

THE Globe

GLOBEN LE GLOBE EL GLOBO O GLOBO
DER GLOBUS د رلوب विश्व گلوب

WORLD'S CHILDREN'S PRIZE MAGAZINE #70/71 2023

PROTECT
GIRLS
RIGHTS



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

PREMIO DE LOS NIÑOS DEL MUNDO
POR LOS DERECHOS DEL NIÑO

DER PREIS DER KINDER DER WELT
FÜR DIE RECHTE DES KINDES

बाल अधिकारका लागि
विश्व बाल पुरस्कार

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

PRÊMIO DAS CRIANÇAS DO MUNDO
PELOS DIREITOS DA CRIANÇA

बाल अधिकारों हेतु विश्व
बाल पुरस्कार

بچوں کے حقوق کے انعام کا عالمی پروگرام

World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child



◀ Vincent and Tadiwanashe from Muhrewa in Zimbabwe proudly show their sign in support of girls' rights.



Thanks! Tack! Merci ! ;Gracias! Danke! Obrigado! CÀM ON ကျေးဇူး
!؛ شکر یہ! ؛! سپاس نھننری धन्यवाद म्हरबاني!

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Hi!

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

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

PAKISTAN

NEPAL

BANGLADESH

BURMA/MYANMAR

VIETNAM



Mohammed Rezwan



Thích Nữ Minh Tú



CHARLES DRAWIN

Editor-in-chief and legally responsible publisher: Magnus Bergmar
Contributors to issues 70–71: Andreas Lönn, Johan Bjerke, Carmilla Floyd, Erik Halkjaer, Jesper Klemmedsson, Charles Drawin, Christine Olsson, Kim Naylor, Bo Öhlén, Faisal Anayat, Alfredo Cau, Yubraj Pokhrel, DaringPix
Translation: LingoNorden (engelska, franska), Glenda Kölbrant (portugisiska)
Design: Fidelity **Cover photo:** Magnus Bergmar **Printing:** PunaMusta Oy

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World's Children's Prize Foundation
Långgatan 13, 647 30 Mariefred, Sweden
Tel. +46-159-12900
info@worldschildrensprize.org
worldschildrensprize.org
facebook.com/worldschildrensprize
Insta @worldschildrensprize
youtube.com/worldschildrensprize
twitter @wcpfoundation

Be a changemaker



Do you want to get involved in increasing respect for children's rights where you live, in your country and in the world? The World's Children's Prize Program (WCP) and The Globe magazine will share with you the stories of how brave Child Rights Ambassadors, Child Rights Heroes and children around the world are fighting for a better world for children. Join them and be a changemaker too!



The Rights of the Child

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

Check out pages 8–36.



The World's Children's Prize Program runs from 1 February until 1 October 2023



Round the Globe for rights

Walk or run 3 km with your message on posters and banners, so everyone can see. Complete your circuits around the globe along with children in lots of different countries for a better local community, country and world.

Check out pages 102–105.



Votes for rights

Celebrate the rights of the child and share the changes you want to see to increase respect for the rights of the child, for the whole school and perhaps invited guests too.

Go to pages 102–105 for some ideas.

Spread awareness

Now you know more about children's rights, democracy and how children can get involved in bringing about change. Tell others what you have learned if you like, and help increase respect for children's rights where you live, in Sweden and in the world, now and for the future! Good luck!

Be inspired by other change-makers on pages 33–41 and 106–113.





CHILD RIGHTS HEROES

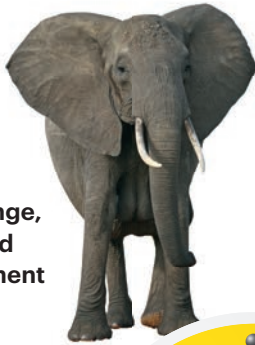


46 million children have taken part in the annual WCP Program, one of the world's biggest annual children's rights education programs.

The Global Goals

Find out about the UN's Global Goals for Sustainable Development and how they relate to children's rights. The countries of the world have pledged to achieve these goals by the year 2030 to reduce poverty, increase equality and stop climate change.

Read about issues such as climate change, children, animals and the natural environment on pages 37-47.



Child Rights Heroes and changemakers

Three Child Rights Heroes are candidates in the Global Vote, in which you and millions of other children choose the recipient of the 2023 World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child. All three have made fantastic contributions for children.

Read about their work and the children they fight for on pages 51-97.



Democracy

Discover the history of democracy and learn about democratic principles ahead of the Global Vote.

Follow the history on pages 48-50.



CHANGE-MAKER DAY

Global Vote

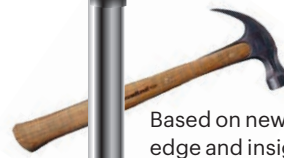
On Changemaker Day, you and your friends make your voices heard for your rights. Invite your family, local politicians and media! Start by organising your own democratic Global Vote for children's rights.

Be inspired on pages 100-101.



CREATING FOR CHANGE

Based on new knowledge and insights, you and other children prepare for your Changemaker Day by making everything from posters, to ballot boxes and voting booths.



The big announcement

When your votes and the votes of millions of other children have been counted, an announcement is made revealing who of the nominated Child Rights Heroes has received the most votes. All the Child Rights Heroes are recognised at a ceremony at Gripsholm Castle in Mariefred, Sweden.

Pages 114-116.



This year is the 20th time that millions of children have taken part in the World's Children's Prize Program. You and your friends will learn about children's rights, that girls and boys have equal rights, and that your country has promised to make sure that your rights are always respected. You will also meet Child Rights Heroes, vote in the Global Vote and have the chance to be a changemaker, just like the heroes themselves!



Start by learning about children's rights and how well they are respected in your country. Based on your own experiences, you can discuss how things could be improved for children where you live. **Page 8–9 and Fact sheet**



Then it's time to look at children's rights around the world. Meet the children of the WCP Jury, who have experienced life as child soldiers, debt slaves and being homeless. **Page 10–24.**



Girls and boys have equal rights, but girls' rights are violated more often. Discuss, like the boys in the picture, how you can stand up for girls' rights. **Page 25–41.**



You can also use The Globe to learn about the UN's Global Sustainable Development Goals and about climate change. **Page 42–47.**



Before you all take part in the big Global Vote, you need to learn more about democracy. **Page 48–50.**

Time to learn all about the three Child Rights Heroes and the children they fight for.



Mohammed Rezwan. **Page 52–67.**



Cindy Blackstock. **Page 68–83.**



Minh Tú. **Page 84–97.**



Time to prepare for *Changemaker Day*. Ballot boxes, a voting booth and voting registers must be created, and ballot papers cut out. **Page 98.**



Speeches must be written and posters and signs made. **Page 99.**



It's finally time for the big day, *Changemaker Day*, which begins with the *Global Vote*, following any initial opening ceremony. **Page 100-102.**



After the *Global Vote* everyone comes together for *My Voice for Rights and Change* with their speeches and signs ...



... perhaps parents, politicians and journalists may have come along to experience the day with you. **Page 103.**



To date, children have walked, run and danced 5 million kilometres with their signs to mark *Round the Globe for Rights and Change*, which concludes *Changemaker Day*. **Page 104-105.**



All of you taking part in the *WCP* program can be changemakers and tell your friends, families, neighbours and others where you live about children's rights. Don't forget equal rights for girls ...



... You can also talk to your local leaders and ask journalists to report more about children's rights and to interview you about what changes you want to see. **Page 106-112.**



Celebrate the Rights of the Child

Fira
barnets
rättigheter!

Celebre
os Direitos
da Criança

Célébre
les droits de
l'enfant

You and all other children have your own rights until you turn 18. It is the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* that gives you these rights.

All the countries of the world except the USA* have ratified (promised to follow) the Convention. They must always put the best interests of children first, and listen to what you have to say.

Basic ideas 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 nine UN conventions on human rights.



The UN adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 20 November 1989. A day to celebrate!



Charles Drawin

*The USA has signed the Convention, but this is not legally binding.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child contains a long list of rights that apply to every child in the world. It is divided into paragraphs that are called articles. This is what some of the 54 articles are about:

Article 1

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

Article 2

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

When adults make decisions affecting children, they must think about what is in the best interests of the child. Politicians, authorities and the courts must consider how their decisions affect children, whether it is one child or many.

Article 6

You have the right to life, and to be able 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

You have the right to say what you think. Your opinions should be 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 are a refugee, you have the right to protection and assistance. If you are in a new country, you have the same rights as all other children there. If you arrived alone, you should be given help to reunite with your family.

Article 23

All children have the right to a good life. If you have a disability 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 about important things, including respect for human rights, your own and other cultures and the equal value of all people.

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 commercial sexual exploitation. 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

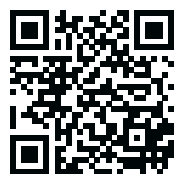
You have the right to information and knowledge about your rights. Parents and other adults should know about the Convention on the Rights of the Child.



The right to complain!

Children whose rights have been violated can submit complaints directly to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, if they have not received help in their home country. This has become possible thanks to a relatively new protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children in countries that have approved the protocol therefore have better opportunities to make their voices heard regarding their rights. Has your country not approved it yet? You and your friends can contact your politicians and demand that they do so.

Find out more at
[worldschildrensprize.org/
childrights](http://worldschildrensprize.org/childrights)



How are the world's children?

All countries that have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child have promised to respect the Rights of the Child. Still, violations of these rights are common in all countries.

Survive and develop

You have the right to survive and develop. You also have the right to feel well and get help if you are ill. Lack of food, clean water and access to proper hygiene facilities harms many children and their health. Around two million children die before they are even born, or at birth, often because the mothers are not getting the care they and the babies need before and during the pregnancy.

Around 1 in 7 of the world's children under five are malnourished. It affects their development for the rest of their lives. Many children, on average 15,000 a day, that is, one child every six seconds, die before the age of five. In low-income countries, at least half of young children die of preventable diseases such as pneumonia, diarrhea, tetanus and AIDS. Only 6 out of 10 children with malaria receive proper care, and only half of the children experiencing poverty in countries with malaria have mosquito nets to sleep under. But much has improved: Since 1990, infant mortality in the world has more than halved!

Name and nationality

When you are born you have the right to a name and to be registered as a citizen of your country. Every year, circa 140 million children are born. Of these, 1 in 4 children are never registered before they turn five. Thus, 237 million children under five have no written proof that they exist. This can make it difficult to, for example, go to school or see a doctor.

Disabilities

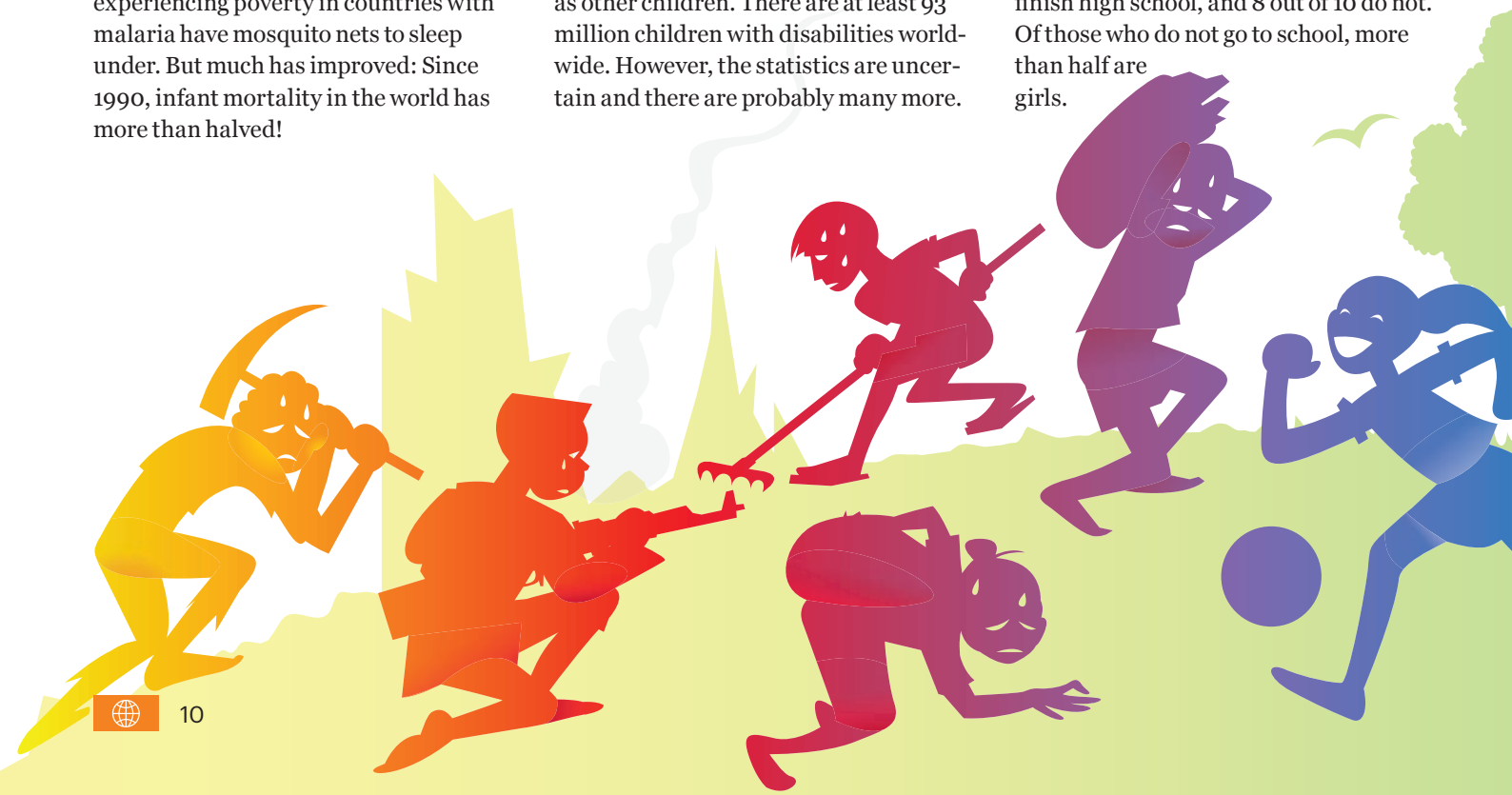
If you have a disability, such as impaired vision or hearing, ADHD, or Down syndrome, you have the right the same freedoms and rights as all other children. However, children with disabilities are often among society's most vulnerable and discriminated against. In many countries, children with disabilities are not even allowed to go to school, play or participate in society on the same terms as other children. There are at least 93 million children with disabilities worldwide. However, the statistics are uncertain and there are probably many more.

Work

You must not perform any work that harms your health or prevents you from going to school. You have the right to be protected from being exploited for financial gain. Children under the age of twelve are not allowed to work at all. The number of children forced to work has increased in recent years to 160 million children, 1 in 10 children. In the poorest countries, about 1 in 4 children work. For 79 million children, work harms their safety, health, development, and schooling. Girls are especially vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation, CSEC. Around 300,000 children are used in war as soldiers, porters or deminers. Due to the pandemic, millions of more children risk being forced to work. More boys than girls work, and more children in rural areas work than in cities. And of all the millions of people trafficked each year, a third are estimated to be children.

Education

You have the right to go to school. Compulsory school should be free for all. Almost 9 out of 10 children in the world go to primary school, and more children than ever before start school today. But many are forced to quit before they can finish their education. About 7 out of 10 children in the poorest countries do not finish high school, and 8 out of 10 do not. Of those who do not go to school, more than half are girls.



Digitization

Access to technology and the internet is increasing in the world. It has given many more children increased opportunities to find information, make their voices heard and influence society. However, access to the internet is not equal. 3 out of 10 children in the world do not have access to the internet at all. The children who live in the countryside have the worst access to the internet and digital devices. Less than 1 in 10 children and young people in low-income countries have access to the internet, compared with 9 in 10 in high-income countries.

Freedom

About 7 million children in the world are detained, often in prisons or in prison-like conditions. Of these, 330,000 are imprisoned in refugee camps, and 19,000 children are imprisoned with a parent. According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, you may only be locked in as a last resort and for the shortest possible time. Children who have committed a crime must receive care and help, and they must never be punished with life imprisonment or death. No child may be subjected to torture or other cruel treatment. However, violence, solitary confinement and other abuses of children deprived of their freedom are common.

Refugees

Children forced to flee have the same rights as other children. Approximately 37 million children worldwide are currently fleeing, many more than just a few years ago. Many try to escape war and

conflict; others flee because of persecution or natural disasters. Most of those forced to flee their country settle in a neighbouring country. Children who are refugees are often not able to go to school. Many suffer from mental and physical ill-health.

Minorities and indigenous people

Children from minority groups or indigenous peoples have the right to their language, culture, and beliefs. Examples of indigenous peoples, meaning those who first lived in their country, are the Aborigines in Australia and the Inuit in Greenland and Canada. Children from indigenous peoples and minorities are often exposed to injustice. Some are not allowed to speak their own language. Others are not allowed to practice their traditional faith. Many are discriminated against. For example, some do not get the same opportunities as other children in school, sports, and access to health care.

The Environment

Climate change is expected to cause more droughts, floods, heat waves and other extreme weather conditions. Children may die and become injured, but natural disasters can also increase food shortages and clean water. It can also increase the spread of diarrhea and malaria, which severely affect children. Already, about 7 million children are estimated to be fleeing due to extreme weather and natural disasters such as

floods. In addition, circa half a million children under the age of five die annually from pollution and far more suffer damage to their lungs.

Violence

You have the right to be protected against violence, neglect, abuse and mistreatment. However, many countries still allow corporal punishment (using violence) in schools. Only circa 64 of the world's countries have banned all forms of physical punishment of children. 1 in 3 children says that they have been subjected to bullying and/or abusive treatment at school. Children are also exposed to hate crimes or sexual abuse on the internet. Girls are particularly vulnerable to violence. About 1 in 3 girls worldwide is estimated to be exposed to physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives, often by a close relative, a neighbor, a teacher or partner.

A good life

You have the right to a good home where you can develop, feel safe and feel good and get help with your studies. Children in low-income families have less access to all of this than children in high-income families. Around 400 million children live in poverty and the number is expected to increase in coming years due to the Covid pandemic. Millions of children experience homelessness, some live alone or with other children on the streets.

Your voice must be heard

You have the right to say what you think about issues that affect you. Adults should listen to children's opinions before they make decisions and should always children's best interests first.

Sources: Unicef, Världsbanken, ILO, FN.



Charles Drawin





Child Jury

The members of the World's Children's Prize Child Jury are experts on the rights of the child through their own life experiences. Each member of the Jury represents first and foremost all children in the world who have had similar experiences to them. They also represent children in their country and from their continent. Whenever possible, the Jury includes children from all continents and all major religions.

Meet the Child Jury!

The Jury members share their life stories and the violations of the rights of the child they have experienced themselves or that they campaign against. In this way, they teach millions of children around the world about the rights of the child. They can be members of the Jury until the end of the year they turn 18. Every year, the Child Jury

selects the three final candidates for the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child from all those who have been nominated.

The Jury members are ambassadors for the World's Children's Prize in their home countries and throughout the world, and they lead the annual WCP ceremony in Mariefred, Sweden.



Dario, 17, Romania

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

Dario grew up in the deprived area of Ferentari, in a wooden shack that his dad built on the pavement, with no heating, toilet or running water. His mum did everything she could to make sure her children were ok, but his dad spent all the family's money on alcohol.

"When I was 9 years old, me and my little sister were sent out onto the streets to get some money for food. The police caught us and we were forced to move to a children's home. It was really hard at first. We missed mum and cried every day. But after a while, once we had made friends, things got better. Like Dario, many of the children at the children's home come from Roma families. The Roma have been Europe's most discriminated against minority ethnic group for hundreds of years.

"If I could decide, I'd clean up all the litter and all the drugs in my area so that people would be kinder to one another. And all children would get to grow up with their families."



Kim, 18, Zimbabwe

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

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

"When I was little, I didn't know that children have rights. It made me sad when I saw children who didn't get to go

to school, who were beaten and subjected to sexual abuse and child marriage. Now I am a voice for children who are too afraid to tell, or who don't know they have rights. I fight in particular for girls, for example to put an end to child marriage and so that girls have the right to their own toilets at school. Being a WCP Child Rights Ambassador feels like an honour. It means everything to me. And I know that my generation will make sure that changes are made for the better for the world's children."



Omar, 18, Palestine

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

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

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



Jhonmalis, 16, Brazil

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

Jhonmalis lives in Amazonas in Brazil and belongs to the Guarani indigenous group. Her family has been fighting to get their land back for over 40 years, land that was stolen by forest companies and

corrupt politicians. Jhonmalis’ own grandfather was murdered for his struggle.

“He was very brave, and he’s a big role model for me. The worst day of my life was when someone started shooting into our house. I thought I was going to be killed.” The Guarani people are now living in roadside camps, where they can neither fish nor hunt. This makes the adults, like Jhonmalis’ dad, depressed; they drink, take drugs and get into fights. He disappeared after attacking her mum with a knife. Now Jhonmalis has to work in the field every morning before school to help the family survive.

“I’m proud of my mum, who is fighting hard for us children! My dream is to put a stop to the violence against children and women.”



During WCP week, the Jury members have meetings during which they share their experiences and discuss important issues.



At worldschildrensprize.org you can read even more of the Jury members’ stories and also meet former Jury members.



Zohar, 16, Israel

Represents children growing up in conflict zones and seeking dialogue for peace.

“It’s important for me to be aware; to learn about what’s happening in the world and try to help as much as I can. I’m involved in our student council and in a young people’s organization. I’ve taken part in lots of demonstrations over the past few years to support girls’ rights, for LGBTQ+ rights and against bullying and corruption.”

When there was a dramatic increase in violence and rocket firing in the conflict between Israel and Palestine in 2021, Zohar and her friends were stressed and frightened. She got to know Palestinian children for the first time quite recently, despite living in the city of Haifa, which has a mixed population.

“Of course I knew that Palestinians live here, but I didn’t know anyone personally. Last year I started going to after-school activities with Arabic-speaking girls. We also started a mixed group, where we learned coding together. The Palestinian girls were really nice, and it was interesting to learn about their culture, which I knew so little of. We don’t know one another at all, even though we’re neighbours. I think it’s easier for people to hate the other side if they don’t know anything about their lives or history. When we get to know one another, we find out that we’re all human beings and quite similar. If the whole of society could see that, then it would improve the chances of achieving mutual understanding. It doesn’t matter how many times the process fails, or how many territories Israel has to give up. We have to keep trying to find a way of living together in peace.”



Threatened by rifle and water

“I’m going to carry on going to school. Kill me if you like,” said Rizwan to the man holding a rifle to his head. The man wanted to force him to quit school and work in the landlord’s fields instead along with the debt slave children. Tales of Rizwan’s bravery spread and gave other families the courage to send their children to school.

Four years later, Rizwan was rescued during the severe flooding, caused by climate change, that destroyed his family’s home and killed their animals.

“My grandfather Shamlu was born a debt slave, because my great grandfather had taken out a loan from the landlord. That’s how you become a debt slave, and the landlord can then force the whole family to work in his fields. But when grandfather grew up, he managed to free our family from debt.

“The landlord wouldn’t let any children in the village go to school, so dad got to start school in grandma’s village. Grandfather also helped another boy in the village, Naveed, to start at the same school. Naveed returned to the village as an adult and started a school. When the landlord got to hear about it he came here in his jeep with armed men and said:

‘Shut down the school!’

“Naveed was supported by the villagers, and the landlord was furious when he left.

Brothers threatened

Two men with rifles threatened Rizwan and his big brother, Sami Ullah, on their way to school. Since the flood they have been living in the tent behind the brothers.



The walls collapsed

As the sun rose, Rizwan saw the first wall being destroyed by the floodwater.

“A year later, a man shot Naveed dead, right in front of the students. Many villagers were afraid then and wouldn’t let their children go to school any more. But my brother and I started at a school five kilometres away.”

Go and work!

“It was a year after the murder of the teacher, and I was ten years old. We’d been up since four and had gone into the forest first, because we don’t have a toilet. Then we fetched water before going to the mosque to pray. Once we’d eaten breakfast, bread with potato, we headed off to school.

“Suddenly we were stopped by two men with rifles. My big brother didn’t hang around and ran off, but I wanted to know what they wanted. One of the men grabbed my arm and the other put his rifle to my head and said:

‘If you don’t work in the field, I’m going to put a hole in your head. You’re ruining other children for us.’

‘I will carry on going to school. Kill me if you want!’ I said. Several people gathered round us, so the men headed off and I continued on to school. When I got home, my brother asked:

‘Why didn’t you run? I thought they were going to kill you.’

“Dad and some others from the village went together to see the landlord and speak to him, but he pretended he didn’t know the men.”

Never free

“All the other families in our village, my uncle’s too, are debt slaves to the landlord. The reason the men threatened me and my brother was to get us to quit school, so the other children wouldn’t get any ideas about going to school.

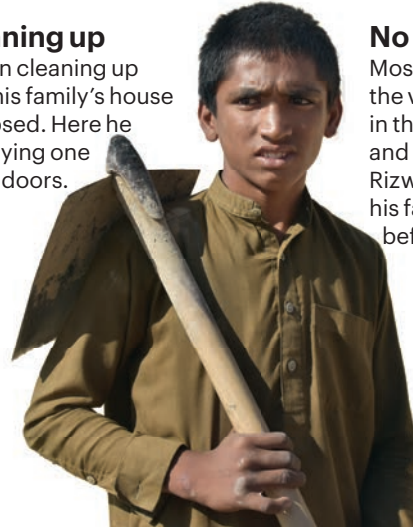
Cleaning up

Rizwan cleaning up after his family’s house collapsed. Here he is carrying one of the doors.



No debt slave

Most of the children in the village have to work in the landlord’s fields and can’t go to school. Rizwan only works in his family’s little field before going to school.





Rizwan, 14, Pakistan

Represents children whose rights are violated due to climate change and other environmental destruction.

BEST TIME: Going to school.

DOESN'T LIKE: How landlords treat poor people.

WORST TIME: The major flood.

MY GOAL: To help my family have a good future.

“The landlords are very cruel. They have often broken their workers’ arms or legs. If anyone protests, the landlord tells his foreman to shoot him. No one dares report him, because it’s dangerous. And there are no police here. People living in poverty have no rights. I don’t like it at all. They also mistreat women and girls.

“The landlord has thousands of hectares of land, but the debt slave families only get wheat and rice and very little money, so they can never be free of their debt.”

Then the water comes ...

“I was doing my homework before the sun went down. We have no electricity here. Mum had made bread with carrots for dinner.

“I woke up in the middle of the night because I heard dad shouting. There was



Saved by a sugar dish

Rizwan and eleven others in the family were saved from drowning, just like the children in the photo above, by sitting in two huge tin dishes that are normally used to make sugar.



FIDA HUSSAIN/AFP

water everywhere. I thought the floodwater would kill us. The water continued to rise, and my uncle said we had to save our families. Mum cried and said:

‘But how can we save everyone?’

“Dad asked us to help carry two huge tin dishes to the door. We use them to make sugar from sugarcane. We sat seven people in one dish and five in the other. Dad and uncle were able to wade through the water and pushed the dishes in front of them.

“I watched our wall collapsing. I thought about our animals, and that our dog would also die. I cried many tears.”

Slept on the road

“Dad and uncle pushed the dishes with us sitting in them for four kilometres, to a road that is high up. For the first two nights we just sat and watched the water, or slept on the road. During the day it was hot under the sun, and at night we were bitten by large mosquitoes. We got two tents and some blankets, so on the third night we were able to sleep under cover. We stayed on the road for 22 days.

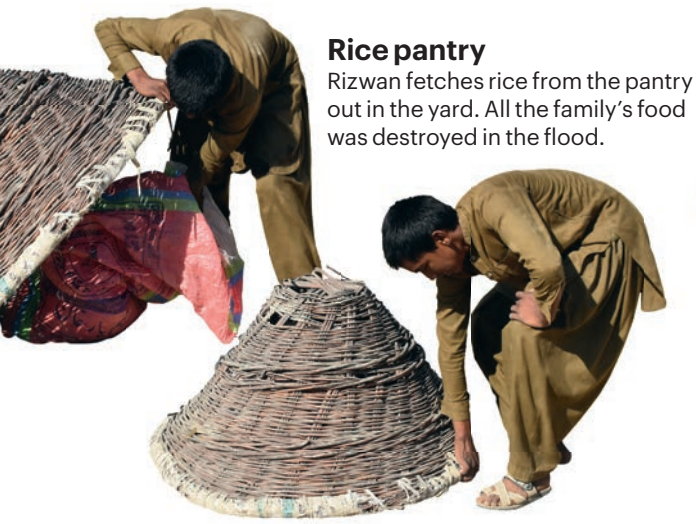
“All the time I was longing to go back to school, and I remember to the day how long I had to wait: two months and eight days!

“We had 10 hens, 24 chickens, 3 goats, 2 lambs and 2 cows. When we returned home, all of them had drowned and disappeared in the floodwater.”

Glaciers melting

Pakistan is severely affected by climate change, which has a big impact on the glaciers in the Himalayan mountains. The 7,000 or so glaciers in Pakistan are melting fast. Pakistan is downstream from the Himalayas, which means it is affected by heavy flooding. In 2022, a third of the country was flooded, and the monsoon rain made the situation even worse. The province of Sindh had 680 mm of rainfall in 24 hours.

1,700 people died during the flooding, and 33 million people were affected.



Rice pantry

Rizwan fetches rice from the pantry out in the yard. All the family’s food was destroyed in the flood.



Defying the landlord

Defying the landlord
The landlord wants all the children to work in his fields, but Rizwan goes to school every morning.



Dog survived

The family’s 10 hens, 24 chickens, 3 goats, 2 lambs and 2 cows were swept away by the floodwater. But their dog survived.



Alcina, 16, Mozambique

Represents girls subjected to child marriage, or at risk of child marriage, and who are forced to quit school.

Alcina has dreams



Alcina is growing up in the village of Malhacule near Limpopo National Park in Mozambique. Her dad supports the family through poaching.



But when armed rangers start protecting the wild animals, he gives up poaching. This makes the family even poorer.



Alcina goes to school, but she has no time for play. She has to gather wood, fetch water, cook, do the dishes ...



When Alcina is 13 and in fifth grade, a 40-year-old man who is a rhino hunter starts paying visits to her parents and offering money, food and beer.



Although the man is already married, Alcina's parents force her to marry him. She has to quit school against her will and move to the man's village.



Alcina is devastated. Her dreams for the future are in tatters, and she doesn't know what to do. All day she does household chores.



Alcina gives birth to her son, Peter, when she has only just turned 14.



In November 2021, Alcina's head teacher Ricardo goes on a course (page 37) with four of his students, and they learn about children's rights.

"Before the course, I didn't know that girls have the same rights as boys. Now girls' rights always have a place at my school," says the head teacher, listing the rights on the blackboard.



for the future once more



A month later, Alcina takes a walk to her home village to ask her parents for maize. She meets her head teacher, who asks why she isn't at school. Alcina tells him about all the terrible things that have happened.



When the head teacher tells Alcina's parents that in Mozambique there are laws prohibiting child marriage, they agree to let Alcina and her son come home, and to let her start school again.



Alcina meets her school friends and learns about her rights. She helps out at home and looks after her son, but is happy that once again she can dream about her future.



Alcina becomes a Child Rights Ambassador and joins the WCP Child Jury. Her mum looks after Peter when she's at school and during her trip to Sweden.



Alcina and Kim from Zimbabwe accompany Queen Silvia to the World's Children's Prize ceremony at Gripsholm Castle in Mariefred.

During the ceremony, she stands up on stage and tells everyone that on the Child Jury she represents all girls who are subjected to child marriage and forced to quit school.



Alcina is involved in the WCP project My Rights & My Future for girls in Mozambique and Zimbabwe, which teaches girls about their rights and helps them return to school.

Slave at five years old

Kwame was just five and couldn't swim when he had to go out in the canoe with his slave master for the first time to cast nets. Every day and every night he was forced out onto the lake, and he had just one meal and drank lake water. But one day, after three long years, the boat came ...

When Kwame was five years old, a couple came to his home in Winneba in Ghana. They asked if they could take Kwame with them and said he'd be able to go to school. The couple gave Kwame's parents a little money. When Kwame woke in the couple's car the next morning, he was in the city of Yendi on the vast Lake Volta.

"We took a boat to an island. When the couple handed me over to a man, he said that I had to go with him out in the canoe and fish. It was really hard at first, and I couldn't swim," explains Kwame.

He had been trafficked and was now forced to work every day and night, without any hope for the future.

"But as I grew older I started to dream that one day I'd be rich, and that my family would celebrate my return."

Two hours' sleep

Every day, at six in the evening, Kwame packed the nets in the boat and set off onto the lake with his slave master, Brother Abbam.

"The moon and stars helped light the way, but we used a torch as well. When the weather was really bad, it was hard to see, and I was frightened.

"First we let down the net that would be taken up early the next morning. Then we cast another net in over and over again and dragged it along behind the canoe for several hours, before turning back at midnight," explains Kwame. He slept in the canoe for a couple of hours before it was time to go out on the lake again to take up the net.

Beaten with a paddle

The slave master often beat Kwame with a paddle or steel cable that they used to mend the nets.

When he got home in the morning, Kwame usually jumped in the water to wash. He was never able to wash himself or his clothes with soap on the island.

Once he'd carried the fish they'd caught to the slave master's wife, he helped her smoke it. In the afternoon, Kwame



Child Jury



returned to the canoe to empty the water out and get the nets ready for six o'clock, when it was time to go out on the lake again.

Dangerous work

Many children have drowned while being forced to fish on Lake Volta.

"Once, when Brother Abbam wanted me to dive down and loosen a net that had got caught, I said I didn't dare. Then he pushed me down under the water. I thought I was going to die.

"When he got angry, he hit me with the paddle," says Kwame, showing a scar on his forehead. "And he used to beat me with the steel cable that we mended the nets with, and call me stupid.

"Brother Abbam's own daughters got three meals a day. They got fish and

sausages to go with their kenkey (cornmeal dumplings) and banku (cassava dumplings), and sometimes soft drinks. But in all the years I was with them, I only drank lake water. I got one meal a day, and never anything to go with it."

The rescue

"I'd heard that there were people who came to fetch children. But Brother Abbam and the other slave masters scared us by saying these people wanted to abduct us, and that we should run and hide."

One day when Kwame was eight years old and standing on the shore, sorting nets, he saw a motorboat approaching.

"I thought it was my mum who had come to get me, so I didn't run away."



Fishing slaves

The fishing slaves are called “The boys who went to Yeti”. Most of them end up in Yeti before they are sent out to various slave masters. Child slavery is common in Ghana. The children are sold by their parents or relatives, often by single mothers who cannot afford to buy food for their children. It’s also common for people living in poverty to borrow money from a slave trader for a

funeral when someone dies. If they can’t pay it back, the slave trader takes their children. The adults might receive USD 20, and the children then have to work for at least two years, often much longer. Ghana has a law against child slavery, so Challenging Heights can get the police to help when they rescue children.

Safe house

Kwame arrived at the organization Challenging Heights’ safe house for rescued trafficked children.

“All I had to do was get up in the morning, make my bed, shower, eat breakfast, go to school and then go to bed in the evening. And no-one beat me or let me starve.”

“I do a lot of drawing, but I never paint anything from my time on the lake. It would only remind me of all the terrible things I went through.”

Kwame now had friends, got three meals a day and could watch TV in the safe house. After a year, they started talk-

ing about reuniting him with his family. Kwame couldn’t wait, but there was one thing he didn’t want to miss before going home:

“I wanted to experience Christmas at the safe house one more time. We practised Christmas carols and dances, and I was one of the dancers. We got Christmas clothes, sweets, biscuits and soft drinks. The Christmas meal was so good, chicken and rice.”

Finally home

It was almost as Kwame had imagined it. He didn’t come home rich, but when his family saw him, everyone cheered and cried.

“I thought a lot about my parents when I was on the island and at the safe house, and I recognised them as soon as I saw them. Dad lifted me up in the air!

“I’m happy now. Challenging Heights give me clothes, and they help dad with the cost of my school fees. I’m in seventh grade now.”



Kwame, 16, Ghana

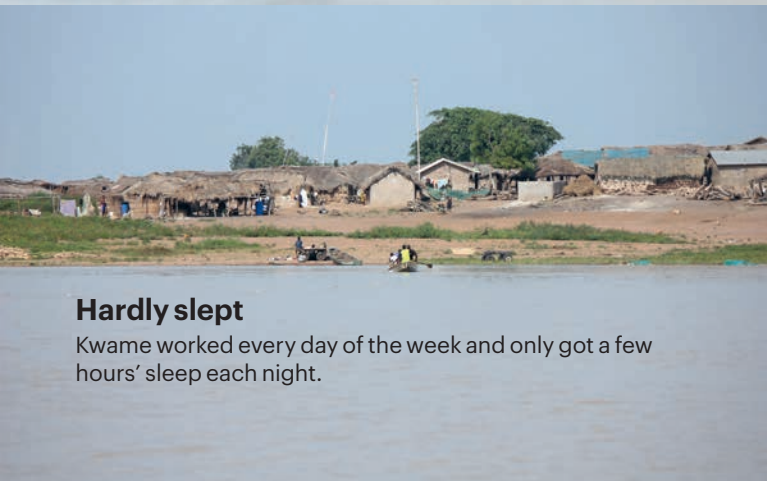
Represents child workers and children who have been trafficked and forced into modern slavery.

BEST EXPERIENCE: Christmas Eve at the safe house.

WORST EXPERIENCE: When the slave master pushed me down under the water.

HAPPIEST MOMENT: When I returned to my family and dad lifted me up.

FAVOURITE THING: Painting pictures.



Hardly slept

Kwame worked every day of the week and only got a few hours’ sleep each night.

Didn’t run away

The slave master said that the people who came and asked about the children were evil, and that Kwame should run away. But Kwame didn’t run when Challenging Heights’ boat arrived and took him to the safe house for rescued children.



Bindu rescued from a r

Bindu believes the distant relative is her friend, but instead the woman tricks her into travelling to India, where Bindu is locked in a house along with lots of other girls ...

Bindu, who is 12, and her mum are often visited by Karuna, a distant relative. She's always suggesting to Bindu that she should travel to new places. Bindu says no, but she's curious about what she hears.

When Bindu gets bitten by a dog, Karuna happens to drop by.

"I'll go with you to the hospital to get a tetanus jab," she says.

On the way home after the vaccination, Karuna says:

"Your mum is always scolding you. How do you put up with it? There's only one boarding school here in Nepal; let me take you there so you can get an education".

The journey begins

Later that same day, Bindu goes outside when she hears Karuna calling for her. As she approaches, Karuna pulls Bindu to her and covers her mouth with a shawl. She drags Bindu with her through a gate. When they get to a bridge, there's a strange man waiting there.

"He's going to take you to the boarding school," explains Karuna.

The man takes Bindu to a hotel room. Before she falls asleep, the man's phone rings. It's Karuna, and she wants to speak to her.

Child Jury



Bindu comes from a poor family and had barely gone to school before she was abducted and taken to India. She is keen to learn and was soon moved up to the second grade at Maiti's school, Teresa Academy, home in Nepal.

"I've told your mum that you're safe."

"I want to go to mum," replies Bindu.

"What are you going to tell her?"

"Everything."

"If you do that, I'll kill you and your family," warns Karuna.

The man drinks alcohol and his snores keep Bindu awake all night. The next morning, he tells Bindu to get into a taxi. They travel the whole day and the day after.

Where am I?

When they arrive in Delhi in India three days later, Bindu is taken to a house, where she meets Karuna's sister. When she enters a room, Bindu sees lots of girls, some of them wearing hardly any clothes.

"What are these girls doing here?" asks Bindu.

"They sell clothes and do this and that," is the response.

When Bindu asks if she's at a school, as Karuna promised, the other girls laugh at her.

"All the girls who sleep here work at our brothel," explains Karuna's sister.

"Aren't you ashamed of selling girls like this?" says Bindu when she realises where she's ended up.

"I haven't killed anyone, so why should I be ashamed?" replies the woman. Soon there'll be another thirty new girls arriving.

"Please, let me go home," begs Bindu in tears.

"There's no way we're letting you out of

A dog bite was what started the whole thing, when a woman she knew lured Bindu away from her home.



Bindu was taken to India in a mini taxi, but she had no idea where she was going.



nightmare



It's like a dream for Bindu to be free and have friends after her experiences in India.

here,” answers Karuna’s sister.

Bindu is moved to another building, where for a month she looks after the young children of the older girls and women. Every day Bindu is given a drug, but she has no idea why she is given it, and that Karuna’s sister wants to make her grow faster so she looks older.

Rescue on its way

Bindu is taken to yet another building that Karuna’s sister is also responsible for. Bindu is kept locked in a room as the days go by. She cries every day and misses home, but she no longer has any hope of being free.

Back in Nepal, Bindu’s mum has gone to the organization Maiti Nepal and told

them her daughter has disappeared. Maiti, which fights against the commercial sexual exploitation of children, contacts an Indian organization and the police in Delhi.

When she’s been in the room for a week, Bindu suddenly hears raised voices outside the door, which soon opens. The police and some other people she doesn’t know are standing there. Then everything happens very quickly. Bindu’s clothes are packed in a bag, and before long she’s sitting in a car on her way home to Nepal.

Keen to learn

When she arrives back in Nepal, Bindu gets to stay at Maiti Nepal’s sheltered home for children. She hasn’t been at

school much before, so she starts in first grade at Maiti’s school Teresa Academy, along with some younger children. But her eagerness to learn means she soon moves up to second grade. Most of Bindu’s classmates are children with no parents, or other poor children who also live at Maiti’s home.

The man who abducted Bindu has been arrested and charged with human trafficking, but has not yet been convicted. Although Bindu managed to be freed before she was subjected to any kind of assault, the man will get a long prison sentence. 🌐



Bindu has just been released by the police and social worker and here she is on her way home to Nepal.



Bindu’s family are very poor. Since her rescue she has been living with the organization Maiti Nepal so she can go to school, but her mum Rajita visits her there.

Bindu wants to get an education and help other children who have been exploited.



Bindu, 15, Nepal

Represents children who are the victims of human trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

WORST TIME: When I was taken to India.

BEST TIME: Seeing mum again.

DIFFICULT: Telling the police.

LIKES: Painting and singing.

WANTS TO BE: Social worker and help others.



Came home after three years

Espoir cried during the whole trek through the forest. His shirt was wet through from the tears, as though it had been raining. If he stopped, the soldier beat him with a stick. All the time, Espoir was thinking of his mum and dad, and that he might never see them again ...

Espoir, whose name means ‘hope’, comes from South Kivu province in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This is the story of three years of his life:

“I was 10 years old, almost 11. Every day I got up early to work in the morning, mostly carrying rubbish to the tip and crops from the field. I’d usually get 2,000 CDF (USD 1), or a kilo of cassava for half a day’s work.

“In the afternoons I went to school. After school we used to play football with a ball made of plastic. Every Wednesday and Saturday, I went to choir practice at church. In the evening I did my homework by the light of the fire.

“I’d heard about boys from the villages nearby being abducted and forced to be child soldiers. I was always worried that the same thing might happen to me one day. But my family is very poor, so there wasn’t much we could do about it. We couldn’t move to the city, which would be safer.”

Worst fears realised ...

“I got up early as usual, ate a cold sweet potato, drank a glass of water and began the walk to school with two friends. It takes an hour to get to school and we usually spent the time talking about funny things that had happened.

“Suddenly a group of armed men

stepped out from some bushes and stood in front of us on the path. I was so scared that I just froze. I immediately thought I would die, but thanks to God I wasn’t killed. We cried and shook with fear.

‘Please, let us go to our families,’ we begged.

‘Why should we do that?’ they said, and they beat us with sticks while dragging us with them into the forest.

‘Don’t try and run! And keep moving!’ ordered one of them.

“We carried our school bags and heavy sacks of food that they had stolen from somewhere”.

Raw cassava for food

“The forest frightened me. I was afraid the wild animals would kill us and eat us. At first we tried to escape. Then they put us right at the front and one of them said in a menacing voice:

‘Fools, just you try and run. Then we’ll help you meet your dead ancestors. And we’ll show no mercy.’

“We walked day and night, ate raw cassava from the sacks we were forced to carry and drank water from springs. When we were too tired and lagged behind, they beat us with their sticks to get us to speed up.

“I thought I’d never see mum or dad or my brothers and sisters again. I kept thinking I would be killed by the soldiers, who beat me as though I were a snake.

“I cried the whole time. My shirt was wet through from the tears, as though it had been raining.”

Tried to help children

“First we had to go through an initiation ceremony with drugs and jujus, which are

Child Jury

The war in DR Congo, which has been going on since 1998, is one of the most brutal wars in the history of the world. More than 6 million people have died in the fighting, or from hunger and diseases as a result of the war. At its peak there were over 30,000 child soldiers in the country; now there are around 15,000. Over 7 million children do not go to school.



When child soldiers arrive at the organization BVES' reception centre, the first thing they do is burn their uniforms as a sign that they are now leaving their time as a child soldier behind them. It says: 'Military uniform: Never again!', and 'School: Yes! Military camp: Never again!' on two of the signs.

objects we had to carry with us in combat to protect us from the bullets. Then we had to learn to shoot. It took me three months to learn to use a weapon. First the AK-47 assault rifle and then the PKM machine gun.

"Then I fought against other armed groups and against our country's army.

"One evening we drank kanyanga that made me drunk. I shot a couple of rounds into the air, and the troop leader demanded that I pay 40,000 CDF (USD 20) for the bullets, but I couldn't pay. So he ordered my friends to give me 15 lashes of the whip. I escaped that same night and headed back to my village. But I came across another armed group and I was tortured until I agreed to join them. We stole from fields and homes and robbed car drivers in the evenings and at night.

"I was never involved in abducting

children. When my friends arrived with new children, I tried to teach them how to escape and avoid my fate."

Free at last

"I wanted to visit my family, and one night I ran away. On the way I was arrested by a government soldier, who took me to a prison. I was put in a tiny cell with some men who assaulted me. They took my food, sold it and used the money to buy cigarettes. It was so cramped that at night we had to take it in turns to stand up and sleep on the floor.

"The organization BVES visited my cell. When they saw that I was a child, they got the prison manager to hand me over to them. I was taken to BVES' centre for rescued child soldiers, and I had time to recover there until I felt ready to go back home."



Espoir, 14, DR Congo

Represents children forced to become soldiers and children living in armed conflict situations.

LONGED FOR: My family.

MOST FUN: Playing football and singing in choir.

WORST TIME: Being abducted and tortured.

MOST IMPORTANT: Going to school.

FAVOURITE SUBJECTS: French, history, social and moral studies.

WANTS TO BE: A teacher and rescue children.

Home again!

"Finally the day I'd been longing for since I was abducted arrived; the day I would be reunited with my family. We were all overjoyed and all of us cried. After a few days, the fear began to creep up on me. Since then I've been constantly afraid of being abducted again if the armed groups find out I'm back in the village. I'm also afraid of being arrested again by the government soldiers.

"Going back to school means a great deal to me. I feel it's helping me build a future for me and my family. I want to be a teacher. But I also want to fight for children's rights, and to prevent children being abducted by armed groups and separated from their families." 🌐

BVES bag

Every child who has been at BVES' centre for street children gets a bag containing things that will make life easier when they go home to their families.



The bag contains:



A radio

Shoes



A towel

Toothbrush and toothpaste

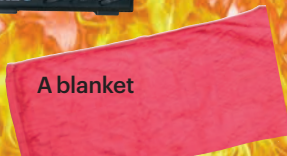
New clothes



Soap

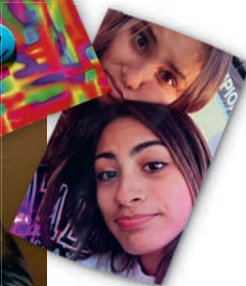


A blanket





The family and two cats share a double bed. Dahlia and Mersadez each have their own wall where they put up their pictures and drawings.



Selfie with bestie.



“I lost all hope”

One day when she was 12 years old, Mersadez finds out that her family has just a few days to leave their home. Again.

Mersadez lives with her mum Stephanie and little sister Dahlia in a little student room. But ever since her mum Stephanie was in a serious car accident she has been unable to work or study, so now they have to move.

At five o'clock one morning, Mersadez packs her clothes, schoolbooks and toys into a van that her mum rented. The family has nowhere to go, so they have to sleep in the van for almost a week.

“There was no room to lie down, so we sat and slept in the seats,” recalls Mersadez. “The next morning we used the toilets in shops and at McDonald’s to brush our teeth and wash.”

Mersadez had experienced homelessness many times before, but this was the worst yet because they had to live in the van.

“It was scary,” says Mersadez. “For the first time, I lost all hope. I thought we’d never have a home of our own. That nothing would ever be good again.”



Mersadez does her homework at the table, while her little sister Dahlia, 8, gets a snack.

After a bit less than a week the family moved into a motel that had been converted into a shelter.

“Then we moved a lot, until we arrived at the motel where we live now, in one room with a kitchenette. We’ve been here for two years. Everyone else who lives here is also homeless. Mum prefers us not to leave the room after school. She has always tried to protect us as much as she can,” says Mersadez.

Over two million children in the US are currently homeless, sometimes because their parents lose their jobs and can’t pay the rent. Others have mothers who are escaping a violent partner. Mersadez’s mum had a difficult upbringing herself. Sometimes she still feels so low because of her own childhood that she can’t work and bring money in.

No one can know

Mersadez’s school friends don’t know where she lives.

“Most of the kids at school are very well-off. If they knew I was homeless, it

would change their opinion of me completely. Instead of being a person, a friend, I’d just be a homeless person to them, not a human being. I don’t want anyone feeling sorry for me or treating me differently.”

During Covid, Mersadez and Dahlia had remote lessons via the internet for a long period. It was tough being locked in the motel room almost 24 hours a day and trying to keep up with school. Mersadez had help then with her schoolwork from an organization called School on Wheels, which was set up by WCP Child Rights Hero Agnes Stevens.

“I’m doing well now and can also help my little sister.” 🌐



Mersadez and Dahlia’s mum doesn’t want them walking around the motel, because some of the people who live there have drug problems and can get violent. “But most of them are nice,” say the sisters.

Mersadez, 15, USA

Represents children who are homeless and stands up for other children experiencing homelessness.

LIKES: School.

LOVES: Dancing, particularly hip hop.

DOESN'T LIKE: Not having a home or a feeling of security.

WANTS TO BE: Marine biologist.



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

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

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



HM DROTTNING SILVIAS STIFTELSE
CARE ABOUT THE CHILDREN

Toi Moi Mêmes Droits is supported by Queen Silvia’s foundation Care About the Children. The project is run by the World’s Children’s Prize Foundation’s partner organisations ONG JEC in Benin, ESPDDE in Senegal, and ASEF in Burkina Faso. It is supported by the Ministries of Education in all three countries: Ministère des Enseignements Secondaire, Benin, Ministère de l’Education Nationale, Senegal, and Ministère de l’Education Nationale et de l’Alphabétisation, Burkina Faso.



You Me Equal Rights – for

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

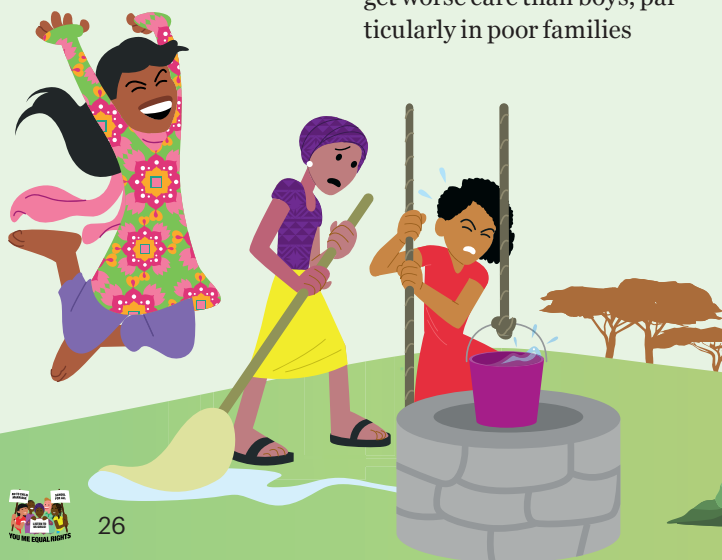
Articles 28–29: You have the right to go to school

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



Celebrate and stand up for girls' rights

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



girls' rights



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Article 37: No one may subject you to cruel treatment

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



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

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

What difference does it make?

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



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

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



“Listen to us girls!”

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

Friends’ rights violated

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

“Girls’ rights are not respected here.

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

“Us boys should also do the dishes”

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

Abdoul Fatao, 14, Burkina Faso

“Daughters are treated shamefully”

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

Daouda, 11, Burkina Faso

“I’ll educate my dad”

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

Hayfa, 10, Burkina Faso

“Need to educate the parents”

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



Abdoul



Daouda



Hayfa



Aminata



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

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

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

My siblings agree

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Only my brothers go to school”

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



Salamata

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

“My aunt tried to sell me”

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

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

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



Ornela



“Our parents need to und

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

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

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



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

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

Dangerous journey

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

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

Girls for change

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

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

what I do otherwise I’ll be beaten.

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

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



erstand”

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

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

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

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

Right to speak freely

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

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

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

Djiba, 13, Child Rights Ambassador, Senegal



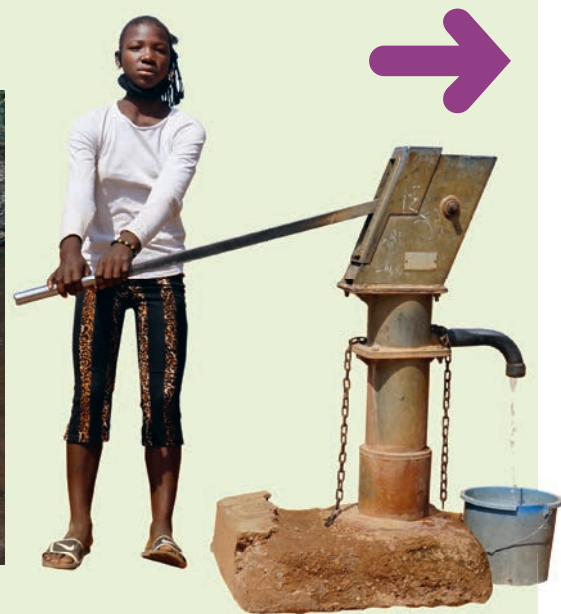
Djiba and her friend Diouma are at the river doing the dishes and washing clothes.



Time for change

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

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



We discovered children have rights

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

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

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

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





School for every girl

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

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

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

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

Shattered dreams

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

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

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

Wants to see change

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

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

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

Grâce, 15, Benin

Fighting for girls’ rights

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

Carlo, 16, Benin



He is standing up for girls' rights

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

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

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

Influencing football team-mates

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

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

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

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

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

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

Francine



Archille

I want to succeed

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



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

The course gave me the weapons

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

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

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

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



Educating friends and parents

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

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

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

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

Young girls out at work

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

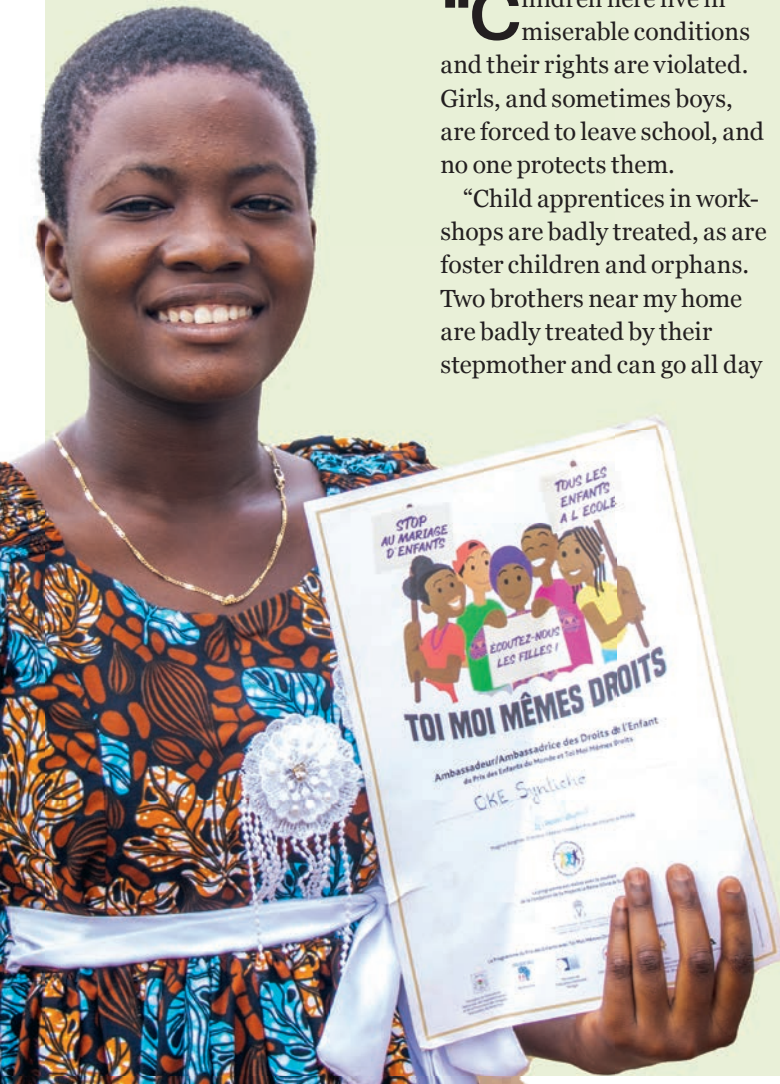
“When my friend Aminata’s dad died, she ended up in a home near me because her mum didn’t have any money.

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

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

Proud to go to school

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



Time to fight!

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

areas and that girls should not have to suffer.

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

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

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

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



nts

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

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

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

The course gave me power

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

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

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

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



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



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

Ganimath Adame, 14, Akassato School, Benin



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

“My friend’s fate made me start fighting”

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

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

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

given. It’s a noble mission.

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

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

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

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



Yasmina, Ghislain and Guemilatou.

Girls must be able to inherit

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

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

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

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

Essential to educate girls

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

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

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

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

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



Ambassadors for girls' and wildlife rights



Girls' rights are often violated in the areas in and around the Gonarezhou and Limpopo national parks in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. People rarely listen to what girls have to say. Many are married off and forced to quit school.

Poaching has been common in the area for some time, which has severely affected wildlife such as elephants, rhinos and giraffes. Child marriage and poaching are illegal in both countries, and now the laws are being

championed by 1,600 Peace & Changemaker Generation Ambassadors for girls' and wildlife rights! And they've reached all 130,000 children from the age of 10 in the area.





In the Peace & Changemaker Generation project (P&CG), 1,600 students at 400 schools in and around the Gonarezhou and Limpopo national parks in Zimbabwe and Mozambique have been trained to be ambassadors during a two-day course. They now defend children's rights, particularly girls' equal rights, and wildlife rights. And they are joined by their 800 teachers, who also completed the P&CG course. The ambassadors and teachers have since carried out the *WCP Program with Peace & Changemaker Generation* for all 130,000 students in the area. They've been supported by 100 local leaders, who also attended the P&CG course, to inform the adults in the villages that children's rights exist, that girls' rights must be respected, and that both child marriage and poaching are illegal.

You can find everything you need to know about Peace & Changemaker Generation at worldschildrensprize.org/pcg.

Peace & Changemaker Generation is a joint project involving the World's Children's Prize Foundation and Peace Parks Foundation, funded by the Swedish Postcode Lottery. It has been carried out by SANTAC in Mozambique and Shamwari Yemwanasikana in Zimbabwe, supported by the district departments of education, and in Zimbabwe by the African Wildlife Conservation Fund as well.



Extinct rhino and silent girls

"Girls aren't seen as people here. If a girl tries to say what she thinks to adults, they tell her to keep quiet. But boys are allowed to speak up. No-one tells them to be quiet. It's not right! It really concerns me, and as an ambassador it's something I want to try and do something about."



Wants to be a ranger

"During the course we also learned a lot about sustainable development and about wildlife. Rhino poaching was common here in Gonarezhou, to get at the valuable rhino horn. In the end, rhinos became extinct here. It's so sad. My generation, and those who come after us, might never get to see a rhino in its natural habitat.

"Some people still poach, mostly to pay for food for their families. I don't think they realise that the environment and wild animals have rights. I now feel confident enough to talk to the village leaders about what I've learned. They can teach the villagers, and maybe we can put a stop to poaching. This feels like a mission for me as a member of



the Peace & Changemaker Generation. I dream of being a ranger here in Gonarezhou and protecting the wild animals."

Edgar, 13, Peace & Changemaker Generation Ambassador, Chompani Primary School, Zimbabwe

Fighting for girls and wildlife



"When one of my school friends was 12, she was forced to quit school because her mum died. Her dad said she had to stay home and look after her younger siblings, and that she would then be

"It was cosy to sleep over in the school hall during the Peace & Changemaker Generation course," says Praise.

married off. But her brothers got to continue going to school. That makes me so mad! Now I'm an ambassador, I want to tell others what belonging to a changemaker generation means; that boys and girls have the same value and should be treated equally. That both should be able to go to school. And that no child should be forced to marry.

"My dream is to be a lawyer

and work with children's and girls' rights. It's important to fight for the environment and wildlife too. If we look after animals, lots of tourists will want to come here and see them. That brings jobs and money, and we really need both here."

Praise, 11, Peace & Changemaker Generation Ambassador, Chikombedzi Primary School, Zimbabwe



Tallest in the world

The giraffe is the tallest animal in the world, and can be 4–6 metres high. It has been a victim of poaching and numbers have dropped by 30 percent in the past 15 years. There are 110,000 giraffes left in the whole of Africa; 446 of them in Gonarezhou Park and only around 25 in Limpopo Park.



Our equal rights!



“The best thing about the Peace & Changemaker Generation course for ambassadors was finding out that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child exists. I didn’t know that before. I also learned that all the rights are the same for boys and girls.”

That’s not how it is here. Here boys are treated much better. Girls are sexually exploited, and some are also trafficked and taken to South Africa. And no-one here accepts that a boy should help a girl with the household chores. As an ambassador, I want to tell everyone that children have rights, and explain that they are the same for girls and boys.”

Rowland, 11, Peace & Changemaker Generation Ambassador, Chikombedzi Primary School, Zimbabwe



Diploma for a changemaker

Amukelo, 15, from Alpha Mpapa High School in Zimbabwe receives her diploma as a Peace & Changemaker Generation Ambassador for girls’ and wildlife rights.

You’ll find Amukelo’s story and a video clip about her at worldschildrensprize.org/pcg.

President for change

“We’ve learned that we need to treat our environment, and by that I mean everyone in our environment – boys, girls, nature, wildlife, everything – with respect. I didn’t know how serious climate change is. I’m worried. Here in Gonarezhou it affects us a lot. It either rains far too much and we get flooding, or there’s

hardly any rain at all and it’s almost impossible to grow anything. But we’ve also learned about ways of helping to reduce climate change.

“I dream of being Zimbabwe’s first female president! I believe a woman would think differently. First and foremost, I would fight to make sure there were laws to



protect and respect girls and women. Laws that value girls.”

Tariro, 17, Peace & Changemaker Generation Ambassador, Justin Chauke Secondary School, Zimbabwe



Fastest in the world!

The cheetah isn’t just the fastest animal in Limpopo Park; it’s the fastest land animal in the world. It holds a world record speed of 75 mph.

Outdoor cinema for changemakers

It was fun to spend time with new friends, sit outside and watch films and eat popcorn in the evening, and then have a sleepover at school together!

Praise enjoyed the short film *The Story of the World’s Children’s Prize*, which is about Child Rights Ambassadors Kim and Hassan. Praise also watched films about wild animals and films about other children who are involved in the Peace & Changemaker Generation project.

Watch the films at:
worldschildrensprize.org/wcpstory
worldschildrensprize.org/videopcg





Poachers now at school



“Peace & Changemaker Generation changed my life and I’m pleased to be involved in carrying out the project at my school. Many children here didn’t go to school, because their parents forced them to work in the field and at home, or sent them out poaching. Many have started coming back to school. I can now count the ones who don’t come to school. But before Peace & Changemaker Generation it was almost impossible for me, because so

many children weren’t coming to school.

“Some boys were sent out into the bush by their parents, even though they knew that poaching is illegal. I know two families that did that, and the sons were killed. Many have already stopped poaching, but I want to see everyone stop! There are lots of children here who don’t have a father, because he was killed while poaching.

“At home, us girls carry on doing most of the work, but

the boys have already started helping out more. When I do the dishes, my brother knows that he should help by sweeping the yard. They’ve stopped doing the *khomba* initiation rite for girls, and we’re no longer forced to marry.”

Anastácia, 13, Peace & Changemaker Generation Ambassador, Cubo Primary School, Mozambique

My brothers help me

“When it comes to girls’ rights in the home, things are starting to change here now. My brothers help me! My friends say that their brothers have also started helping them. It’s a big change from before. At school we’ve talked about how girls have the right to rest and time to do their homework.

“I know a lot of children who’ve lost their dad through poaching. Our leaders held meetings to make sure everyone understands that poaching is a crime. People are changing, and most here have stopped poaching now.”

Adélia, 12, Peace & Changemaker Generation Ambassador, Cubo Primary School, Mozambique



Lion numbers fall by 90 percent

A hundred years ago, over 200,000 lions roamed the African plains. Now there are fewer than 23,000 lions left, which is a drop of 90 percent.

Leaders and children changing together

Teachers and leaders from every school and village are also learning through the Peace & Changemaker Generation courses. Back in the village, the adults and students who are now trained ambassadors together help increase respect for girls’ rights, and put a stop to poaching.

“Many parents in our village used to take their sons out of school because they thought poaching was more important. Many young people here have died while hunting. But after the course and continuing project in our village, many more children now attend school.

“Lots of girls also used to quit school early. We have a very old tradition called *khomba*. Girls who have had their first period are taken out into the bush to prepare for marriage. After *khomba*, the girls usually quit school and

are forced to marry.

“I’m glad that the Peace & Changemaker Generation project came to us. After the course, we held meetings with the villagers to explain the risks of poaching, parents not letting their children attend school and subjecting their daughters to *khomba*.

“The project has helped us a lot. While the head teacher and teachers talked to the children at school, as village leader I was able to influence the villagers. The Child Rights Ambassadors educated their school friends.

“There are lots of changes happening in the village now. Far fewer boys are leaving school to go poaching. No girls quit school as a result of *khomba*. We no longer allow *khomba*, because it was a ritual that wasn’t good for the girls, so no girls quit school now because of it.

“Thank-you Peace & Changemaker Generation for opening our eyes and helping us.”

Isaak Alione Cubae, village leader, Cubo, Mozambique



Sharing knowledge in the village

“The river has dried up here because of climate change, and girls’ rights are not respected in the village. I know four girls who went to school with me, but then quit because they fell pregnant. I also know four boys who don’t go to school. Their parents think it’s normal not to go to school. It’s the first time we’ve been educated about these

issues. I’m grateful to have had this education, and now I can share knowledge with others at school and in my village.”

Zulfa, 15, Peace & Changemaker Generation Ambassador, Matafula Primary School, Mozambique



Girls’ rights for the first time

“My family respects my rights, but my brothers don’t help me with the household chores. I grind the maize, do the cooking, and fetch water and wood. My brothers just take the cattle to graze and go to school.

I’m going to talk to them and get them to come back to school. And I’m going to teach my school friends about their rights. It’s the first time we’ve been educated about children’s rights and girls’ rights in our district.”

“Many girls in the village are married off and pregnant by the age of 18. The parents get 10 oxen and money as a *lobola* payment from the husband’s family. Two of my friends who were in sixth grade with me are now expecting. As an ambassador,

Sonia, 14, Peace & Changemaker Generation Ambassador, Matafula Primary School, Mozambique



Pupils from three village schools came together at Matafula’s simple school to be trained as Peace & Changemaker Generation Ambassadors.

Getting children back to school

“I’m going to go round the village with my classmates and get children who’ve left school to come back. It’s good for a child to go to school, because then they can be teachers, nurses, police officers or engineers. I know several 14-year-olds who’ve had children and I’m going to persuade them to come back to school too. In my village, it’s parents who are the biggest problem when it comes to children’s rights. They don’t understand the value of

school. Even if children want to study, the parents don’t allow it. I get up early, take the cattle out to graze and leave them there. Then I run to school. When school is finished for the day, I bring the cattle home again.

“No-one has ever come here before to teach us about children’s rights, so I’m really grateful for the course.”

Shelton, 13, Peace & Changemaker Generation Ambassador, Matafula Primary School, Mozambique

Biggest of all

The largest land animal, the African savanna elephant, can reach heights of over 3.5 metres and weigh 6,500 kilos. Hundreds of African elephants are killed every day by poachers. Elephant numbers have fallen by 62 percent over the past ten years. There are now 350,000 left in Africa; 11,000 of them in Gonarezhou Park and 1,500 of them in Limpopo Park.



Child Rights and Global Goals!

The countries of the world have agreed to achieve three extraordinary things by the year 2030: end extreme poverty, reduce inequalities and injustice, and stop climate change. In order to achieve this, the countries have set up 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development. All the goals are interlinked and closely related to children's rights.

The governments of each country are mainly responsible for achieving the goals and for making changes that help achieve the goals. But if the world is to have any chance of achieving them, then everyone, including you, has to be aware of the goals and get involved and fight for change! That means both adults and children. Even small actions can make a big difference.

You can find out about the Global Goals and share your knowledge through the WCP Program. In The Globe you will meet Child Rights Heroes and many children who are fighting for a better world. They are helping to achieve many of the Global Goals, for example:

- Goal 5 – gender equality and equal rights for girls
- Goal 10 – reduced inequalities
- Goal 16 – justice and peaceful societies.

The rights of the child

The Global Goals are closely linked to the rights of the child. If the goals are achieved, then the situation for children around the world can improve.

Here are examples of how the goals are linked to your rights and the rights of other children.



Learn more about the Global Goals and Child Rights



1 NO POVERTY
No child should grow up in poverty. No child should be treated differently or not be allowed the same opportunities as other children because of how much money they or their family have.



2 ZERO HUNGER
No child should have to go hungry or be undernourished. All children should have access to nutritious and safe food.



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
All children should have the chance to be healthy, receive good health care and medical treatment, and be vaccinated. Abuse of alcohol/drugs must be reduced, as well as road accidents and air pollution.



4 QUALITY EDUCATION
All children should receive an education and all children should have the opportunity to learn to read and write. Primary and secondary schooling should be free. No child should be discriminated against in school.



5 GENDER EQUALITY
Girls and boys should have equal rights and opportunities in all respects. No girl should be discriminated against. Child marriage and violence against girls, such as female genital mutilation and sexual assault, must be stopped.



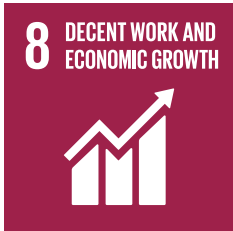
CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

All children should have access to clean water and toilets, and be able to attend to their personal hygiene. Separate toilets for girls are important in many countries for their safety and security.



AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

All children should have access to safe and sustainable energy that makes their lives easier, without ruining the environment.



DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

No child should be subjected to child labour or human trafficking. This includes not using children as soldiers. Parents should have good working conditions so they can look after their children.



SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Industries, roads and other infrastructure should be built in a way that means they are not dangerous or harmful to children. All children should have access to information and communication technology that improves their lives.



REDUCED INEQUALITIES

All children should have equal opportunities regardless of background, gender, belief, sexual identity or orientation, disability or the fact that they have been forced to leave their home.



SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

All children should have good living conditions close to play areas and green spaces, with effective public transport links. Growing big cities should be built in an environmentally sustainable way while preserving culture and traditions.



RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Children should be taught how to live in a more sustainable and environmentally friendly way through, for example, sustainable consumption, recycling and reusing.



CLIMATE ACTION

Children should learn how to combat climate change, and be able to demand that adults, e.g. decision-makers, do the same.



LIFE BELOW WATER

Children should learn how littering, overfishing and emissions can affect seas, lakes, rivers and everything that lives there.



LIFE ON LAND

Children should have knowledge of how to protect forests and land, mountains, animals and plants, and understand why we should not waste nature's resources.



PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

No child should be subjected to violence, assault or exploitation. All children should be able to grow up in peaceful communities where everyone is treated justly, for example, by authorities, the police and courts.



PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Countries must work together more, support and learn from one another in order to create a better world for everyone.



Taking care of our planet



Everyone needs food and water, a roof over their heads, and heat to survive. We all share the Earth's resources, but some people use much more than others.

For as long as humans have been around on this planet, many of them have tried to live without destroying the natural world. Indigenous peoples follow age-old traditions and make careful use of the Earth's resources. They take only what they need when hunting, growing food and harvesting forest. Some people still live like that. However, at the same time consumption and mass production have increased dramatically, especially in the western world. How much impact a country or person has is often simply called our ecological footprint.

Your impact

An ecological footprint is the 'impact' on nature and the planet from each of us based on the amount of resources we use. The size of your footprint is connected to the land area used to produce what you use, from food to gadgets, as well as the area required to take care of your waste. Your personal footprint can be calculated

based on what you use and how much land you use.

Reducing your footprint

If you live in a way that impacts the environment as little as possible, this reduces your ecological footprint. For example, you can recycle more, save water and buy less stuff. Growing your own food or eating locally grown food is generally better for the environment than buying things that are grown on the other side of the world and transported to a shop near you.

The rich have a larger footprint

Different countries face different challenges. In many rich countries, carbon dioxide emissions represent more than half of the national footprint, largely because they buy so much food and stuff. However, there can also be a big difference between different people in the same country. A child in the rainforest in Brazil uses almost no resources at all.

Plastic does not go away

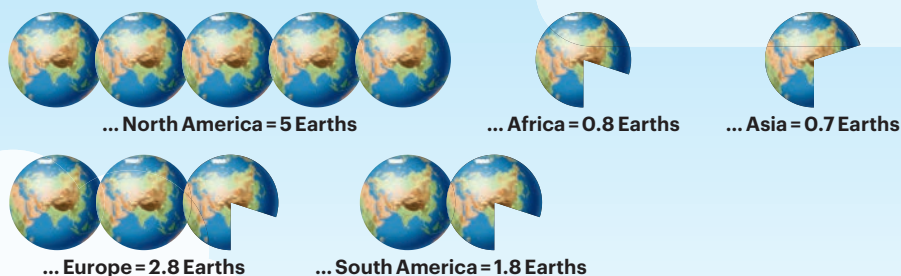
Did you know that a beached whale found in Europe had 30 plastic bags in its stomach! It can take thousands of years for plastic litter to decompose and it is hazardous to humans and animals. Even tiny plastic particles (microplastics) can cause huge damage. Microplastics are consumed by zooplankton and mussels, for example, which in turn are eaten by larger creatures. The plastic remains inside them and may ultimately end up in the fish you eat for dinner.

While a rich Brazilian landowner may have a private plane, several cars, air-conditioning and a pool, which creates a gigantic footprint.

What needs to happen now?

The rich need to reduce their production and consumption. Many people in poorer countries, on the other hand, need to increase their footprint in order to have dignified lives with electricity, heating, food and clean water. We all need to come up with smarter ways to live than the lifestyle enjoyed by rich countries for so long.

Humanity uses up more water, food, raw materials, energy and other resources than nature can regenerate in a year. Large-scale mining operations and deforestation contribute to the problems. The day when resources 'run out' each year is known as Overshoot Day. It fell on 28 July last year. If everyone lived like the average inhabitant of the world, we would need 1.7 Earths! And if everyone lived like they do in ...



It's important to save water and to recycle plastic.





Vital forests

Major forest fires release a lot of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. This is not a problem if the forest grows back, with new trees to absorb and store the carbon dioxide again. This cycle has been going on throughout Earth's history. However, if forest is burned or chopped down with no new forest to replace it, the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere increases very rapidly. Large forestry companies can fell huge areas at a time, and it takes a long time for new trees to grow back. Time we don't have.

The Earth is heating up

Heat is necessary for all life on Earth. However, right now many people are worried that the Earth is getting too hot. Last year, for instance, we saw more drought in Europe, extreme heat in India and more violent storms in the USA and West Africa. This is due to climate change.

For a long time, humans have used fossil fuels like oil, coal and gas to enable them to drive more cars, operate larger factories, fly further, and grow crops and raise livestock on large farms. In large parts of the world a lot of resources are consumed for everything from heating to cooking and computers. All this results in large emissions of carbon dioxide.

Our blanket is getting too hot

Carbon dioxide is a natural component of the Earth's atmosphere, which is made up of a variety of gases. The atmosphere is like a warm blanket around the planet. Without it the temperature would be around 30 degrees colder than it is now! But as humans release more and more greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane, this blanket has become thicker and so the Earth is getting hotter. The natural greenhouse effect has increased significantly and this raises the temperature of the ground.

Changing climate

As the earth gets hotter, the climate changes. Climate is the weather over a

long period of time, such as how hot it tends to be and how much it usually rains. If the Earth gets hotter, there may be more drought and less rain. However, it may also rain more in certain places, with more violent storms and more flooding. Both animals and humans may have more difficulty finding good places to live.

What happens now?

It's hard to say exactly how the climate will change in different locations around the world, but we know for certain that there will be climate change as the Earth heats up. This may make entire countries uninhabitable. In the worst-case scenario almost the entire planet may become uninhabitable! But it doesn't have to be that way!

Fighting for change

Today, many individuals are working together, children, young people, scientists and politicians, to stop climate change. No one can do everything, but everyone can do something. And that includes you!



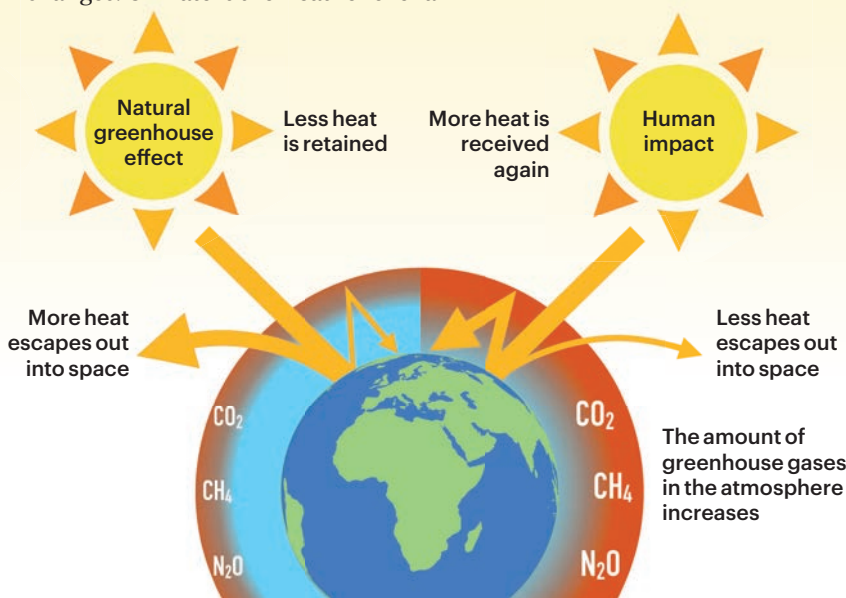
Harmful fuels

Fossil fuels are primarily the remains of old plant material that has been stored in the ground for hundreds of millions of years. When humans burn coal, oil or natural gas now, it takes just a few years to release carbon dioxide that has been absorbed by plants over many millions of years!



Rising sea levels

As the earth gets hotter, sea levels rise. Mostly because warmer water expands and takes up more room, but also because glaciers (ice on land) melt and flow into the sea. People who live near the coast or on islands may have to move if sea levels rise and submerge their homes and fields.



The greenhouse effect

The sun's rays hit the ground and turn into heat that radiates out from the Earth's surface. The atmosphere contains *greenhouse gases* like carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane (CH₄) that prevent this heat radiation from disappearing out into space and keep the heat in the atmosphere for longer – otherwise the planet would be too cold to live on. Now, though, we have the opposite problem. The amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is increasing so sharply and rapidly that the level of retained heat is getting to be more than humans, animals and nature can deal with.



If we don't take action

Scientists agree that we urgently need to make changes to how we live and exploit the Earth's resources. Otherwise this may lead to major problems around the world. Here are some examples of what can happen and the resulting negative impact on children's rights:

Extreme weather

Heat and extreme weather, as well as drought, flooding and natural disasters, affect everyone on the planet. However, children in poor and already hot countries are hit hardest of all. (See pages 14-15, 52-56, 58-65 and 91-92.)

Hunger

If climate change is not halted, this will result in poorer harvests, and shortages of food and water. If so, the number of hungry and malnourished children may increase by 20-25 million by 2050.

War and conflict

Inequality and poverty increase the risk of violence and war. This affects children in poorer countries in particular, and especially girls.

Economic crisis

Poor children get sicker and go hungry, and sometimes end up homeless. Children in high-income countries are negatively affected too. More children will need to work instead of going to school, and girls' education suffers the most.

Refugee crisis

Many children have to leave their homes when villages and towns become uninhabitable due to everything from extreme heat to flooding. Children's schooling and health are affected, and families may be separated. Climate change can also lead to conflicts over resources, which may force many people to flee their homes.

Disease

As the Earth heats up, diseases like malaria and dengue fever, as well as waterborne diseases like cholera and diarrhoea, spread more rapidly to more areas of the world. More children get sick and die prematurely.



If we act now

There is hope! If everyone does their bit, we can reverse the trend. First of all, politicians and big business must take responsibility, but everyone can help by making changes, large and small, to their lifestyle and how they use resources.

Safety and security

If climate change is halted and everyone takes responsibility, this can bring about increased equality and gender equality. This reduces the risk of people and countries being drawn into violent conflicts over land and natural resources.

Reduced hunger

Everyone benefits from better harvests that are not destroyed by drought, storms or flooding. Families can provide for themselves and live comfortably, and children have enough to eat and are healthy.

Talk about the issue

Many people feel worried when they hear about climate change and a bleak future. It's good to take the climate crisis seriously, but it's equally important to feel positive and that there is hope. Talk to friends about it, get out into nature and pass on tips for small but positive changes to your everyday habits.

Sustainable living

Everyone needs to try and live more sustainably. But it is the emissions from and waste of resources by rich countries over a long period of time that are the biggest causes of the climate crisis. They must now support poorer countries, where most people are already using resources efficiently.

Clean water and hygiene

By saving water and combating climate change, we can improve access to clean water and hygiene facilities. Children will stay healthy, be able to go to school, play and develop.

We need everyone

You can get involved and fight for your right and the right of future generations to inherit a world where people and the environment are healthy. Adults and decision-makers must do all they can to halt climate change.



The road to democracy

Every year, children organize their own Global Vote as part of the the World's Children's Prize Program. What do you know about the rise of democracy in our world?

What is democracy?

You and your friends probably have similar opinions on some issues, but completely different views on other issues. Perhaps you are able to listen to one another and discuss the issue until you arrive at a solution that everyone accepts. If so, you are in agreement and have reached a *consensus*. Sometimes you have to agree to disagree. Then the majority – the biggest group – gets to decide. This is democracy.

In a democracy, all individuals should have equal worth and equal rights. Everyone should be able to express their opinions and influence decisions. The opposite of a democracy is a *dictatorship*. That's when everything is decided by just one person or a small group of people and nobody is allowed to protest. In a democracy, everyone should be able to make their voices heard, but compromise is necessary and decisions are made by voting.

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

Joint decisions

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



The birth of the word 'democracy'

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

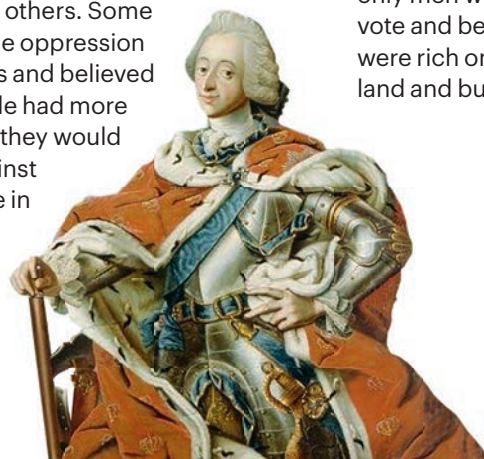
508 BC

1700s

1789

Autocratic rulers of the 1700s

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



No women or slaves

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

Voice of the rich

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

Women demand voting rights

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



MUSEUM OF LONDON



Equal rights for all

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

Free elections

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



1856

First secret ballot

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



1906

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.



1948

1955

Equal rights in the USA

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



1957



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted

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



The Arab Spring

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

The children's democratic Global Vote

The World's Children's Prize Program takes place for the twentieth time. Over 46 million children have taken part in the annual program. The program helps you and your friends contribute throughout your lives towards building democratic societies, where children's rights are respected. Organize your own Global Vote when you feel you know enough about democracy, the Rights of the Child and the Child Rights Heroes. Your vote is your decision. No-one else can decide how you should vote.

1989

1994

2010

2015

2023



Faster towards the Global Goals

Although more countries than ever before have introduced democracy, people are still suffering as a result of injustices and oppression. In 2015, world leaders in the UN agreed on 17 new Global Goals for a better world, to be reached by 2030.



Voting rights for everyone in South Africa

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



Child Rights Heroes

2023



This year, millions of children around the world will be taking part in the 20th Global Vote to award prizes to Child Rights Heroes, who are all doing fantastic work to support vulnerable children and their rights. To date, almost 46 million children have voted for their favourite Child Rights Hero.

Every year, the World's Children's Prize child jury selects three Child Rights Heroes from among the nominated candidates. These three become the final candidates for the *World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child*. The prize cannot be awarded based solely on votes from a candidate's own country. If the children in all the other countries have collectively chosen a different recipient for the World's Children's Prize, then this Child Rights Hero will receive the prize.

To enable you to make an informed and fair choice in the Global Vote, it is important to know about all three candidates equally. You can read all about them and the children they fight for on the following pages.

The two candidates who are not awarded the prize from the children's votes receive the *World's Children's Honorary Award* instead. All three Child Rights Heroes receive prize money to be used in their work for children.



Candidate 1

Mohammed Rezwan
Bangladesh

Pages 52–67



Candidate 2

Cindy Blackstock
Canada

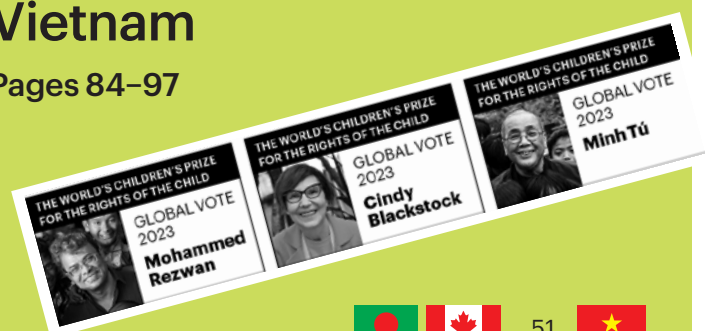
Pages 68–83



Candidate 3

Thích Nu Minh Tú
Vietnam

Pages 84–97



Why is Rezwana a nominee?

Mohammed Rezwana has been nominated for his 25-year campaign for children's right, and particularly girls' right to go to school, despite flooding and increased poverty due to climate change.

THE CHALLENGE

Every year, thousands of schools and school routes are destroyed as a result of flooding in Bangladesh, which is being made worse by climate change. The education of millions of children is affected, and many never go back to school. Instead they are forced to work, and girls are often married off.

THE WORK

Rezwana and his organization Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha (SSS) run 26 floating schools on the rivers. The boat schools fetch the children where they live, so they can go to school even if the roads are under water. SSS also has floating libraries and health clinics, and offers vocational training on boat schools for young women. Every village with a boat school also has a Young Women's Rights Association that fights for girls' rights and campaigns against child marriage.

RESULTS & VISION

Since 1998, some 22,000 children have received an education through the boat schools. The floating libraries and health clinics reach 150,000 villagers every year. 15,000 young women receive vocational training to give them a better future. The practice of child marriage is declining where the boat schools visit. Rezwana wants to start up more boat schools. His idea of floating schools has spread throughout Bangladesh and to eight other countries.

Nominated Child Rights Hero Mohammed Rezwana

52-67



“We’ve always had flooding here in Bangladesh, but it’s much worse now. Thousands of schools are destroyed by flooding every year”, says Mohammed Rezwana, who fights for the right of all children to go to school in a country plagued by natural disasters.

Bangladesh is one of the countries most severely affected by climate change. Children suffer most of all. Almost 20 million children in Bangladesh are affected by the consequences of extreme heat, drought, cyclones and flooding.

The heavy rains came every year during the monsoon season in the village of Shidhulai when Rezwana was growing up. Everything was flooded. Fields, homes and roads. Houses made of mud, straw and bamboo were dragged along by the floodwater, and people lost

everything they owned. Many died. Schools were destroyed and closed. And because the roads were left deep under water, you couldn't walk or cycle to those schools that remained open. Many children were left without any kind of education.

“That’s what it was like for

many of my friends, but it was a bit different for me.”

Rezwana’s dad worked in the capital Dhaka, so the rest of the family lived with grandmother and grandfather in the village. Grandfather was a high school teacher who owned his own land and grew crops, and the house was



As a changemaker, Rezwana helps fulfil children’s rights and achieve the following Global Goals:

Goal 4: Quality education. Goal 5: Gender equality. Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy. Goal 13: Climate action.



Each boat school takes three classes with 30 students every day. The classes are taught in three-hour sessions.

Safe for the girls

“In Bangladesh, girls can be the victims of assault by male teachers, or on their way to and from school. It means that many families decide not to let their daughters go to school. We do everything we can to make sure families feel safe. Almost all our teachers are women, who are popular and live in the village where they teach. The boats pick up and drop off the students where they live, and are piloted by skippers who also come from the village,” explains Rezwan.

sturdy and built of brick with a tin roof.

“We also had a boat that we used to transport our rice and other crops we grew. So when the roads flooded, I could get to school by boat. I was lucky, but it didn’t feel good because many of my friends didn’t have the same opportunity.”

Unfair

School was really important to Rezwan’s grandfather, who encouraged him to study hard.

“I loved school, I got good grades and scholarships, which meant I could afford to continue on to university in

the capital Dhaka, where I trained to be an architect.”

Every time Rezwan visited Shidhulai he met friends of his who had been forced to quit school because of the constant flooding. He saw how hard life was for them. There were no jobs, no health care and the situation for schools was still bad in the area. Everything was just a huge struggle for survival.

“It felt unfair, and I wanted to help in some way. As an architect, I wanted to build schools, libraries and hospitals and help create jobs in the villages so life would be better,” explains Rezwan.

Floating schools

But he realised that it was no use building normal schools, because they’d only be destroyed in the next flood.

“At its worst, two-thirds of Bangladesh ended up under water, so I came to the conclusion that the schools had to be able to float so as not to be destroyed. And if the schools were built as boats, then school could come to the children when they couldn’t make their own way to school because the roads were under water.”

In 1998, using an old computer and \$500 that Rezwan had left over from a scholarship, he started the organiza-



Rezwan’s 54 boats

- 26 schools
- 10 libraries
- 6 training schools
- 6 health clinics
- 4 transport boats
- 2 playgrounds

Rezwan not alone

The organization Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha has 213 employees and 315 volunteers. The boat school has 78 teachers and 58 skippers and boatmen.





Family's honour

"If a girl is the victim of a sexual assault, it's often the girl that gets the blame in the end. The family's honour has been ruined, and gossip means that no-one wants to marry either the girl or her sisters. One of the reasons for child marriage is to avoid the family's honour being at risk. It's a dreadful situation," says Rezwan.

tion Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha (Shidhulai self-reliant) to make his vision of floating schools a reality.

First boat school

"I sat up late at night searching for organizations in Bangladesh and abroad that could support me financially. I sent hundreds of emails! Meanwhile, I worked with a team of volunteers collecting scrap for recycling, which we sold to factories to raise money.

"In the end, all our efforts produced results. The money started coming in." Rezwan took on two employees, and in 2002 he was able to design and build the first boat school.

"We used materials and skilled boat builders from the villages. People were proud!"

In addition to the boat builders getting work and the children an education, Rezwan also employed both teachers and skippers from the village.

"It became everyone's school, not just mine!" says Rezwan, laughing.

Girls' rights

Rezwan managed to raise more money, so the number of boat schools and students increased every year. And to enable as many children as possible to go to school, the education was completely free, including the school books. Children that would previously never have gone to school were now jumping aboard one of Rezwan's schools when they arrived at their village.

"Every child has the right to go to school. But here it's perhaps most important of all for the girls. One in five girls is married off by the age of 15. The best way to stop child marriage is to make sure these girls get to go to school for as long as possible," explains Rezwan.

"My mother was married at the age of 13. She had me at



Floating library with internet

Rezwan's ten floating libraries make three stops a day, and every village is visited three times a week. The libraries also have computers that run on solar energy.

"You have to know how computers work to have a good future, and we can help with that here. It's most important of all for girls and young women to learn how to use computers and the internet. If they continue their education and gain new skills, it almost always raises the age at which they marry," explains Rezwan.

Rezwan's library contains books about girls' rights and about nature, the environment and climate change.



Long queue for the doctor on one of the organization's six floating health clinics.



15. She gave up her own childhood, her own rights, to look after me and my brothers. So the fight for equal rights for girls and boys is something that is very personal to me! We've always spent a lot of time explaining to everyone in the villages that girls and boys share the same rights, and that both must be respected and allowed to go to school."

tion also has floating libraries and health clinics that reach 150,000 villagers every year. Over 22,000 children have been educated on the boat schools, and Rezwan's floating schools idea has spread to other organizations across Bangladesh. It's also spread to India, Pakistan, Vietnam,



Rezwan's 26 schools

Today, 20 years after the first school was launched, 2,340 students attend 26 school boats on the rivers of north-west Bangladesh. And in addition to the floating schools, Rezwan's organiza-

Young Women's Rights Associations

There are Young Women's Rights Associations in all the villages that are visited by the boat schools.

"We support one another, share information in the villages and try to prevent child marriage and pregnancies at a young age," says Maria, 19, in a red-blue headscarf, on a mission together with her friends from the association.





Cambodia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Nigeria and Zambia.

“I’m delighted! And if you consider the effects of global warming, even more floating schools are going to be needed around the world,” says Rezwana.

Dangerous work

But not everyone is a fan of Rezwana’s work.

“There are those who don’t like the idea of poor children getting a good education, because it means that as adults they’ll start demanding their rights. Then it won’t be possible anymore to exploit them as cheap labour and steal their money. So my

colleagues and I have many enemies. We are reported to the police on false grounds, and our offices and homes get searched. I’ve been the victim of two murder attempts and I rarely sleep more than one night in the same place.

“I don’t own many things or have much money. But every time I see all the children at the boat schools learning important things, which will allow them to fulfil their dreams and have a good life, I feel lucky and rich!”

Climate and children’s rights

“Climate change is leading to the violation of many of the rights of the child in Bangladesh. Here’s my list of violations,” says Rezwana:

- Children are not getting an education because their schools are being destroyed and closed.
- Children’s families are getting poorer, which means less food, no health care and child marriage is increasing.
- Children are being forced to leave their homes.
- Children are losing their homes and families.
- Children are getting sick.
- Children are dying.

Constantly working

Rezwana is in regular contact with his schools out on the rivers. Do they have everything they need? Enough teachers? Skippers? Books?



XINHUA/TT

Bangladesh disappearing

Bangladesh has always had flooding during the rainy season, but climate change is making the situation much worse. Higher temperatures are melting the glaciers in the Himalayas, increasing the amount of water in the rivers that flow through Bangladesh. The river channels cannot cope with all the water when the monsoon rain arrives, and they over-

flow and land disappears. Meanwhile, global warming is causing sea levels to rise, leaving Bangladesh’s coastal areas under water.

The rain and floods are more severe, unpredictable, come more often and last longer. It’s hard for people to sow crops and harvest them.

Despite Bangladesh being responsible for less than a thousandth of the world’s

greenhouse gas emissions, it is one of the countries that is affected the worst by global warming.

Researchers on the UN Climate Panel estimate that almost a fifth of Bangladesh will completely disappear under water by 2050, and that 20 million of the country’s inhabitants will become climate refugees.

3 million homeless

The flooding in Bangladesh in 2022:

- Impacted the lives of almost 11 million people.
- Caused the deaths of 145 people.
- Made 3 million people homeless.
- Destroyed 6,676 schools.
- Affected the education of 1.5 million children.





There are 15 girls aged between 13 and 19 in Chobi's association. She and some of the others still go to boat school, while others have started high school or go to Rezwan's training school. The Young Women's Rights Association helps them stay in contact and continue supporting one another. An adult woman from the boat school leads the meetings. There are Young Women's Rights Associations in all the villages visited by the boat schools.



TEXT: ANDREAS LÖNN PHOTOS: JOHAN BJERKE

Fights for girls' rights

"My big sister was forced to quit school and get married at the age of 14, and she's already a mother, so I know how important it is to fight for girls' rights," says Chobi, 13, who is a member of the Young Women's Rights Association.

“I think the same thing was planned for me, but mum and dad changed their minds after the boat school and Young Women's

Rights Association started informing people about the problems with child marriage. But I feel sorry for my sister, who didn't get the same

opportunities as me. It's to protect other girls from ending up in the same situation as her that I'm a member of the association.

“We meet about three times a month and learn about girls' rights. And we support and protect one another. Being part of the group means we feel stronger together. We dare to say what we think. It's really important, because we talk to our families, neighbours, children and young people, older people...in fact everyone in the local villages!”

More starting to understand

“We tell people that child marriage is prohibited, and that all girls must go to school instead, just like boys. We

Chobi's important checklist for girls

According to Chobi, it's important for a girl to go to school because:

- She learns important things.
- She makes friends.
- She gets to play and enjoy free time.
- She can get a job and have a better future.

also explain that a young girl isn't ready to have children at an early age, because she's still a child herself. That there's a high risk that both mother and baby will die.

“I actually think they're listening to us, because child marriage is nowhere near as common here anymore. My family treats me well, and it's the same for most girls in this region now. More people are starting to understand that boys and girls have the same rights.

“My dream for the future is to own my own land and grow food on it. I'd also like to keep some goats and ducks, and live a peaceful life. I'd be happy with that.”

Life for girls in Bangladesh

- More than half of all girls, that's 38 million, are married off before the age of 18, and one in five, 13 million, before the age of 15.
- 5 of 10 girls who are married off at a young age have given birth to their first child before the age of 18.
- Girls who are married off are subjected to a lot of violence, including sexual violence. But a majority of the population do not regard child marriage as sexual violence towards girls.
- More than twice as many girls as boys quit school in years 6 and 7 (aged 12-14).
- It is four times more common for a married girl not to go to school than an unmarried girl.
- Five million women and girls have died as a result of discrimination, in the form of less food, medical treatment and care than boys, as well as from abortions of female fetuses.



Boat school saved Rakhiya

“My life would have turned out very differently if it hadn’t been for Rezwan’s boat school. I would have been married off and forced to quit school to look after the home. My future would have been ruined,” says Rakhiya, 11, who is in fifth grade and dreams of becoming a doctor in the village.

Nearly one in five girls in Bangladesh are forced into child marriage before the age of 15, many due to poverty that is being made worse by climate change. Rakhiya was almost one of them ...



“ It happened last year. I’d just got off the school boat and walked up from the river to our house. Just as I was going through the door I heard mum and dad talking about me. I stopped to listen, trying to be as quiet as possible. At first I thought I was hearing things. Could it be true? They were talking about a wedding. My wedding? Yes, they said my wedding. My heart started beating fast. Everything was spinning. I just didn’t get it. My parents were sitting there, planning to marry me off...

“At first I didn’t know what



Teacher against child marriage!

Rakhiya’s teacher, Rowsonapa, is a role model for many of the children who live by the river.

“I feel like I can tell her anything,” says Rakhiya.

to do, but eventually I decided to go in. They stopped talking the minute I went through the door. I pretended as though I hadn’t heard a thing, and they pretended that everything was normal. I didn’t show how I felt, but I was so disap-

pointed in mum and dad. And angry.”

Teacher saved me

“At boat school, we’ve learned that child marriage is banned. That it’s against our rights. My teacher often talks about



Floating school arrives

It's almost 8 o'clock in the morning, and Rakhiya is waiting for the school boat along with some of her classmates. The boat does two more stops to pick up the rest of the class before teaching starts.

"We don't have any uniforms at my school, and I think that's good because some families can't afford that," says Rakhiya.



Married off at 13

"I'm so pleased we reconsidered and didn't marry Rakhiya off. As for me, I was 13 when I was forced to marry. I managed to finish fifth grade, but when I was married off I never had the chance to go to school again. I wish for a better and simpler life for my daughter than I had," says Rakhiya's mum, Saleha.

every child's right to go to school, both girls and boys. But that could be all over for me now. I didn't say anything to mum and dad that evening, but the next day I went straight to my teacher as soon as I got to school and told her. She was very worried and came home with me after school along with some people from the boat school's Young Women's Rights Association that she'd asked to come too. They explained to mum and dad that child marriage is wrong and illegal, and asked them not to marry

me off. They said I had to finish school, play and be a child, not get married.

"I was worried and nervous, but the meeting actually ended with my parents promising not to marry me off. It's hard to explain the relief I felt. But I still found it difficult to understand it all. Everything happened so quickly. I just

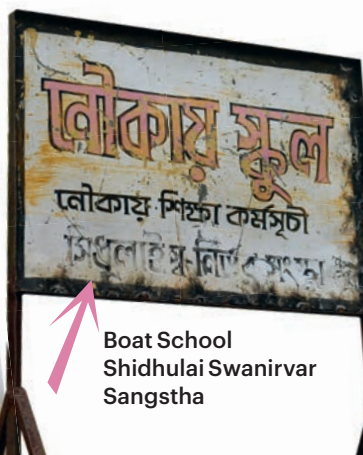
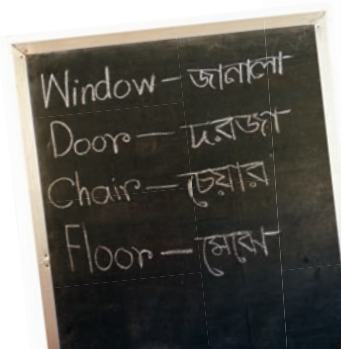
didn't get why mum and dad had been prepared to do that to me."

River took everything

"A few years ago, we lived near the river in a little house

with walls made of reeds and bamboo. It was the monsoon, so the rain was pouring down

"I do my own henna patterns. I love drawing, and I draw in my notebooks too!"



Boat School Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha





RAKHIYA, 11

LIVES: By the Gumani River.

LOVES: Honesty.

HATES: Lies.

BEST THING THAT'S HAPPENED TO ME: My teacher saving me from being married off.

WORST THING THAT'S HAPPENED TO ME: My parents planning to marry me off.

WANTS TO BE: Doctor.

LOOKS UP TO: Rezwan.
I want to be like him!



Solar power for homework

"All the students at boat school get a solar energy lamp so we have good light to do our homework by. We've also been given a solar panel for our roof so we can charge the lamp. I stop studying after the last call to prayer of the evening, at around 7.30 pm. The call to prayer from the mosque is like my clock," says Rakhiya.



→ and the water in the river was constantly rising and getting closer to the house. It was late one evening, but no-one in the family dared go to sleep.

"First, a little water came in under the reed walls and at the door, but suddenly the water rushed in through every crack in the house. Finally it came right through the walls. My brothers and I

held on to mum and dad as hard as we could, while the water got deeper and deeper. Before long, mum had to lift me as high as she could, because the water had got so deep in the house.

"When we made it out through the door it was like stepping right into the river. We screamed when we hit the water, and thought we were

going to die. But somehow we managed to get to land. From there we watched as the walls and roof of our house were ripped off and dragged down into the river. The entire house disappeared."

No land of our own

"We spent the whole of that night outside. The rain carried on pouring down, and

there was water everywhere. I don't remember much after that, I don't know why. But mum has told me that I just cried and screamed. One moment I was in mum's lap, and the next in dad's. Sometimes I fell asleep from exhaustion, but then I woke again and screamed out loud. I had nightmares for ages, and would wake in the middle

Banana tree raft

"When the waters rise in the river and flooding is on its way, mum and dad build a platform out of bamboo high above the water and we move there. We cook and sleep there. The water underneath the platform is often full of snakes. We also make rafts out of banana trees to get around. You have to know how to swim and treat snake bites here, otherwise you won't survive," says Rakhiya.



Vital snake knowledge

"At boat school we learn what to do if someone gets bitten by a cobra or other snakes. First you tie a rag or band hard above the bite so the poison doesn't spread to the rest of the body. Then you have to get to the clinic or hospital as quickly as possible. Snake bites are more common during flooding. Snakes get into the houses then to seek shelter from the water. My uncle was bitten by a dangerous snake, but luckily he survived," explains Rakhiya.





of the night crying and calling for mum and dad.

We stayed with relatives until dad had built the house we live in now. But it was really hard after the flood. We have no land and we lost what little we had when the old house disappeared. The neighbours' fields and plantations where mum used to work were also destroyed. So

she had no way to work and earn money.

"Mum has explained that they were thinking of marrying me off so they'd have one less person in the family that needed food and other things that cost money. They felt they had no choice, because everyone was always hungry. She said it was an idea that was very painful. And that it

was a mistake. Now I know she's happy when I take the school boat every morning, and in some way I've forgiven my parents."

Floating school

"We get floods here every year during the monsoon. It's always been that way, but things have got a lot worse. We get more rain, and severe

Caught you!

"I have fun with my friends. We meet every day after school and go bathing and play," says Rakhiya.

The floating clinic

"Although my dream is to start my own hospital when I grow up, I'd also like to work as a doctor at the floating clinic," says Rakhiya.

Here, boat school student Sumaya, 11, and her 4-year-old sister Choya are having their tonsils examined by Doctor Khalilur on one of Rezwan's floating clinics. There are six floating clinics that visit patients in the villages along the rivers where the boat schools are, and this clinic passes Sumaya's village every other week.





Rakhiya's big brother is out fishing, but he doesn't catch much for Rakhiya to deal with today.

→ drought. The flooding comes when we don't expect it, and it lasts for longer. I can see it happening with my own eyes, but we learn a lot about global warming and climate change at boat school as well."

Many children have to quit school in Bangladesh because the schools are destroyed by the flooding. And the paths and roads to the schools are

also destroyed, or end up under water, so no-one can get to school anyway.

"But it never affects us. Our school is on a boat that always floats on the water, no matter how high the river rises. We can carry on going to school during the monsoon, because we get picked up from home in the village by the boat in the morning, and then we're

dropped back home at the end of the school day. It doesn't matter if roads and paths get flooded. It's also much safer for girls to be picked up and dropped off this way. We can get into difficulties if we have to walk long distances to school, because there are some boys and men who aren't nice. Now my parents don't have to worry that something might happen to me, and they can let me go to school."

Wants to be a doctor

"Going to school is important. I want to be a doctor, so there's lots to learn. It just wouldn't be possible if I didn't go to school. I want to open a brand new hospital here in the village, where everyone can get help. My hospital won't be expensive, it will be completely free. My teacher at boat school saved me, which means it's possible for my dream to come true. I love her for that!" 🌐



Computers for the future

"We have computer studies at school every day. We learn to write and draw on the computer. Everyone needs to have these skills for future study or work," says Rakhiya, who gets help from her computer teacher Jahidul.

The computer runs on electricity generated by solar panels fitted to the roof of the school boat. The classroom's lights and fans are also powered this way.





Helping out

"I help mum with cooking and cleaning. I can cook rice, fried potatoes and tasty omelettes! We don't own any land, but when mum works in other people's fields and isn't at home, it's me who does the cooking. My big brother Bijoy goes to high school, but he helps with the fishing too. I love fish! But sometimes he doesn't catch anything. Then we just have rice and vegetables," says Rakhiya.



Rakhiya's climate list

"We learn a lot about climate change at boat school," says Rakhiya, showing her climate list:

What happens:

- Higher temperatures.
- Droughts.
- Glaciers and ice melt.
- More rain, at unusual times and lasting longer.
- More flooding, at unusual times and lasting longer.

Causes:

- Pollution from cars, planes and factories.
- Deforestation.
- Because we don't recycle rubbish properly.



"It's really bad! We need to start looking after our planet if we're going to survive,"
says Rakhiya.

Rakhiya, mum Saleha and big brother Bijoy outside the house that the family built when their old house was destroyed by flooding. Dad, Abul, works at a banana plantation a long way from the village, and their eldest brother, Rakibul, works at a textile factory in the capital Dhaka.



That's it for today!

"We have school for three hours a day, and I really like being here. At school I meet all my friends and I love it! My favourite subject is Bangla."



Jibon's home disappeared



Jibon's family outside the new house that dad built; dad, Gulzar, older brother, Jony, Jibon and mum, Ranjana.



"You need to wake up! The whole house is flooded, we have to go NOW!" shouted Jibon's mum as she tried to shake him into life. Like so many other landless people, Jibon's family lived in a simple mud building close to the river, which is the cheapest place to live.

“ It was late in the evening, and everyone had gone to bed when mum suddenly woke us up. Floodwater was rushing into the house. When I stood up, the water came right up to my waist. I was so afraid. Perhaps mostly of all the snakes that are in the water everywhere

when there's a flood. Being bitten by a snake can be fatal.”

Panic

"I panicked and couldn't stop crying, so mum lifted me up and ran. When we got to a little hill, we watched as the whole house went under the water and was swept away by the river. Mum and dad man-



Jibon feeds the cows that survived the flood.



Class against child marriage

"Both the teachers and the students at the boat schools campaign against child marriage, because girls suffer and are forced to quit school. It's wrong and unfair. There was this one time we managed to stop a marriage for a girl who was only 14. The whole class of 30 students went along with our teacher to the girl's family and explained to the parents that child marriage is wrong. In the end they decided to cancel the wedding, and it felt really good! I will never marry anyone who is under the age of 18," says Jibon.



Loves cricket

“I play cricket with my friends every day after school. I support Bangladesh of course, but unfortunately our neighbouring country India usually does better in the matches. And I hate that!” says Jibon, laughing.

aged to bring some money with them, but most of what little we owned disappeared. Two of our cows were dragged under the surface and drowned in the floodwater.

“We are landless, so we don’t have any land of our own. And the small strip of land we rented to grow grass for our cows was covered in water and destroyed. But we were lucky that the whole family survived. Because that night we thought we were going to die.”

Boat school helps

“After a few months with grandma and grandpa, dad had finished building the house we live in now. I like my new house. It’s higher up and further from the river, so I’m not so afraid that it will happen again. But I still have nightmares and sometimes I wake up sweating in the middle of the night.

“We’ve had to move three times in five years because of flooding. Every time it happens, we lose almost everything we own. We are often hungry. We only had dried rice to eat after the latest flooding. I asked mum for some fish with the rice, but she said we couldn’t afford it. We had nothing.

“It’s great for us that I get to go to boat school, as we’ve lost so much in the floods. Because everything’s free at boat school. The teaching, the notebooks, pens...everything! I’m in fifth grade now, and in the future I dream of becoming an engineer and building large bridges and buildings.”

Jibon, 11





Safe on the boat

Sabina loved going to boat school when she was younger. But she's 17 now, and there's no high school on the boats, so she goes to another school. But for three weeks she's back on the river at one of Rezwan's floating training schools for women.

“ I love being here. I meet friends and have fun. Nupur, who has been my best friend since junior boat school, is also doing this course. In fact we do everything together! It makes us braver and stronger, and gives us the chance to move about more freely. Like getting to high school in town. Otherwise it can be difficult for girls to do that in Bangladesh. It's not safe for a girl to be out alone in town or in other places. Men and boys shout out horrible things, insults. You can even get kidnapped, abducted and subjected to an assault like rape.”

needs to stop. Marriage should be a choice for everyone. And women and girls should be able to go anywhere and have the right to an education. We have to be able to express our opinions in the family, in the village and in society, and our opinions should be respected. I believe the whole of society would be better if girls' rights were respected. Boat school and the floating training school are safe places for girls. It feels great to be here! The rest of society should be like the boat schools. Then all women and girls would be safe and secure.” 🌐

Marriage must be a choice

“I really wish a lot of things were different in my country. For example, child marriage



Best friends Sabina (on the right) and Nupur.

Independent

“I'm doing this course to learn to sew, because I want to be a seamstress and have my own shop in the future. Once I've learned a profession I'll be able to look after myself, earn my own money and be independent. After all, my parents can't give me money forever!”

Dreams on Rezwan's boat school



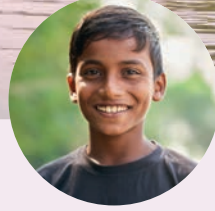
MONIRA, 12

GOOD AT: Sewing and embroidery.
FAVOURITE SUBJECT: BGS (Bangladesh & global studies), because I like learning about the world.
DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE: To be a doctor.



SAMAD, 12

GOOD AT: Fishing.
FAVOURITE SUBJECT: Bangla and listening to stories like 'The Elephant and the Fox'.
DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE: To be a policeman.



OMOR, 10

GOOD AT: Football! Messi is my idol.
FAVOURITE SUBJECT: BGS (Bangladesh & global studies), because we look at maps and learn about the world.
DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE: To be an engineer and build roads here in the village.



SIGMA, 13

GOOD AT: Various games.
FAVOURITE SUBJECT: Natural science, where I learn about animals, plants and the environment.
DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE: To be a doctor and help people living in poverty.



JIM, 10

GOOD AT: Studying and playing.
FAVOURITE SUBJECT: Natural science, where I learn about water and air pollution.
DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE: To become a teacher.



RASEL, 11

GOOD AT: Playing football. My favourite team is Argentina!
FAVOURITE SUBJECT: Natural science.
DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE: To own a large clothing factory.



SHIMLA, 15

GOOD AT: Cooking, particularly fish.
FAVOURITE SUBJECT: Bangla.
DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE: To be a doctor.



RATUL, 12

GOOD AT: Studying and doing my homework.
FAVOURITE SUBJECT: BGS (Bangladesh & global studies), where I learn about climate change.
DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE: To be a policeman.



RIMA, 11

GOOD AT: Going to the best school in the world!
FAVOURITE SUBJECT: Bangla.
DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE: To become a doctor and treat everyone in the village for free.



KEYA, 13

GOOD AT: Dancing.
FAVOURITE SUBJECT: Natural science, because we learn a lot about environmental issues.
DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE: To be like our teacher; she's so good and I really like her!

TEXT: ANDREAS LÖNN PHOTOS: JOHAN BERKE



Why is Cindy a nominee?

Cindy Blackstock has been nominated for her 30-year struggle 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 for tens of thousands of years before European settlers arrived. For over 100 years, children were taken from their families to schools where they would be forced to forget their language and their culture. Many became ill, and thousands of children died. To this day, Indigenous families are split up, and the children are poorer, have worse schools and health care.

THE WORK

Cindy works tirelessly to combat discrimination against Indigenous children, raise awareness and pursue legal cases. Indigenous children and other Canadian children write letters to the government and demonstrate for children's rights. Cindy faces government opposition, but she will never give up.

RESULTS AND VISION

Cindy has helped ensure that 165,000 First Nations children get better schools and other resources needed for a secure childhood. Other Indigenous children have also seen their rights strengthened. The government has apologised and must give Indigenous children everything they need to thrive. Together with elders, leaders and young people, Cindy and her organization continue to fight for children's rights.

Nominated Child Rights Hero Cindy Blackstock

68-83



In May 2021, 215 unmarked children's graves are discovered outside a closed school in Canada. Later, thousands more graves are found at other schools. Many politicians say they are shocked! But Cindy Blackstock isn't surprised. After almost 30 years of fighting for equal rights for Indigenous children, she knows that they have been subjected to injustices and violence for generations.

Cindy grew up in the huckleberry fields of northern Canada, where her father was a forest ranger. Many of her peers were sent to residential schools for Indigenous children, but she got to go to a normal school in the nearest town. Cindy was the only Indigenous child there.

Cindy belongs to the Gitksan First Nation, one of over 50 Nations with their own language that are part of the First Nations, one of Canada's three recognised Indigenous peoples.

When Cindy asked why there weren't more children like her at school, she was told that 'Indians', as they called her people, didn't care about

education. That they were lazy and would grow up to be drunks anyway. That's probably how Cindy would end up too, they said, and often used ugly and racist words to make her sad.

Dug graves

When Cindy was older, she found out what happened to Indigenous children in the



As a changemaker, Cindy helps fulfil children's rights and achieve the following Global Goals:

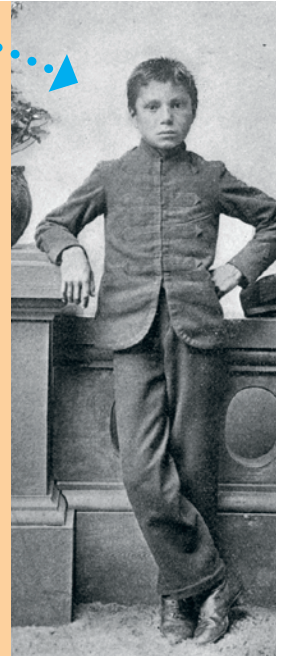
Goal 3: Good health. Goal 4: Quality education.
Goal 5: Gender equality. Goal 6: Clean water.
Goal 10: Reduced inequalities.



Children 're-educated'

Thomas Moore Keesick was eight years old when he was taken from his parents and placed in Regina Indian Industrial School. The teachers called him Number 22, because he was the 22nd pupil enrolled at the school. Thomas was a First Nations child, and these photos of him were taken a few years apart by the government's 'Office for Indian Affairs' to advertise residential schools. They wanted to show that they could 're-educate' Indigenous children, so they would more be like children with a European background. On the left, Thomas has plaits and wears traditional regalia. The photographer has put a pistol in his hand, to make Thomas look wild and dangerous. On the right, he has slicked down hair and wears a school uniform.

After a few years, Thomas developed tuberculosis, a dangerous lung condition that infected tens of thousands of children in residential schools. He was sent home to die, at the age of just 12.



terrible residential schools that for over a hundred years were run by churches and the Canadian government. They would grow up here far away from the 'bad influence' of their parents, and be made to forget their language and culture.

"Bad things happened to children there. Many never returned home. Some children even had to help dig the graves for friends who had died," explains Cindy. "You were punished for speaking your language. All the things that were special that your parents had given you were taken away. One school even had a homemade electric chair to punish the children

with. They wanted to change you into being someone else."

Violence and brainwashing

David Decontie is the same age as Cindy, but he never went to a normal school. First he was taken to St. Mary's residential school at just four years old. Three years later he was moved to Pointe-Bleue school.

"There were three priests on the front step, all dressed in black, but I couldn't understand a word of what they were saying, because it was in French. We had two months to learn French, or else we'd get hit or have soap shoved into our mouth. I got sexually abused there. Even today, I don't know who it was,

because my head was on the ground. There was a nun there who told me not to cry. She said men don't cry. It stayed in my mind for the longest time. The only time I cried was when my father died. They brainwashed us and showed films about 'cowboys and Indians'. The Indians were always the bad guys. I remember playing one day and I was shooting Indians."

Lost everything

"When I came home after nearly ten years, I was like a stranger within my own fam-

ily and no sense of belonging. I had lost my language and my culture. I drank and I tried to take my life ten times."

Now sober, David still struggles daily to get over his experiences.

"When my son was born I held him in my arms and told him, 'I will never send you away, you will grow up with your people.' I knew nothing about being a father, my wife taught me everything. I love being with my children and grandchildren. We learn about the old ways together and they help me re-learn the language, Algonquin."

Indigenous peoples in Canada

Indigenous peoples in the area that is now called Canada lived there for tens of thousands of years before settlers arrived, mainly from the UK and France. There are three distinct groups of Indigenous peoples in Canada. One of these are *First Nations*. There are more than 630 First Nation communities in Canada, representing more than 50 Nations and languages. Another Indigenous people are the *Inuit*, Indigenous people of the Arctic who speak the language Inuktitut. The third distinct Indigenous peoples are the *Métis* – people of mixed European and Indigenous ancestry.



David was the same age as these children, Kenneth and Gwenneth, when he was taken from his parents to residential school.





In 2021, 215 unmarked children’s graves were found outside Kamloops Indian school. Relatives and others travelled there to mourn and lay 215 tiny pairs of shoes in memory of the children.



A painted healing touchstone honours the buried children.

Truth will out

The Truth Commission wanted to remind people about what had been done to Indigenous people and share ideas on how everyone can help to make a change. The report gave details of terrible injustices; that the residential schools got far less money from the government than other schools in Canada, and lacked everything from trained staff, to food and books. Lessons were short because the children had to work as servants and in the fields and forest. Dangerous diseases spread quickly in the overcrowded classrooms and dormitories, particularly during the freezing winters. Some years, a quarter of the students died!

Once the truth has come out, the next step is reconciliation. Reconciliation means to forgive but not forget, try to get along and be fair and kind to everyone. It can take a long time.

Meeting survivors

Cindy trained as a social worker and started seeing families that were really struggling. Many mums and dads were suffering from the effects of what had happened to them, and to their own parents and grandparents, at residential schools. Like David, they didn’t know how to look after their own children. But instead of helping families stay together, the government continued to take the children away. When the last residential school closed at the end of the 1990s, children were instead placed in care or were adopted. They were often worse off where they ended up. Some children became so depressed they didn’t want to live any longer. Cindy had had

enough. She wanted to get justice for the children and see fundamental change throughout Canada.

“When you see unfairness, it’s your job to learn how and why things became unfair and then do your best to fix it,” says Cindy. “Once you do that learning, you’ll find that there’s other people already working on this and they’ll give you ideas on how you can do your part. And that’s really how I started. I saw that First Nations children are really special, just the way they are. They deserve good schools, proper health care and clean drinking water. And they deserve support to help their family deal with that hurt from residential schools.”

Cindy is standing up for the children!



Jordan River Andersson died in hospital instead of at home with his family, simply because he was a First Nations child. His family belonged to the Norway House Cree Nation.



On Valentine's Day, 14 February 2012, children celebrated history's first 'Have a Heart Day', and demonstrated outside parliament. They read out letters to the politicians and planted hearts in the ground, with messages about justice.

Challenging the government

Cindy became a founding member of the organization *First Nations Child and Family Caring Society*, which raises awareness and campaigns for children's rights. She also studied law and children's rights, and in 2007 things really kicked off! Cindy's organization and a group of Indigenous people took a complaint about the government to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, which is a kind of high court, and demanded that they stop discriminating against Indigenous children.

One of the children who has inspired Cindy is a little boy called Jordan River Anderson – a First Nations child who was born with a serious illness. Jordan had to stay in hospital until the age of two. Then the doctors said that he could move home to his family, as long as he had the medicine and carers he needed to make sure he was ok. But

Jordan's care was very expensive. "That's where the problems started," explains Cindy.

Battle over money

In Canada, children's care is usually paid for by the province in which they live. But First Nations children's care is paid for by the government. When Jordan was due to move back home, a dispute began between Manitoba province, where his family lived, and the Canadian government. They couldn't agree on who was to pay for Jordan's care. It took such a long time that Jordan became ill again. He never got to go home to his family, and died at the age of just five at the hospital.

Many were ashamed, and a new rule was created in Jordan's memory. 'Jordan's principle' would make sure that what happened to him would never happen again. Yet still, it soon started happening to more Indigenous children. Cindy wanted the Human Rights Tribunal to tell

the government to follow the law and give all children the care they needed.

The Canadian government was totally against the tribunal taking up the case. They sent their lawyers to the court to protest and argue, which delayed the case for several years. Cindy spent a lot of time in court, but she also travelled across Canada to ask for support. When people learned about what was going on, they wanted to help! Thousands of children started writing letters to the prime minister to demand justice. Some came to the courtroom, and sang and supported Cindy and the others.

A win for the children!

It took nine years until the Human Rights Tribunal to announce their decision, in 2014. Everyone celebrated,

Spirit Bear comes everywhere with Cindy. Judges and lawyers in the courtroom aren't used to meeting soft toys.

because the children won! The tribunal said that the government had discriminated against First Nations children and had to follow the law.

"Children can really make a difference when they come together for what's right," says Cindy.

To this day, many Indigenous children are still lacking in everything from clean water, to good schools. Cindy continues to fight cases, partly to make sure everyone who lost their childhood in residential schools gets financial compensation and support. Cindy will not give up until every child matters! 🌐





The painting 'The Scream', by Cree artist Kent Monkman, shows how Indigenous children were forcibly taken to residential schools by police, and churches.

Kent Monkman (Pikishan/Anishinabe/Cree), The Scream, 2017. Baner Art Museum. Native Arts Acquisition Fund and fund from Loren G. Lipson, M. D. 2017-18. © Kent Monkman. Photography Courtesy: Baner Art Museum.

Life at the residential schools

End of family life

The Canadian government decided that Indigenous children had to be taken away from their mums and dads before they 'learned to become savages like their parents'. It wasn't long before there were hardly any children left in Indigenous communities that parents could hug and care for.



Canada Archives

From love to loneliness.



"A lot of the time the food we had was rancid, full of maggots."

Andrew Paul

Sent to their deaths

As early as 1907, newspapers in Canada were reporting that children 'died like flies' at residential schools. They died for all kinds of reasons, including lung diseases, malnutrition, workplace accidents and fires. So lots of people were aware of what was happening, but almost no one, neither politicians nor ordinary people, did anything to stop it.

"I was a little flower that was uprooted and transplanted into another world."

Jeanette Basile Laloche



Many of the teachers were priests, monks and nuns who were told to force the Christian faith on the children and make them forget their spiritual beliefs. In recent years the Pope, the head of the Catholic Church, and many other church leaders have asked for forgiveness for all the pain they caused. Not everyone has accepted those apologies.



Chanie Wenjack



Many children were forced to work hard because the schools had no money.

Tried to run away

Chanie Wenjack was 12 when he and two friends ran away from their residential school in 1966. Some said that Chanie wanted to meet his dad. That he felt alone. Chanie's sister thought he ran away after being sexually abused.

It was common for children to run away from the tough residential schools. Running away was dangerous. Those who were caught were severely punished. Those who managed to escape were often injured in accidents, or got frostbite and lost fingers and toes. Many died.

Doctor protested

Peter Henderson Bryce was a doctor who was sent by the government in 1907 to inspect the infamous residential schools for Indigenous children. He was shocked, and wrote a report saying that the overcrowded buildings were causing deadly diseases to spread rapidly among the underfed, worn-out children. The doctor also wrote a list of everything that needed to be done to save lives. But the government didn't want to listen. Instead they gave the schools even less money. The doctor was forbidden from talking

Chanie and his friends walked for eight hours on the first day. They stayed the night with the friends' uncle, who had a cottage in the forest. The next day they were to continue in different directions. The uncle advised Chanie to follow the train tracks and ask the railway workers for food on the way.

After a while it got colder and started snowing. Chanie was freezing in his thin jacket, and didn't have any food, just a few matches in a glass jar. He survived for 36 hours.

about what he'd seen and was later forced out of his job. He then wrote a book: 'A national crime', in which he blamed the government and the churches for the fact that children were dying. Yet still the government continued to send children to these dangerous schools for several decades.

Today, Peter Henderson Bryce is regarded as a hero. He stood up for children's rights when hardly anyone else either wanted or dared to.

"... there's nothing out here that could make me happy and feel like it was home."

Clara Quisess

When Chanie's body was found by the railway track, it attracted a lot of attention in Canada. For the first time, the politicians were forced to carry out a proper investigation into the residential schools' way of treating Indigenous children.

Attempt to eradicate

After the country of Canada was created in 1867, the government established a law, the 'Indian Act' and a government office for 'Indian Affairs' to control the Indigenous peoples. From 1920, the schools were compulsory for Indigenous children aged 5-15, and many Indigenous communities were emptied of children. For over 100 years, 150,000 children were taken to residential schools run by churches on behalf of the government. The idea was to teach the children the 'white man's way of being and thinking'. The children were given English or French names. They weren't allowed to speak their own language or feel pride in their culture. Because the residential schools received far less money than other schools in Canada, there was a shortage of everything from food, to medicines and school books. Many children became ill and died. It was a way for Canada to try and wipe out, or eradicate the culture of the Indigenous peoples. But despite all the damage and sorrow they caused, they didn't succeed. Indigenous peoples are still there, fighting for their rights and a better future.



Peter Hederson Bryce is an important role model for Cindy. She often visits his memorial and grave. Children can leave messages and drawings for the doctor in the orange mailbox.

Shannen's dream came

Shannen dreamed of a proper school in her little town of Attawapiskat in northern Canada. But instead she had a classroom in ice-cold portable trailers, on contaminated ground. So Shannen told the minister responsible at that time what he should do, and became the leader of *Students helping Students*, the biggest ever child-led campaign in Canada.



To get to Attawapiskat, which means “people of the parting of the rocks” in Shannen’s language, Cree, you have to travel as far north as you can and then take a small plane. There are hardly any roads here, apart from in the winter when the lakes and rivers freeze, and cars and buses can travel on the ice.

Shannen Koostachin was a *First Nations* child of the Cree community. When she looked up to the night sky and saw the stars, it was exactly like

her forefathers had done for thousands of years. That made her happy, but she was also often sad because she couldn’t go to a good school.

The elders had been passing on knowledge for thousands of years from their forefathers, people and animals who had lived before them. But to be a lawyer, which was Shannen’s dream, she needed a good education. And she wasn’t getting that in Attawapiskat.

Contaminated school

A few decades before Shannen was born, Attawapiskat got its first proper school, with bright classrooms, a gym and colourful walls. Everyone was happy. But before long, the children and teachers started getting headaches, and they felt tired and unwell. The parents complained, but it took twenty years before the authorities investigated the ground underneath the school and found a leaking pipe there. It must have cracked when the school was being built. Tens of thousands of litres of foul-smelling fuel had leaked out over the years, contaminating the ground and making the children sick. The school was closed, and grey portacabins were put up in the schoolyard. The politicians said that it was a temporary solution, but nine years on the children were still waiting for their new school.

Mice and mould

By the time Shannen started school, the poorly insulated cabins were already in a bad state. The winters in Attawapiskat are extremely cold, and sometimes ice

SHANNEN

DREAMED OF: Safe and comfy schools.
WANTED TO BE: A lawyer.
DIDN'T LIKE: Broken promises.
NICKNAME: Shan.
LIKED: Dancing.
LOVED: Her family and her friends.

would form on the walls inside the classroom. Shannen and the other children had to put on thick jackets, hats and gloves several times a day when they were changing classroom or going to the toilet. When there was a power cut, like after a severe storm, there was no heating or light.

The teachers tried their best, but they didn’t have enough books or materials, because the school wasn’t given anywhere near enough money by the government. It got so bad that children as young as nine started to drop out of school. Shannen knew why:

“It’s hard to feel pride when your classrooms are cold, and the mice run over our lunches.

Life in Attawapiskat

In Shannen’s little hometown of Attawapiskat there’s now a lovely new school, thanks to Shannen’s dream. And a new youth centre. But there are still lots of problems. Some families live in dilapidated houses, tents or sheds without insulation, electricity or clean water. The tap water contains hazardous chemicals, so the town’s inhabitants have to fetch their own drinking water. Now even that water is showing traces of toxic chemicals. Sometimes the electricity network and sewage system break down. On occasions the town is flooded by stinking sewage water and sludge. The tough way of life and lack of hope in the future makes both children and adults unhappy. Some drink alcohol or take drugs. And some even take their own lives. It’s far more common for a child from a First Nations reserve to commit suicide than in other parts of Canada. Many, including teachers, parents and leaders in Attawapiskat and other reserves, are fighting hard to help children who are suffering from depression and to prevent more suicides.



true, but ...

Winter sun in Attawapiskat in northern Canada



It's hard to feel like you could have a chance to grow up to be somebody important when you don't have proper resources like libraries and science labs. You know that kids in other communities have proper schools. So you begin to feel as if you are a child who doesn't count for anything ... Imagine a child who feels they have no future even at that young age. School is a time for hopes and dreams of the future. Every kid deserves this!"

The politicians promised to build a new school, but year after year they broke their promises. So Shannen and her friends launched a school campaign. First they held a demonstration with signs and banners in temperatures of minus 40! Yet no one outside their little town seemed to care. So then they started posting on social media, including YouTube. They showed the situation in their school and urged all the children in Canada to write protest letters to the government. Soon letters started pouring in from children



Sometimes it's minus 40 and the children are freezing.

demanding change and equal opportunities for *First Nation* children.

Cancelled class trip

One day, the elders in Attawapiskat received a letter from the minister in Canada's government who was responsible at the time for the schools in the reserve. He was the one who had received all the protest letters from children. But his message was that the government did not have any money to pay for a new school.

Shannen and her friends lost patience at that point. Their class had saved up for a fun end-of-term trip, but the children decided instead to

Life skills

Shannen's dad Andrew had spoken about the Cree people's history and culture since she was little. She knew that her people and other indigenous people were living in Canada thousands of years before the English and French seized the indigenous people's land.

"He taught me to look up to the Seven Grandfathers. Love, Respect, Truth, Honesty, Humility, Bravery and Wisdom," explained Shannen. The Seven Grandfathers is about what's most important in life, and how to treat our fellow human beings, particularly children. The different characters are often represented by a special animal. Here's a shortened version:



Love

To love others unconditionally and cope with difficult times, you have to love yourself, gain knowledge and talk to others.

Respect

Respect all living things and find a balance between what you want and what Mother Earth can give. Do what you can to make a difference.

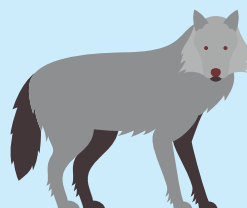


Truth

Always speak the truth and be kind and compassionate towards others. Always be yourself, love and respect your true nature.

Honesty

Always be honest with yourself and with others, and walk through life with integrity, valuing the efforts of yourself and those around you.



Humility

Know that you are a sacred part of creation. Live selflessly, not selfishly, carry pride in your people and praise the accomplishments of all.

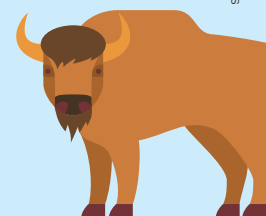
Bravery

Believe in yourself and your convictions. Find your inner strength so you can face your fears and be a better person, for a better family and community.



Wisdom

The teaching of wisdom will allow you to use your inherited gifts wisely and to recognize your differences and those of others in a kind and respectful way. Wisdom nurtures your ability to listen with clarity and a sound mind so this teaching will focus on how to listen.





Shannen told the crowds about the government's broken promises and her dream of having a safe and comfy school.

→ travel to Canada's capital city, Ottawa, to explain to the politicians why their school was important. To their surprise, the minister agreed to see them. He invited them to a meeting on *National Indigenous Peoples Day*: an annual day to celebrate and recognise First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. Shannen saw this as a positive sign. Maybe they would get some good news...

Meeting the minister

Shannen was 13 when she travelled to the capital, accompanied by some of the elders and parents, who went with Shannen and her friends Solomon and Chris to the grand parliament building. When they entered the minister's room, he put his hand out and said: "How do you like my office?"

Shannen replied immediately that she'd be happy to

have a classroom as nice as this. Then the children tried to explain why they were there, but the minister interrupted them straight away and said: "The answer is no"! The government had no intention of building a new school in Attawapiskat.

Everyone looked at one another in shock. The elders started to cry. Shannen cried too, but mostly out of anger. She looked the minister right in the eyes and said the children would never give up!

Then they sadly filed out. The elders were still crying. All their lives they'd experienced broken promises from those in power.

Marching for change

Some distance away from the parliament building, thousands of people had gathered from all over Canada to march in a procession in support of the rights of indigenous peoples. The children and elders from Attawapiskat joined the procession; some were holding up signs, while others played drums and sang. Many were dressed in their regalia, large head-dresses, dresses with little jingling bells and beaded tunics and moccasins.

Several speeches were made outside the parliament building. The organisers



Member of parliament Charlie Angus fought alongside the children and Cindy Blackstock to make Shannen's dream a reality.

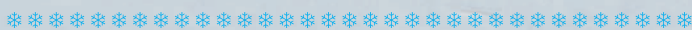
asked if any of the children from Attawapiskat could share what had happened in the meeting with the minister. It was decided that Shannen would speak. At first she panicked, but one of the adults calmed her down and said: "Shannen, this is the moment where you need to be heard. Just speak from the heart. You'll know what to say."

Shannen took the microphone and said: "Hello, everybody, my name is Shannen Koostachin, and I am from the Attawapiskat First Nation. Today I am sad because Mr. Chuck Strahl said he didn't have the money to



Shannen's advice

- Stand up for your rights.
- Never give up hope.
- Ignore people who are putting you down.
- Tell people what you want... what you need!
- Think about the future and follow your dreams.



The new school in Attawapiskat has a symbol that shows Shannen dancing the Fancy Shawl dance in her blue regalia.



Children from across Canada got behind Shannen's dream, wrote letters to the government and demonstrated.

build our school ... But I didn't believe him."

The crowds roared and carried on cheering as Shannen explained why she and her friends were there, and that they would never give up. Of the minister, she said: "I could tell he was nervous".

Afterwards, Shannen was interviewed by newspapers, TV and radio, and she said the campaign would never stop until all First Nations children had proper schools. She kept her promise. Shannen became the leader of the biggest child-led campaign in Canada's history: *Students Helping Students*.

Terrible accident

When Shannen was 14, she had to leave her family and move 600 km away to the nearest high school. Her older sister Serena was already there. Shannen had to work hard to catch up with the other students. They hadn't gone to school in dilapidated portacabins, and they were way ahead in many subjects. But Shannen didn't miss a single day of school.

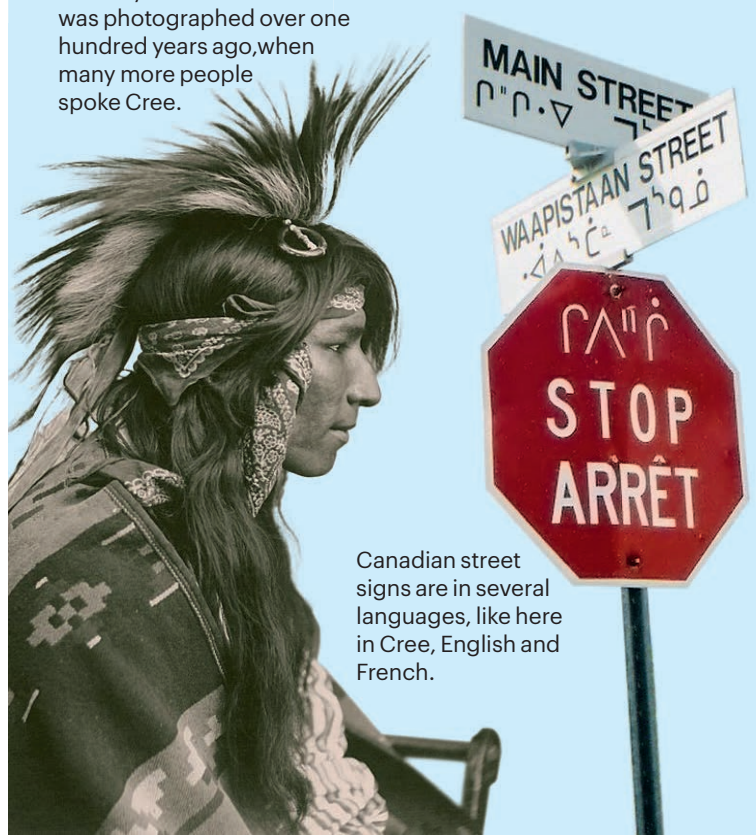
On weekends and in the holidays, she, Serena and other children continued to speak at major gatherings and ask for support. They spoke of the mice, the cold and the shortage of school books. The



Endangered languages

Cree, as it's called in English, is one of the indigenous languages in Canada that is in danger of dying out. It belongs to the linguistic family of *Algonquin* and comes in many variants. For generations, children in Cree-speaking areas were separated from their parents at a young age. Forced to live at boarding schools, they were punished if they spoke Cree. When they went home for a short time in the summer, they had forgotten their language and couldn't speak to their families. For every year that passed, fewer and fewer people were left who could speak Cree. Today, more and more people, children and adults, want to learn their languages. Elders, schools and communities fight hard to save the languages before it's too late.

This boy from the Cree Nation was photographed over one hundred years ago, when many more people spoke Cree.



Canadian street signs are in several languages, like here in Cree, English and French.



Children from the little town of Moosonee want Shannen's dream to become a reality for all First Nations children.

Shannen's story is told to Spirit Bear in a new film that gives more children the chance to get to know her.



SPIRIT BEAR: FISHING FOR KNOWLEDGE, CATCHING DREAMS © FIRST NATIONS CHILD & FAMILY CARING SOCIETY AND SPOTTED FAWN PRODUCTIONS

→ support steadily grew, and Shannen dared to believe that her dreams might come true. Then something terrible happened.

After a year at high school, Shannen was travelling in a minivan that crashed into a big transport truck. She died at the age of just 15.

Children all over Canada were devastated, but they were ready to fight. They had no intention of letting Shannen's dreams die with her. With the help of Cindy Blackstock and her organization, and member of parliament Charlie Angus, a new campaign was launched. It was called 'Shannen's dream', to honour her memory. Shannen's family, friends and the little town where she grew up also got behind the children's campaign.

To the UN

Almost two years after Shannen's death, six youngsters travelled from First Nations to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva, Switzerland. One of them was Shannen's child-

hood friend, 16-year-old Chelsea from Attawapiskat First Nation. Cindy Blackstock was also with them. She had pushed for the children themselves to have the opportunity to tell the committee about their difficult school years in Attawapiskat, and about the violations of their rights. In the UN building, the children got to talk to a group of experts, who listened carefully. Everyone was sad that Shannen couldn't be there, but pleased that experts in children's rights were taking them seriously.

Soon after, a proposal was adopted by politicians in the Canadian House of Commons to make 'Shannen's dream' a reality. A law was created that would guarantee the right to a good education for First Nations children as well. After the vote, their success was celebrated with Shannen's family, who had travelled to the capital to be there at this historic moment. Her dad Andrew made a speech. He began in the Cree language, then switched to English.

"Shannen was a special gift, it was an honour to be her father," said Andrew. "I always thought I was a teacher for her, but she taught me a lot of things, and she started reaching out to people ... When the young people speak, they have power because they're so innocent, they're so strong...".

A new school

On the day that Shannen would have graduated from high school, work began on building a new school in

Attawapiskat. It opened two years later, and above the entrance a sign in big letters reads: SHANNEN'S DREAM.

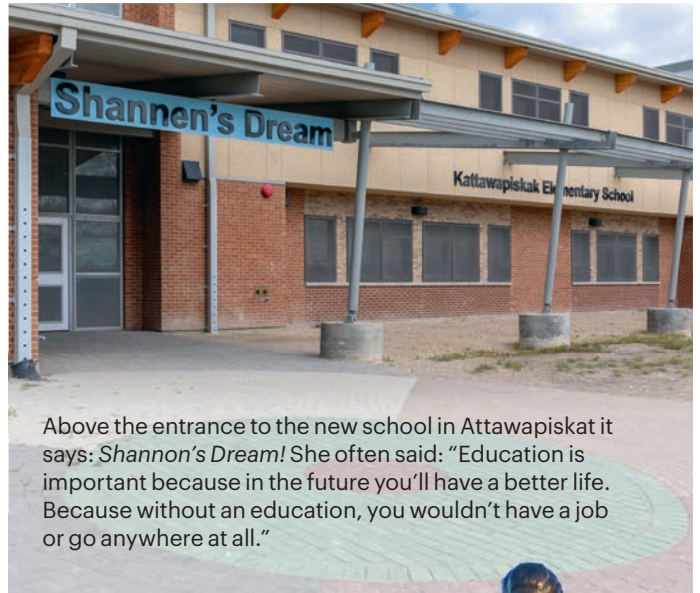
Children in Canada continue to write letters to the government, because there are still lots of First Nations students who need better schools. Despite the law based on Shannen's dream, the process of giving all children the education they deserve is slow. 🌐



Shannen's father Andrew and her friend Chelsea (in the foreground) were present when Canada's parliament voted to make Shannen's dream a reality.

Education for all?

In Canada, children's education is paid for by the provinces. But schools for First Nations children on the reserves are paid for by the Canadian government. Reserves are areas of land that the Canadian government forced First Nations people onto many years ago, because the colonisers wanted to keep the best land for themselves. Today, many First Nations children in Canada live on reserves, and just 4 out of 10 finish high school. The government gives far less money to the reserve schools compared with what the provinces give to schools for other children. That's why many First Nations schools are lacking in things like books and computers.



Above the entrance to the new school in Attawapiskat it says: *Shannen's Dream!* She often said: "Education is important because in the future you'll have a better life. Because without an education, you wouldn't have a job or go anywhere at all."



The tap water in Attawapiskat contains traces of chemicals, so residents have to fetch water from a drinking-water station.



Children playing hockey in Attawapiskat.

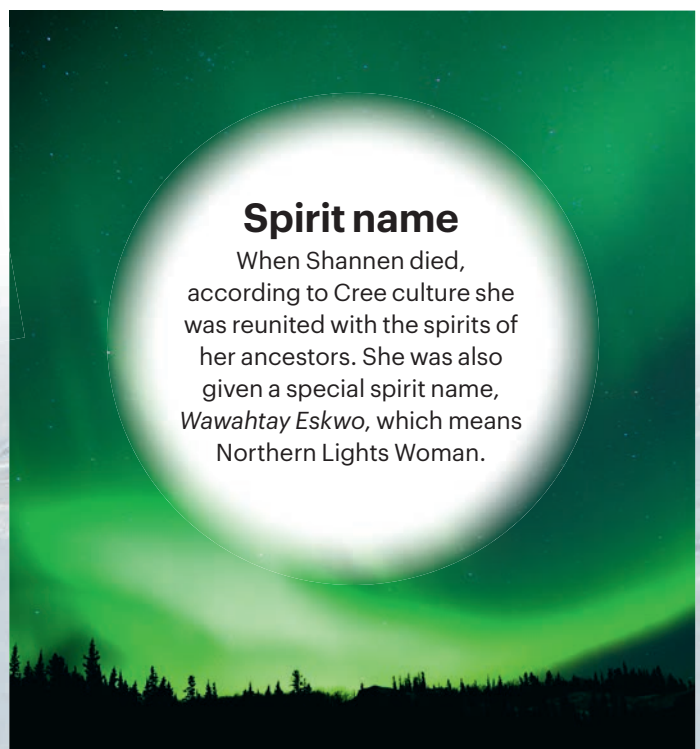


Shannen's cousin Jules raised money for a bronze statue of Shannen.



Shannen's message

"Never give up. You get up, pick up your books and keep walking in your moccasins." (a type of First Nations footwear!)



Spirit name

When Shannen died, according to Cree culture she was reunited with the spirits of her ancestors. She was also given a special spirit name, *Wawahtay Eskwo*, which means Northern Lights Woman.



TEVE RUSSELL/TORONTO STAR VIA GETTY IMAGES

Storytelling through dance

The land learned the hoop dance from elder dancers, who showed him how to tell stories using large hoops to create shapes representing animals and nature. Dancers used to use hoops made of willow, but The land has given the dance a modern twist with his luminous hula hoops.

"I'm now good enough to teach the dance to younger children. It's a way for me to give back!"



Dancing for the future

Every year, girls and women from Canada's Indigenous communities go missing. Some are found dead, others are never found. But things are starting to change, thanks to activists like The land Kicknosway. He uses everything from dance, to Instagram to bring about justice.

When The land was little, he often went with his mum to meetings at which people showed pictures of their 'stolen sisters' who had gone missing. They would light candles, hold ceremonies and make speeches. When he was nine years old, he asked his mum:

"What happens to the children when their mothers disappear?"

His mum replied that they needed help with everything from food, to clothing and comfort. It was also important for more people in Canada to be aware of the injustices, so they could tell

politicians to give Indigenous girls and women better protection and support.

Finding out more

The land also asked his Auntie Bridget, who lives in the First Nations reserve of Kitigan Zibi. When her own mum Gladys was killed, Bridget started an organization that fights for missing and murdered girls and women.

The land often got to sing at her protest meetings.

"Auntie Bridget asked me to sing in memory of the missing and murdered, and to give strength to others," explains The land.

Bridget told him about Maisy and Shannon, two teenage girls who disappeared after a school dance in Kitigan Zibi. The family reported them missing to the police, but it was two weeks

before the police even started looking. Maisy and Shannon are still missing.

Gets an idea

Bridget said that it's important to fight back.

"Whatever we go through, and whatever obstacles we meet, we have to keep moving forward, putting one foot in

Maisy's mum Laurie (left) fights to make sure no one forgets her missing daughter and her friend Shannon.



Many cheered when The land ran for missing and murdered girls and women..

front of the other," she told Theland. That gave him an idea. He liked running, and you have to put one foot in front of the other for that.

"I'm going to run across Canada to raise awareness and money for the children!" said Theland.

"Canada is a very big country," said his mum. "That would take months!"

So Theland decided to run from the capital city Ottawa, where he lives, to his Auntie Bridget in Kitigan Zibi, which is about 130 kilometres. He started training and also finding out more about the missing and murdered. He wanted to share their stories with everyone he met on his way, and tell everyone that thousands had disappeared in the past 30 years, nobody knew the exact number. It was six times more common for Indigenous girls and women to be affected than others in Canada. One major reason was that injustices carried out against Indigenous people had led to both grief and poverty, but also that many saw girls and women from Indigenous communities as having less worth.

And he's off

Theland was 11 years old when he started his run to Kitigan Zibi.

"I put one foot in front of the other, just like Auntie Bridget told me."

Lots of others ran sections of the route with Theland. They told everyone they met



Powwow power!

"Powwows are like medicine for our people," explains Theland. He has danced at powwows since he learned to walk. Friends and family gather, celebrating with traditional music and dance, food, handicrafts and healing ceremonies.

For a long time, the Canadian government banned powwows in an attempt to eradicate the culture of Indigenous peoples. When the fight for the rights of Indigenous peoples gained support in the 1960s, powwows became a way of demanding justice and strengthening their culture. Non-Indigenous people are almost always welcome to visit a powwow, as long as they show respect.



Watch Theland dance and much more on Instagram and TikTok @the_landk

A young Theland being taught how to dance by an elder dancer.

about the missing and murdered girls, particularly about Maisy and Shannon. Everyone promised to pass the information on, and some ran with Theland for part of the way. They used a system where you only ran as far as you were able, so everyone would manage the whole route.

On the third day, Theland had a bad stomach ache.

"It was terrible, I wanted to run. But the others told me to rest for a day, we'll do it for you! The next day I could run again!"

Finally, after six days, Theland arrived in Kitigan Zibi.

"I had no idea there would be so many people cheering for us for the final kilometres

up to Auntie Bridget's house, and they had a big party. It felt like I'd won an Olympic gold medal! And powerful that so many wanted justice for the victims and their families."

Step by step

Since that first time, Theland has continued to run for missing and murdered girls every year. He highlights injustices, both historical and those happening today, and keeps traditions alive in various ways, like showing his almost 100,000 Instagram followers everything from dance, to how to do plaits.

"It's a way of giving back," says Theland. 🌐

Theland with his parents Elaine and Vince, survivors from the Sixties Scoop when Indigenous children were separated from their families.

Separated families

Theland has always gone with his mum to protest meetings and talks. Here they are at Canada's parliament a long time ago! Mum Elaine was taken from her parents and grew up in a family that knew nothing about her culture.

"I'm one of the first in my family who got to grow up with my mum and dad in a safe home," says Theland.



ELLIOT FERGUSON/THE WHIG-STANDARD/POSTMEDIA NETWORK



Spirit Bear's voice

Cindy Blackstock and the Caring Society have made several animated films and books about Spirit Bear. In the films, Theland provides the voice for Spirit Bear.

"Cindy is a huge role model for me. She's a voice for so many, and it sparks a fire in me and other young people. You feel like if she can, so can I!"

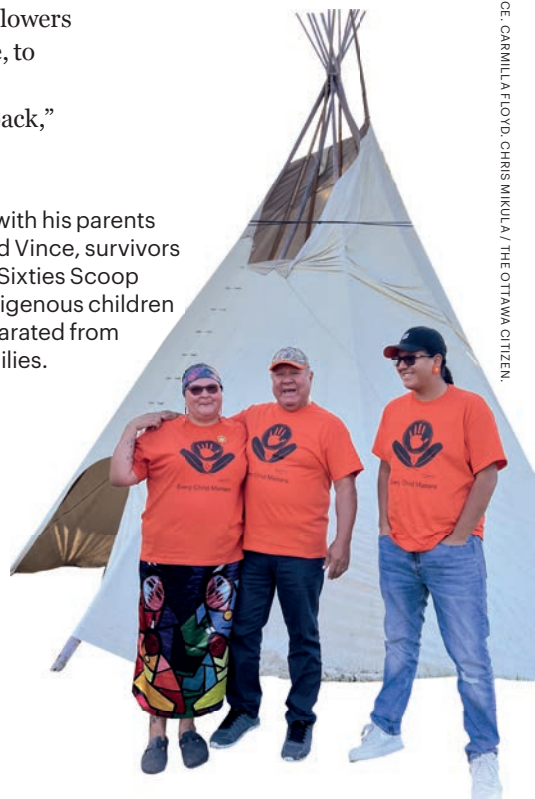


PHOTO: CARROLL A. FOOD PHOTO: ROD MACIVOR OTTAWA CITIZEN/CANWEST NEWS SERVICE. CARROLL A. FOOD. CHRIS MIKULAJ THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

“We’re still here!”



Wade advises other children to always be themselves, and not to worry about people who try to put them down.

Odeshkan has a bluejay on his cap that reminds him of his grandmother. “We believe that she’ll come back to Earth as a bluejay and watch over us!”

“I’m glad that we have a great school where we live,” says Wade, 14. “In lots of other reserves they have to travel long distances to get to a shop or be able to go to high school.”

One day, when Wade arrived at school, he heard that the students had to stay indoors. Several bears had been spotted nearby.

“A bear was sitting in a tree next door to my neighbour,” says his friend Odeshkan, 13. “It was scary, I was worried about my dogs.”

But despite the wild bears, Wade and Odeshkan love living close to nature and being able to fish and hunt.

“When the lake freezes in winter, we go skating and play hockey on the ice,” says Wade.

He and Odeshkan love ice hockey, Canada’s national sport. Wade wants to be a professional ice hockey player or personal trainer. Odeshkan, who has had several film roles, wants to be an actor or a politician.

Self-governing

The boys are members of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg Nation, which governs its reserve. Instead of a local government commissioner, they have a Chief and a Council that makes the decisions.

“We study the usual subjects at school, but we also learn about our culture and our language,” says Wade.

There are lots of healing herbs and trees growing on the land around the school. Wade found out about these from his great grandmother Barbara and great grandfather Morris.

“They teach me to speak Algonquin, and about our cer-

emonies. Some of the older people burn cedar, sage or tobacco every day to cleanse themselves with the smoke in a practice called smudging.”

When Odeshkan’s family goes hunting, they always place a little tobacco on the ground and say a prayer if they shoot an animal.

“According to our tradition, everything and everyone is treated with love and respect. We thank nature and the animal for giving us food,” Wade agrees.

Lost knowledge

Many of the boys’ older relatives were sent to residential schools when they were little.

“The schools were supposed to ‘kill the Indian in the child,’” says Wade. “When my relatives came home, they couldn’t even speak to their parents. I’d feel completely lost. Some people say: ‘Forget that, it was a long time ago.’ But I’m never going to forget. I’m grateful that they survived, because I wouldn’t be here otherwise.”

“I just don’t understand how they could do that to children,” says Odeshkan.

“Everyone in Canada needs to learn about Indigenous peoples and our history. If we work together, we can build a better future. But I’m still proud that our people managed to keep our culture and our language alive. We’re still here!” 🌐

First Nation elders teach the children about natural medicine.



Dancing and drumming!

“I love dancing and drumming, and I take every opportunity to share our culture,” says Odeshkan.



Culture on the curriculum

On culture days at Kikinamadinan school, elders and other community members come and talk about everything from history and traditions, to how to prepare a moose hide. The students learn and share their own experiences of hunting and trapping game, fishing, about handicrafts and traditional food, and singing, dancing and drumming.

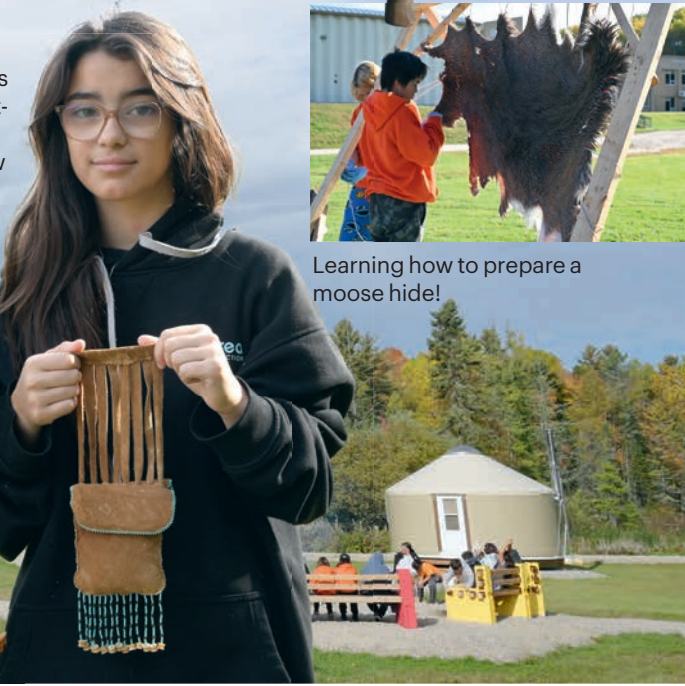


Gemma has made a little leather pouch for storing healing herbs and plants.

Zoe, with an old leather bag. It has a secret compartment that only those in the know can find!



Learning how to prepare a moose hide!



A First Nations canoe hanging on the school wall.

Orange memories!

Every year, Cindy and all the others who are fighting for the rights of Indigenous peoples celebrate *Orange Shirt Day* on 30 September.

Children in Kitigan Zibi remembered the children hurt in residential schools by forming a sacred circle around a memorial. Hundreds of pairs of children's shoes that had previously been left outside Canada's parliament were buried at the memorial site.

Orange Shirt Day

Orange Shirt Day started after Phyllis Webstad, a survivor, spoke about when she was sent to residential school at the age of six. Phyllis was so proud of her new orange shirt, given to her by her grandmother to wear at school. But as soon as she arrived, they took the shirt away from her, and Phyllis never got it back.

"The colour orange has always reminded me of that and how my feelings didn't matter, how no one cared and how I felt like I was worth nothing," says Phyllis.

On *Orange Shirt Day*, everyone helps heal the wounds from residential schools with dance, song and ceremonies. The message is that *Every child matters*.



Naturally, Spirit Bear is there on *Orange Shirt Day*.

Phyllis wasn't allowed to keep her new shirt.



Students from the school at Kitigan Zibi form a sacred circle.



© TEXT: CARMILLA FLOYD, POSTMEDIA.

Why is Minh Tú a nominee?

Minh Tú is being nominated for her almost 40-year long struggle for orphaned children and for children who cannot grow up with their families.

THE CHALLENGE

People in Vietnam today are suffering from the after-effects of several decades of war. Many lost everything they owned and were injured and 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.

THE WORK

Minh Tú supports the children who live at Duc Son Pagoda by offering a place of safety, love, play, and by providing medicine. Many get help obtaining their birth certificate and are given a name, so they can start school. They are provided with school materials, uniforms, and help to go on to higher education. Differently abled children get special support. When possible, Minh Tú helps children to be reunited with their families. Minh Tú wants all children to learn to respect one another and be themselves.

RESULTS & VISION

For 40 years the 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 offer shade and nourishment to others.

Nominated Child Rights Hero

Thích Nu Minh Tú

84-97



“Children are my saplings that I give sun and water to every day, so they can grow into trees that offer shade and nourishment to others. I am over 70, but I still feel like a child. That’s probably why I love them so much,” says Minh Tú. The terrible things she saw during the Vietnam War led to her becoming a Buddhist nun and devoting her life to helping vulnerable children.

Minh Tú grew up during a war in Vietnam that carried on for several decades. Before the war, many in North Vietnam fought for almost ten years against France. After that the country was divided into North and South Vietnam and a 20-year war began, with the US help-

ing South Vietnam. In the end, the war was won by the North Vietnamese.

Becoming a nun

Every other week, Minh Tú’s family visited a Buddhist temple, or pagoda, and prayed. Minh Tú loved how peaceful it was there. All talk

outside the pagoda was of war.

One day, Minh Tú told her parents that she wanted to become a nun.

“No, you can’t,” said her dad.

“Why not? I love being there,” said Minh Tú.

“You know you have to



As a changemaker, Minh Tú helps fulfil children’s rights and achieve the following Global Goals:

Goal 2: Zero hunger. Goal 3: Good health and well-being. Goal 4: Quality education. Goal 10: Equal rights.



Min Tú counts all the children in before they board the pagoda's school buses.

study for many years to become a nun," said her mum.

"Yes, but I like reading," said Minh Tú.

She kept nagging and studied a lot at home. In the end, her parents said she had to quit school because she was just studying all the time.

But Minh Tú didn't give up. She borrowed books and carried on reading and studying at home.

Then her mum said she could start school again.

"Your dad and I wanted to

test you, to see if you were serious," said her mum.

Minh Tú was so happy! She put all her effort into becoming a nun.

The orphaned children

The war was now getting closer to Minh Tú's home city of Huế, which was right on the border between North and South Vietnam. When the battle for the city began on 31 January 1968, Minh Tú, who was now aged 21, volunteered to help the injured and those affected. She learned how to

give medical treatment and support those who had lost their families.

When the battle ended on 3 March 1968, the city of Huế was left in ruins. Tens of thousands of people had been killed and many children had lost their parents.

The following year, Minh Tú passed the exam to be a nun. She was sent to serve at one of Huế's larger pagodas on the edge of the city. One of her first jobs was to help look after the hundreds of children who were living at the pago-

da's children's home, and who had lost their parents in the fighting. Meanwhile outside the pagoda walls, the war continued for another six years.

The nuns helped out at the city's hospitals and visited people in parts of the city and villages that had been destroyed by bombing. They gave them food, water and health care. They helped people who were trying to escape the fighting. Many had lost everything. Minh Tú prayed every day for the war to end. She didn't want to see any more fighting or suffering.



What Minh Tú does for children

- Takes in orphaned children and children whose parents cannot take care of them.
- Gives the children love, food, medicine and the opportunity to play.
- Makes sure the children get birth certificates, names and the chance to start school.
- Helps differently abled children get the equipment and support they need.
- Pays for the children's schooling and through university.
- Gives the children school materials and a school uniform.
- Teaches all the children to swim.
- Buys a motorcycle for older children and young adults who have to travel far from the pagoda to get to work or university.
- Helps those children whose parents have disappeared to try and find them.

War ends

When the war came to an end in 1975, the country united. There were many bombs and mines left lying in the coun-



How the children get their names

Many of the children who come to the Duc Son pagoda and children's home do not have names. When the nuns apply for birth certificates and identity documents with the local authorities, they name the children according to their personalities. For example, Thien means 'good person'. For surnames, girls are called 'Kieu' and boys 'Cu'.



→tryside and rice fields. Many farmers and children were killed or seriously injured in explosions.

During the war, the US had sprayed large areas of the country with a toxic substance called Agent Orange. The toxin made many people ill, and some died. Children were born with disabilities because of the toxin, even long after the war had ended.

For Minh Tú, the end of the war meant that she had to move. The head nun at her pagoda wanted Minh Tú to follow in her footsteps.

"It's time for you to lead other nuns at another pagoda," said the head nun.

"Gladly, I want to continue the work we've been doing here," said Minh Tú.

That was how Minh Tú found herself at Duc Son pagoda, south of Huế. For the first few years, Minh Tú worked with the nuns at Duc Son, visiting people who were living in poverty in the local villages.

The nuns gave the villagers food and medicine. They helped farmers who had been injured by bomb explosions in the fields, and when the Huong River flooded, the nuns supported those who had lost their homes and harvests.

Minh Tú often went hungry, because she gave almost

everything she had to others who she thought needed food and money more than she did. Rumours of her kindness and work with the poor spread.

Children's home opens

The children's home at the pagoda where Minh Tú used to live was closed down. The

Vietnamese government said the children's home wasn't needed, and they pulled it down and built a school.

But out in the rural areas, Minh Tú was still seeing a lot of orphaned children. Sometimes the children's relatives begged her to look after the children.

"I can't, we have nothing to

Buddhism and life at the pagoda

Buddhism was founded 2,500 years ago by Siddharta Gautama, who was born into a noble family in India. Buddha means 'enlightened one'. It was a title that was given to Siddharta after he began talking about what he believed to be the truth about life.

According to Buddha, life is an endless cycle of suffering. Humans are never satisfied. We are constantly striving for

more. So a person will never be free until they free themselves from all cravings and desires.

Buddha created an order of monks and an order of nuns. People who become Buddhist monks or nuns are regarded as having come very far in achieving harmony and freedom from the desire for more.

The monks and nuns live in self-imposed poverty and have pledged never to marry or have children. They rely on

the gifts and generosity of others. Followers of Buddhism have a religious duty to give food and gifts to monks and nuns.

At the pagodas, the monks and nuns devote a great deal of time to study, teaching and meditating. Because of their lifestyle, the monks and nuns are role models for everyone living in a Buddhist community.





“Let’s go to the garden now,” says Minh Tú. “Yes!” cry the children.

give them,” was Minh Tú’s reply.

But soon she felt she just couldn’t say ‘no’ any longer. She loved children, and cried inside every time she saw children going without food, or being forced to work or not having the chance to go to school.

“We have to open a children’s home,” she finally told the nuns at the pagoda.

“We’ll do as my teacher did at the pagoda I used to live at. We’ll give these children love. I wish they all had parents, but they don’t, and we have to do what we can for them,” said Minh Tú.

Live your true self

The Duc Son pagoda took in one child at a time. Their reputation quickly spread, and more and more children came to live at the pagoda. After a major flood in Huế and the surrounding villages, there were 250 children at the pagoda. Today there are 130

children here.

Lots of people came who wanted to adopt the children, but Minh Tú said no.

“I want the children to feel loved and safe, to go to school and possibly university. They will learn to respect one another, live in peace and live their true selves.”

Some of the first children who came to the pagoda are now adults. They have jobs and have been to university but they still come back.

“Children are my saplings that I give sun and water to every day, so they can grow into trees that offer shade and nourishment to others. I still feel like a child myself. That’s probably why I love them so much,” says Minh Tú. ☺

Classroom in the garden

Behind the pagoda there’s a tarmac path that leads between the buildings, bamboos, bushes and palms. Everyone stops when they get to a little bridge over a small stream.

“That’s our mushroom patch,” says Minh Tú, pointing to a tin storage shed a bit further up the path. The mushroom patch provides food for the children and the nuns, just like all the other crops grown in the pagoda’s garden.

Down a slope, a large garden stretches out. The children come here at least once a week to learn about growing food and various plants. Here they grow coriander, ginger, lettuce, calabash, cucumber, mint and lots more. The children do the weeding, watering and help with harvesting.

The harvested food is used for cooking in the pagoda’s kitchen, but a lot is also sold, or the herbs and vegetables are used for the lunches that the pagoda sells to passing groups of tourists. Next to the pagoda lies the grave of one of the old emperors, Thieu Tri, and lots of tourists come to see the grave. They can have their lunch at the pagoda while visiting.

“We were given the garden by a family as a gift. It’s a place where the children can have their lunch and learn about how to grow food, and we can sell a little to buy other food,” explains Minh Tú.





Yen dancing the 'hat dance' with her friends Nga and Phouc. This traditional dance was performed in Hu in the 1700s, and it is still performed at major Vietnamese festivals.

"I'm not shy when I da



YEN, 15

WANTS TO BE: Choreographer

LIKES: Dancing

DOESN'T LIKE: Cleaning and washing up

FAVOURITE SCHOOL

SUBJECT: Music

IDOLS: South Korean pop stars

Yen is often shy, but when she's dancing or practising karate she feels self-confident and strong. Her grandma brought Yen to Minh Tú when her dad left the family and her mum was too ill and poor to look after her.

It takes ages to choose the music. Yen argues with her friends Nga and Phouc about which South Korean pop star is best. In the end they agree on more traditional Vietnamese music and start dancing the 'hat dance' to the rhythm of the music, while making special movements with their hats.

There are posters of South Korean pop artists above Yen and her friends' beds. And there are some famous artists on the inside of Yen's cupboard too.

This is where Yen retreats to – the world of music and dance – when she wants to get

away from it all. She's been living at the children's home at Duc Son pagoda since the age of seven. She loves the nuns and her friends, but she often dreams of a life somewhere else.

It was a sad day when Yen first arrived at the pagoda. Her dad had disappeared, and her mum Vinh was suffering

from a serious mental illness. That's why Yen's grandma had been looking after her. The family was poor, and it was hard for grandma to care for both her daughter and granddaughter. She took Yen by the hand and went to Duc Son pagoda. There she asked Minh Tú to take care of Yen.

Yen and her friends together with Minh Tú and the other nuns, who helped them prepare themselves before performing for the other children.





nce"

Discovers dance

"It was hard. I was sad, but the nuns were kind and I soon made lots of friends," says Yen. She got to start school. It was exciting, but scary with all the new faces.

"Would you like to dance?" asked one of the nuns.

"I can try," replied Yen.

The nuns helped Yen and her friends to put their hair up in pretty styles and put make-up on, so they almost looked like dolls. They wore Áo dài, lovely silk dresses.

When the music started, Yen couldn't keep still. She just felt she had to move. She watched the nuns, who showed her how to move in time with the music.

Soon the girls were performing for the other children. It was exciting, and they were nervous. But when the

music started, Yen didn't see the audience. She only heard the music, and followed the dance steps she had learned.

"I feel free. I'm not bothered by the audience," said Yen. She told the nuns how much she loved dancing. She practiced every week with her friends. She dreamed of getting into dance academy and becoming a choreographer.

Visiting mum

Yen often missed her mum and grandma. She knew they were out there somewhere,

outside the pagoda walls.

"I'd like to visit grandma and mum," said Yen to Minh Tú one day.

"I understand," said Minh Tú. "We can arrange it so that you get to meet them every New Year's holiday."

She explained to Yen that the most important thing was that she carried on going to school. There was no guarantee she could do this at home with grandma and mum.

"They don't have much money because they can't work," said Minh Tú.

Yen understood, but she was glad she'd get to see her family. Many of the other children at the children's home didn't have parents at all. But she did, even if they were ill and living in poverty.

When Yen got to go out and visit her family she saw something other than the pagoda. She got to see the old city of



Yen is as agile in karate training as she is in dance.





When it's homework time, one of the pagoda's nuns is always ready to offer help.



Yen and the other older children help serve the younger children in the pagoda's dining room.

→ Huế. It was huge, with lots of people and shops.

As Yen grew up she started daydreaming more and more. When she wasn't dancing, she started painting and doing karate.

On an adventure

Yen had several friends at school who lived in Huế with their families. They were always talking about parties and how they would go shopping on the weekends. It sounded exciting. One day, a school friend asked if Yen and

some of the other girls wanted to come too.

"It's easy. Some of the older kids have told me how to do it," said one of Yen's friends at the pagoda.

After dinner that day, Yen helped put the younger children to bed. Then she did her homework. She and her friends got ready for bed.

When the lights were switched off and the nuns had gone to bed, Yen and her friends snuck out. There were ten of them. They got changed and tiptoed out through the

entry gate. Down by the road they'd organised transport, which took them to a big shopping centre in Huế. They hung out there with their school friends, laughed and just talked while looking in the shop windows. It was exciting to do something forbidden, and it felt good to get away from the pagoda for a bit.

When they got home to the pagoda late that night, the nuns were waiting anxiously for them. They were not happy. Yen and her friends

were sent straight to bed. The next day they had to kneel for a long time and think about what they had done.

"It didn't matter. I love Minh Tú and the rest of the nuns. They are like my family and I'm never afraid when I'm with them. But I also want to be independent and do what I want. I can't wait to be an adult," says Yen. 🌐



Yen when she first arrived at the children's home.



Good night with K-Pop

Yen and her friends love K-Pop and often discuss which K-Pop artist is the best.



Mai dreams of becoming a musician



Mai was around one month old when she lost both her parents in Vietnam's worst rainstorm in a hundred years. The family's friends took Mai to Minh Tú, who welcomed her with open arms. When Mai was older, her first dream for the future was to be like Minh Tú and help the poor.

In a matter of days, the vast Huong River, which flows through the city of Huế, rose by several metres. Everyone was forced to escape the rising floodwater.

Little Mai was just one month old. Her dad disappeared in the torrent, but her mum refused to believe he was dead. She left Mai with some friends to look for Mai's dad.

The rain continued for several days. It felt like it would never end. When it finally stopped raining, both Mai's parents were gone. The family's friends waited for over a month, but they never came

back. The friends wondered what to do if the little girl's parents were dead.

"Go to Minh Tú at Duc Son pagoda," said one of them. "She looks after children."

Mai meets Minh Tú

A woman took Mai in her arms and travelled to the pagoda, which is south of Huế, 800 metres from the Huong River.

The steep driveway and steps up to the pagoda showed signs of the flooding. As the rain poured down, the waters of the Huong River had reached far above the many raised statues and right into the nuns' sleeping quarters.

A petite nun wearing glasses met the woman and Mai.

"I have a girl here who lost her parents in the flooding," said the woman.

"Don't worry," said the nun, who introduced herself as Minh Tú. She was the one in charge of the pagoda. The nuns were already looking after many other orphaned children.

"What's her name?" asked Minh Tú.

"Her parents named her Mai," replied the woman.

Once the woman had signed a piece of paper, she turned and left. Minh Tú was left standing at the entrance with

Mai's zither

'Đàn Tranh' is the Vietnamese name of Mai's zither, an elongated wooden instrument with 16 steel strings that dates back to 13th century China. The Vietnamese zither is made of wood from the Paulownia tree. It is played by pressing the strings with the left hand while plucking them with the right hand, like a guitar. The musicians often use a kind of plectrum made of steel, plastic or tortoiseshell that they wear on the fingers of their right hand. Similar instruments are also found in China, Mongolia, Japan and North and South Korea.



MAI, 19

LONGS FOR: My parents. The river took them.

USUALLY: Helps out with the younger children.

WANTS TO BE: A musician.

BEST THING: Music.

WORST THING: Not being able to play music.



→ yet another little child who would grow up in the pagoda's children's home.

Wanted to help the poor

Mai settled in quickly at the children's home. The older children helped the nuns take care of her and the other little ones.

When she started school, Mai too began helping out with the younger children. She looked up to the nuns and read about Buddhism. Soon she moved her things to the young children's section. Just like the nuns, she wanted to be like a mother to the youngest children.

Minh Tú had told Mai the story of how she came to be at the pagoda and what had happened to her parents. Mai thought that if she was a good Buddhist then maybe she would be reunited with her parents in another life.

"I want to be like you, Minh Tú," said Mai one day.



At first Mai wanted to be a nun and help poor people. Now she wants to be a musician, but she still helps the nuns during prayer time.

"How do you mean?" asked Minh Tú.

"I want to be a nun here at the temple and help poor people," replied Mai.

Minh Tú explained that Mai didn't have to be a nun.

"You know that you can be whatever you want. I'll pay for



Mai and her friends at the children's home dressed in their party clothes, together with Minh Tú.



Many metres of rain

Vietnam has two seasons: a dry and a rainy season. It rains a lot from September to February. Mostly in the area around Huế, which is particularly exposed to severe tropical storms. There can be over two metres of rain from September to December alone. When it rains too much, the ground just can't cope with all the water at once. Meanwhile, the water in rivers and other watercourses starts to rise sharply.

Large areas of ground can get flooded very quickly. During the flooding in Huế in November 1999, when Mai's parents disappeared, the Huong River rose three metres in just three days. Seven provinces in the vicinity of the river were under several metres of water for days. Seven million people were affected. In the future, rains and floods may become even worse due to climate change.



your schooling and university if you want.”

Minh Tú said that if Mai wanted to be a nun she would have to devote a lot of time to studying Buddhism. So Mai did. She helped the nuns during prayer time every week. When she wasn't reading about Buddha and writing long texts using old-style Vietnamese characters, Mai continued to go to school and look after the younger children. Her spare time was taken up with dancing and drawing.

From nun to doctor

Soon Mai started high school. Those of her school friends who lived at home with their parents were always talking about what they did in their spare time. How they met up, went to the shops and had fun together. Sometimes they asked Mai if she wanted to come too, but it wasn't so easy to get permission from Minh Tú.

Her friends talked about what they planned to study at university. Mai realised that she would also be able to help people as a doctor. Maybe she didn't have to be a nun?

At school, Mai also learned that you didn't have to be a nun to meet your parents in



Mai usually takes the chance to do some homework while watching the sleeping little ones.

another life. You could believe in that while also working as a doctor, or something else.

“You're like a mother to me, Minh Tú. I love you and the other nuns. You are kind, but I don't want to be a nun anymore. I want to be a doctor,” said Mai.

“That's a good idea,” said Minh Tú. “If you study hard and get into university, it's possible.”

A new dream

Children have to pass a difficult exam in order to get into high school in Vietnam. It

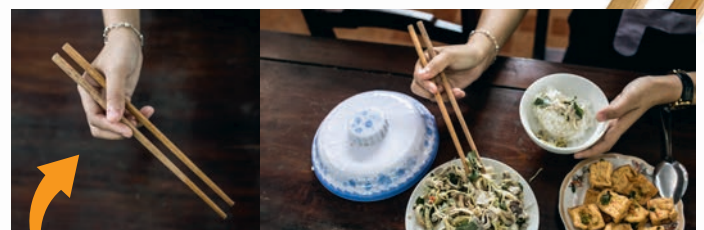
wasn't a problem for Mai, but she began to realise that getting into medical school would be tough.

A new idea started forming in her head. Mai asked the nuns if she and the other children could learn to play music. Minh Tú appointed a music teacher and it soon turned out that Mai was very

good at playing the zither.

Now Mai has a new dream. She wants to study music at the highly respected academy of music in Huế. To be accepted there she has to pass a difficult test. She's practising every day to make her dreams come true! 🌐

When Mai arrived at the pagoda as a baby, the older children helped the nuns look after her. Now she's helping out with the little ones.



How to use chopsticks

At Duc Son pagoda, many of the children eat using a spoon, but Mai, the nuns and most other people in Vietnam use chopsticks.

Chopsticks are held in one hand, with the thumb, index and middle fingers holding the top chopstick while the ring finger and little finger support the bottom one. It's not polite to point with chopsticks; they are only for eating with.

Food is often served in various bowls and on small dishes. You pick up food using your chopsticks then place it in your own bowl.

The girl by the tree

At Duc Son, they often talk of the time when Minh Tú found a girl in a basket underneath the tree outside the pagoda. The girl is called Thao, and she's grateful to the nuns for caring for her. Now it's she who helps them.

It was during the Vietnamese New Year festivities, which continue for three days. The first day is spent with family, the second with friends. On the third day the country's teachers are celebrated. The nuns at Duc Son pagoda received lots of gifts from visitors. It was often envelopes with money, but also food and various presents.

Early one morning, Minh Tú heard the sound of a baby crying outside the pagoda. She looked out, but couldn't see anyone. Then she went outside to take a closer look. The crying seemed to come from the big tree.

There was a little bundle



lying in a basket among the tree roots. It moved. When Minh Tú folded back a bit of the cloth, she saw a tiny face and an open mouth. The baby wasn't very old. Perhaps just one week, thought Minh Tú. There was no letter and no papers in the basket.

In the pagoda's little children's home there were some older children that the nuns took care of, but they had never had a newborn baby before.

The little girl was named Thao. There was no milk at the pagoda, so at first she had to drink powdered milk and rice purée.

Needed more food

The children at the pagoda followed the nuns every

Thao works as a nurse, but every weekend she comes home to the pagoda.



Thao arrived at the pagoda as a newborn baby, and it's been her home ever since.



Thao, in the pink dress, was given her name by the nuns.



Thao, in the middle with her school bag, always studied hard.



where. If Minh Tú had an errand to run, she took Thao with her. When Thao was five, Minh Tú had to travel to Ho Chi Min City for a course on Buddhism. They took the train. On the way home, Minh Tú became very ill.

“You’ll have to manage by yourselves for a bit,” said Minh Tú.

“No problem. You just rest and we’ll look after you,” said Thao.

Then Thao got sick. She had a stomachache and Minh Tú took her to hospital.

“The girl isn’t getting enough food,” said the doctor. “She’ll have to stay here for a while.”

Minh Tú watched over Thao day and night at the hospital. She sat at her bedside for two weeks.

Keen to help out

When Thao started school, it meant leaving Minh Tú for the first time. She took the bus to school and back every day with the other children.



Thao often went with Minh Tú when she helped the poor outside the pagoda. Now she always gives the children and nuns health checks when she visits the pagoda.

The children’s home was bigger now. Lots of children lived there. Minh Tú was receiving more and more gifts from people who came to visit. She was able to get more nutritious food, so the children could grow up big and strong and have enough energy for school.

Thao grew, and as soon as she had some spare time she started accompanying Minh Tú when she went outside the pagoda to help the poor. Thao soon decided that she’d like to work in health care herself. She didn’t just want to be able to help others. She also wanted to care for the nuns,

who had given her so much, and the young children at the children’s home.

After high school, Thao was accepted into nursing school. She now works at the hospital in Huế, but every weekend she travels to the pagoda. While she’s there, she carries out health checks on both the children and the nuns. 🌍



Thao and Trung met at the children’s home

When Thao was seven, two new boys arrived at the children’s home at Duc Son. They were the same age as her, twins Trung and Thnong. Throughout their school years they lived alongside one another at the pagoda, playing and studying together. When it was time for university, the twins left the pagoda and Thao trained to be a nurse. Several years later, Trung turned up at the pagoda again. Thao was visiting at the same time, and Trung wanted to ask her out.

Trung found a job at the pagoda. Minh Tú wanted him to start a mushroom growing patch so the children at the children’s home would have more to eat and the nuns something to sell at the market.

Trung and Thao are now married and living in Huế.

A jump away from footb

If only Nhon had taken the stairs. Then he'd have had the chance to play football with Vietnam's Paralympic football team ...

Just imagine getting to represent Vietnam in the Paralympics! Nhon found it hard to stop thinking about it, but he was woken from his daydreams by the noisy shouts of the other children. The shuttlecock was right by him on the ground. He'd missed.

Nhon picked it up and hit it with his badminton racquet. Badminton was great, but not as fun as football. And some-

one from Vietnam's Olympic committee had actually approached him and asked if he wanted to be on the country's football team for young people with disabilities. Nhon was born with a developmental disability that affects his brain function.

Dangerous jump

Now his friends were shouting again. He watched the shuttlecock soar above him



and down over the railings around the children's home courtyard. Nhon ran to look for it. The shuttlecock was three metres below.

"Run down and get it," cried his friends. "It was you who missed!"

When he was telling the nurse later what had happened, he realised his brain had been playing tricks on him. Instead of running to the stairs and walking down, Nhon jumped. He screamed in pain as his foot collapsed beneath him. The children who had been urging him on

laughed at first. Then they went quiet and ran to get the nuns.

So no Paralympic Games for Nhon. He had sprained his foot. And Vietnam's Paralympic football team hadn't managed to qualify anyway. So maybe it wasn't such a big deal about his foot.

Making incense sticks

Nhon sits at the machine that makes incense sticks.

"Can you pass me more sticks, Nhi," he asks a younger girl who is helping him. On a good day, Nhon can make a thousand incense sticks. On those days he has help from Nhi's big brother.

Nhon is tall next to the other children at Duc Son pagoda's section for differently abled children. Several of the younger children are sitting in the next room, drawing. A nurse is helping a little boy who is blind.

Vietnam's national sport

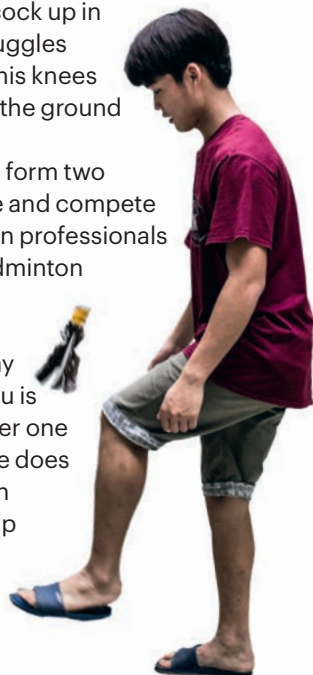


'Da cau', or foot badminton, is Vietnam's national sport. Almost all the children at Duc Son pagoda play da cau. They often stand in a ring and kick the shuttlecock between them. The shuttlecock is similar to the one used for badminton, but it has more weight at the tip so it always falls downwards.

Con can keep a shuttlecock up in the air for a long time. He juggles with it and holds it still on his knees and toes. It mustn't touch the ground you can't use your hands.

Sometimes the children form two groups either side of a line and compete with one another, but when professionals play they use a proper badminton court.

Con says that when the children at the pagoda play football, it's serious. Da cau is more of a game. They cheer one another on when someone does a good kick, or laugh when someone misses or trips up trying to get to the shuttlecock.



The orange toxin

Between 1961 and 1971, the US sprayed vast areas of Vietnam with a toxic substance called Agent Orange. It made trees and plants lose their leaves. The US used the toxic chemical to make it harder for soldiers from North Vietnam to hide in the jungle. The toxin also destroyed food growing in the fields. The US did not mind food becoming scarce for the soldiers on the opposing side, but ordinary people suffered the most. The name 'Agent Orange' comes from the orange containers in which the toxin was stored. The US fitted the containers to helicopters and flew over the jungle and fields, spraying it over everything. Agent Orange contains several different toxic substances, including some of the most dangerous toxins to humans



all success

Nhon presses brown pulp into a steel tube and turns a lever to feed the thin wooden stick through the tube. Once the stick comes out the other side, it's a finished incense stick that can be used in the pagoda when the children and nuns are praying to Buddha. The pagoda also sells incense sticks to people who want to burn them at home.

Popular with everyone

Many of the children at Doc Son pagoda's children's home have been orphaned. But Nhon's mum works in the pagoda's kitchens. Her brain also plays tricks on her at times. No one knows what kind of condition she has. Nhon's mum comes from northern Vietnam and the nuns say that she was affected by the toxin, Agent Orange, that the Americans sprayed over North Vietnam during the war.

Nhon's mum was living on the street and begging when she fell pregnant. She met a woman who said that she should seek support from the nun Minh Tú at Duc Son pagoda in Huế. Shortly after, Nhon was born in the pagoda's children's home. Nhon had difficulties similar to his mother's. He had problems learning to speak, read and write. He was also quick to get angry, sometimes had trouble controlling his body. With the support and help of the nuns and other children, Nhon has become calmer and feels better.

Nhon is popular with everyone at the pagoda. He helps out with the younger children and with cleaning while the other children are at school. When the children get back, they play football with Nhon. 🌐



With help, Nhon can make a thousand incense sticks in one day. In Buddhism, it's common to light incense when praying, as a gift to Buddha. The incense gives off different strong scents, depending on which herbs have been used to make it.

in the whole world. No one knows exactly how much was sprayed over Vietnam, but it was roughly 100 million litres. Between 3 and 4.8 million people may have been affected by the toxin. Almost half a million children have been born with deformities and disabilities. The substance is now banned.



Preparing for Changemaker Day

Global Vote • My Voice for Change • Round the Globe for Rights and Change

It's now time to make sure all the necessary preparations have been made for Changemaker Day. For the *Global Vote*, you will need to make a voting register, ballot boxes and a voting booth, among other things, and for *My Voice* and *Round the Globe for Rights and Change*, speeches must be written and signs made. However, start by inviting your families, local media and politicians well in advance to your Changemaker Day...



For the Global Vote, you need:

- 1 A voting register**
Everyone with the right to vote must be on the register and be ticked off once they receive their ballot paper.
- 2 Ballot boxes**
All ideas are allowed. Ballot boxes can be anything from empty jars, cardboard boxes and pots with WCP decoration to creative ballot boxes like houses and boats.
- 3 Voting booth**
WCP voting booths tend to be creative, made from corn stalks, bamboo canes or fabric, for example. Some groups borrow voting booths from adult elections. The important thing is to ensure secrecy so no one can see how you vote.
- 4 Ballot papers**
The ballot papers need to be cut to size. It is important that all three Child Rights Heroes are on the same ballot paper!
- 5 No cheating!**
Mark those who have voted using felt pen, ink or something else that will not wash off easily. So no one can vote twice.





Ballot box made of ice



Vote-counters

For My Voice and your Round the Globe event, you will need to:

1

Write speeches and poems

About what changes you want to see to ensure greater respect for children's rights.

2

Make signs and banners

Get hold of pieces of card (e.g. sides of boxes), large sheets of paper, light-coloured fabric, paint/pens and sticks. Plan your slogans for the changes you want to see. Remember that your words must be visible from a distance. Full sentences don't work well. For instance, writing 'All girls in school' or 'No child marriage' is enough, and can be written in large letters.

3

Plan a meeting place

Where do you plan to meet after your Global Vote to show your signs, give speeches and perhaps perform songs and dances to celebrate children's rights?

4

Prepare for your Round the Globe event

What route will you take for your 3-kilometre walk with signs and banners? Perhaps to the most important buildings in your town so that as many people as possible will see you? In many countries, the police secure the route for the children's Round the Globe walk.

6

Appoint voting officials

The following are needed, but you can also take turns:

- Voting officers, who mark off the voting register and hand out ballot papers.
- Voting supervisors, who make sure that everything is being done properly.
- Vote-counters, who count the votes for each Child Rights Hero.



No to girls being taken out of school.



No to poverty.



No child soldiers.





1 The voting queue in Burkina Faso

Global Vote

Changemaker Day begins with the children’s democratic Global Vote, but some schools start the day with singing and dancing, perhaps even a speech, to celebrate children’s rights and to launch their school’s Changemaker Day. To date, almost 46 million children have voted to choose their favourite Child Rights Hero.

2 Signing the voting register



3 You receive your ballot paper here



4 Go to the voting booth and mark your choice on the ballot paper

5 Time to vote in Togo



Marking to prevent cheating



6

Voting for the first time

“I had heard about children’s rights on the radio, but now I understand them better, especially that girls’ rights are the same as we boys’ rights. When I read The Globe, I discovered people who fight for respect for children’s rights. Changemaker Day went well at my school. We had both a Global Vote and a Round the Globe walk. I got to vote for the first time in my life.”

Prince, 12, Kèrè School, Benin

Pleased to vote

“I was very pleased to be able to take part in the democratic Global Vote. I wish that our parents would also read The Globe so that they understand children’s rights. WCP taught me about my rights, and the Global Vote allowed me to exercise them to choose my Child Rights Hero.”

Chenai, 15, Rutendo, Zimbabwe



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The Global Vote gives me hope

"The Global Vote gives me hope that my rights will be defended. For a long time children's rights have been violated because we didn't know about them. WCP has taught us about our rights and allows us to exercise our democratic rights, so that we can use them in the future."

Selina, 11, Kagande, Zimbabwe

Democracy is important

"Democracy is important, and as Child Rights Ambassadors it is our mission to encourage other children to use their democratic rights, just like we did today, and also to increase knowledge in our communities about what democracy is and how important it is."

Ngoni, 17, Mbare, Zimbabwe

Should get to vote about everything that concerns us

"It was the first time that I took part in a vote. I think that we children should regularly get to participate in choices that affect us. It is our right to be heard in matters that concern us."

Danile, 11, Bunia, DR Congo

The government can learn something

"The Global Vote is a genuine democratic voting process, which we children are proud to participate in. Our parents and our government need to learn how we children with different backgrounds come together and prepare for voting without cheating, violence, vote buying and vote theft!"

Paul, 12, Ogori, Nigeria

Making our own decisions

"No one tries to influence us about who we should vote for, so the vote is fair. We make our decisions ourselves. We children organise the vote, and being part of it feels fantastic."

Davida, 13, Makeni, Sierra Leone



7

Counting the votes
at Kèrè School, Benin



Our voices are heard through the Global Vote

"We have learned from the World's Children's Prize program about some amazing people in the world who make sure that children's rights are respected. Above all, we have understood that everyone must be treated the same. We have talked a lot about the right of all children to go to school and that there are many children in the world who dream of being able to go to school. With the WCP program, we feel that we can get involved and change the world and make our voices heard in the Global Vote."

"We have gained knowledge that makes us realise how serious climate change is and that we must act now!! We want to feel proud when facing the future generation and that they understand that we fought to take care of the planet."

Ottilia, Eija, Ingrid, Lisa & Liv, 11, Ålstensskolan School, Sweden

Soldiers prevent Global Vote

For many years, children from the Karen region of Burma, the country also known as Myanmar, have learned about their rights and democracy through the WCP program. When Burma was previously an oppressive military dictatorship, Karen children still held their own democratic Global Vote every year. Burma is now once again a military dictatorship. Some of the Karen children's schools have been bombed and destroyed or burned down by soldiers, and it is uncertain whether these children will be able to take part in the Global Vote this year.

My first Global Vote

"I live with my grandfather, as my dad died when he stepped on an army land mine. It takes me an hour to walk to school. I had just taken part in the WCP program and the Global Vote for the first time. By reading The Globe I learned about children's rights, about the fact that all children have the right



to go to school and to get to play and not be forced to be in the army.

"One day my grandfather saw that the bombers were near. Several minutes later loud explosions could be heard, so we all ran out to the forest and looked for the cave. We didn't have time to bring blankets or clothing with us.

"I don't understand why the Burmese army is attacking us. We are just villagers who live in our own place and are no threat to them."

Saw Ywa, 12



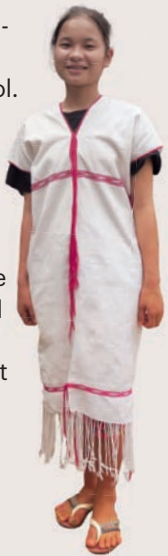
My school was bombed

"I walk 45 minutes to get to school. I joined the WCP program when I was 10 years old. By reading The Globe I learned about children's rights and that girls have the same rights as boys. Before this I had no idea about my rights, but now I know how to make sure they are respected.

"When the Burmese army attacked our villages, I ran out into the forest. We only had a little rice and vegetable

soup to eat. The military bombed and destroyed my school. We had school outdoors in the jungle. I stayed in the forest for two months. I still can't study in peace and quiet. We have to be prepared for the bombers attacking us again at any time."

Naw Sha, 15



Afraid of snakes and bombs

"My village is high up on a mountain, not far from one of the military camps. I was participating in the WCP program and used to walk to Wai Nor Dern School, where several schools had got together to hold their Global Vote. I learned a lot about children's rights, especially girls' rights. I know that children have the right to go to school and not be forced to be soldiers.

"The planes first came over early in the evening, then three more times during the night. They passed close to our homes and dropped bombs every time. Everyone in the village ran to the large cave. The children were screaming and crying. I was afraid of the planes, but also of the snakes and insects in the cave, where I slept on the ground with no blanket."

Naw Lah, 12



Children from several Karen schools usually gather here for their Global Vote, but this year the soldiers and bombers may prevent the children from being part of the 20th Global Vote.





At the jungle school, their 'blackboard' is green and is made from large leaves. Here the children are learning the days of the week in English, but that means they also need to learn a different alphabet.



View the film of the Global Vote in Burma at: worldschildrensprize.org/video-collection

Protective trenches have been dug in the forest for the children to jump down into if the bombers come. But they have to be careful, as there may be snakes.



My Voice for Change

With their signs *against* child marriage and violence against children, and *for* the right of girls to go to school, equal rights for all children and the fight to combat climate change, children in many schools and countries make their voices heard after their Global Vote. They want to see change, so that children's rights are better respected. The children give speeches to one another, to parents and politicians, and are sometimes interviewed by journalists. They will shortly leave the school yard, with their signs in hand, to conclude their Changemaker Day with *Round the Globe for Rights and Change ...*



Round the Globe for Rights



Students from Hubert Maga School in Parakou, Benin walked and danced their three kilometres accompanied by trumpets, drums and singing, with their signs demanding respect for various children's rights, including equal rights for girls.



'All girls in school.'

Students in Parakou in Benin alternate between walking and dancing as they take part in the *Round the Globe for Rights and Change* event. Trumpets, drums and singing make it a fun three-kilometre walk for them.

"Children's rights are not respected in Benin. I had a friend in the sixth class. She was barely thirteen years old when her parents said that she should get married because they could not afford to keep her. Our signs show that equality between girls and boys is not respected," says François-Xavier, 16.

To date, 1.6 million children at 5,455 schools in 20 countries have covered almost 5 million kilometres as part of the Round the Globe event, or more than 121 laps around the globe.

The Round the Globe event is the conclusion to Changemaker Day and demonstrates that children are serious about wanting to see increased respect for children's rights. And together they are spreading the message in their village or town and around the globe.



and Change



Students from Massi-Zogbodomé School in Benin walk their three kilometres with posters and signs demanding increased respect for children's rights.



When the students from Hurungwe School in Zimbabwe complete their Round the Globe walk they go on main roads. So they asked the local police for assistance, and he stops all vehicles and makes them drive past slowly.



PHOTO: DARINPIX & MAGNUS BERGMAR

Changemaker Mission

Everyone involved in the WCP program can be a changemaker and spread the message about children's rights and equal rights for girls! Sometimes it can feel better if you can join with a group of friends and help one another.

Over 20 years of the WCP program 46 million children have learned about their rights. More than half a million teachers have learned how to teach about children's rights. Almost all these children and teachers have told their families, friends, neighbours and others in their villages and neighbourhoods

that children's rights exist and that they must be respected. Collectively they've been a huge force for change, reaching over half a billion people. And it just keeps spreading and reaching more and more people!

**Mission:
rights**



Start with your friend



Anyone can tell their friends about children's rights, like this girl in Nepal. You can also accompany your friends to their homes and help them tell their families about children's rights and that the equal rights of girls must always be respected.



Become a Child Rights Ambassador

From 1 July, there will be a course for anyone who wants to become a Child Rights Ambassador at worldschildrensprize.org/cra



Family and neighbours

This girl in Mozambique is reading aloud from *The Globe* to her grandmother, siblings and neighbouring children. Many girls have reported how their fathers changed their attitude after having read *The Globe* and allowed them to continue in school.

Start a Child Rights Club

If you are a group of friends who believe that children's rights are important, you can set up a Child Rights Club. You can then learn more together and plan how you can help other friends who have issues at home and girls who have been forced to leave school. Children have the right to make their voices heard about important issues, and together we can have the courage to do this!



Tell local leaders

Hassan and Kim in Zimbabwe invited leaders from several villages in order to tell them about children's rights and the fact that girls and boys have equal rights. Leaders who support children's rights and equal rights for girls are important changemakers.





Visit authorities

Together we can have the courage to do more. Girls from a number of schools in Mozambique got together and requested a meeting with the school authorities. They reported that it was common for teachers to demand sex in return for giving girls pass marks so they could go up to the next class, and they demanded that this must be stopped. Their schools are now abuse-free!



↑ Discuss things with the police

The police are always required to accept reports of serious violations of children's rights. Not all police know that children's rights exist and that their country has promised to respect them. You can teach them, like this girl in Mozambique is doing here.



Child Rights Ambassadors in Vietnam

In Hanoi in Vietnam, nine teenagers have set up a Child Rights Club and trained as Child Rights Ambassadors with the help of The Globe and the WCP website. They then spread knowledge about children's rights to their families, their local neighbourhood and in school, as well as on social media.



Contact journalists

You can ask journalists to report about children's rights and about common violations of these where you live. Suggest that they interview you and your friends. Child Rights Ambassadors Tatiana and Marie-Jurince were interviewed on Royal TV in Benin:



Marie-Jurince: "I learned that we cannot violate children's rights, particularly girls' rights. We have to make sure that children develop and get a good school education. And in order to reach those who violate children's rights, I ask that all of us raise awareness among the older people and mobilise our friends for a better world."

Tatiana: "When you are a Child Rights Ambassador, you have to fight and teach others what you have learnt about children's rights, and talk to the elders in your area about allowing girls to go to school."



GANG

What a gang
for girls' rights and
against corporal
punishment



These girls meet regularly at school and after church on Sunday to talk about child rights and what to do. They are **GANG**, Girls of an Active New Generation. They are WCP Child Rights Ambassadors in a very violent suburb in South Africa called Bonteheuwel. There are many gangs involved in drugs and shootings. Thousands of people have been killed, many of them innocent children, who were struck by stray bullets.



Ashlyn, Taylor, Zoe, Tasneem and Bianca are half of the ten-strong GANG of girls.

Girls can support girls

“I am a Child Rights Ambassador and I have the responsibility to use my voice to tell my friends what they can do if an adult hurts them in any way. We are ten girls at our school who are ambassadors. We call ourselves the **GANG**, meaning the ‘Girls of an Active New Generation’.

“Girls can report to us if they think their rights have been violated and we will act by going with them to the Human Rights Commission in our area. Sometimes it does

not help to tell the police, even though the law says they must investigate any case of child abuse that is reported to them. If they do not want to do this, they are breaking the law. We are lucky to have a principal who is kind to us and encourages our work as ambassadors in our school.”

Support people in trouble

“In Bonteheuwel, we have a lot of unemployed people who resort to drugs and alcohol to ease their pain. That is why we have so many violent

gangs. I can relate to this because I grew up with my older sister who took to alcohol since she was in high school and I was a little girl. We live with my mother and things are often very hard, with not enough to eat or to buy medicine.

“But I am my sister’s keeper. We have shared a room for as long as I can remember, and I love her. I don’t want to lose her. We talk about her problems and then she promises to stop. She tries and tries, but she can’t.

“I love my sister for who she is, despite the bad things other people say about her. I think it is because of my sister that I see it as my duty to support people who are in trouble.”

I support girls

“I believe that Girls can support Girls. As a WCP Child Rights Ambassador, I want to be there for those girls who have no one to talk to about how their rights are abused here in Bonteheuwel.”

Zoe, 17



GANG meeting.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN THE UN CONVENTION

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.

ARTICLE 28. You have the right to learn and develop in school, and should not be violently punished by a teacher or other adult.

ARTICLE 37. No one should punish you in a cruel and harmful way.



Girls in The Globe make us stronger

“As a Child Rights Ambassador, I care about the rights of the child, especially girls. In my community it is not easy to be a teenage girl, because you are not safe even to walk to the corner shop, church or even school because you are afraid of being robbed or molested. It saddens me to notice how girls do not know the rights they have.

“There is a young girl who lives in my street by the name of Keila. She is twelve years old and her mother’s oldest child. Keila has a special place in my heart because I see the emotional abuse she must go through because of alcohol. Her mom spends most of her pay cheque on buying alcohol. Keila must buy food and bread on credit at the corner shop, because she does not have money

to buy what she needs. My mother has now taken Keila in as her ‘soup kitchen child’, meaning that every day Keila comes to our house to fetch her breakfast and lunch.

“These are the things I see and experience in my ghetto community. Being a Child Rights Ambassador and a member of the GANG has made me stronger because I can talk to my peers about their rights and help them in the small ways that I can. When we read The Globe, we also see that other girls are suffering even worse than we are. We read what girls do about it and that makes us stronger.”

Ashlyn, 17

Many teachers hit students with a steel ruler or other objects.



The homes are very crowded together in Bonteheuwel, and many residents are poor.



Ashlyn

Taylor

Hitting my friend

“Some men steal girls, take them away and beat them up. I do not go walking alone in the street. As a WCP Child Rights Ambassador, I want to use my voice to explain children’s rights to adults. When I grow up, I dream of being a teacher so I can teach kids how to stand up for themselves.

“I have a friend whose father died. Her mom remarried and she was not happy with the new stepfather. When her mom got married to that man, some time passed, and then that man started hitting her mom.”

Saved by her mom

“When the man was drunk, he hit her and her mom. This one day the man wanted to rape my friend, but her mom pushed the man away from her so that she could have time to run away.

“After a day, she came back to the house, but that man had hit her mother and stabbed her to death. My friend knew that her mother had protected her so that she could live. The man is now in jail and my friend lives with her auntie. She has come to join us at GANG so that she can also be a part of us girls who support girls.”

Tasneem, 15



Zoe

Tasneem

Bianca



Listen and talk to us

“As a Child Rights Ambassador, you get to witness lots of kids and adults who do not really know what children’s rights are. Therefore, I share my knowledge of children’s rights with people around me.

“For example, I know now that teachers are not allowed to hit us, because it is against the law that protects children. So, when our Sir hit my classmate for coming late, I stood up and told him it was illegal. Then Sir tried to hit me, but I ran out of the door. My friend followed me, and we went to a teacher for help. She came back to our classroom and explained to our Sir that it was illegal to hit a child. Sir was blood red in his face.

“Children have rights and that means that if you are late, your Sir must take a moment to ask you why and listen to your answer. Adults must allow children to speak and listen to them. That is what adults have to learn, to listen and talk to us, instead of hitting and shouting.”

Bianca, 17

Change and dream big

“When someone hears the word GANG in our community, they think of people that are dealing in drugs and doing violence. When someone sees a gang, they must be aware and avoid them so that they won’t get hurt, and always be on the alert.

“Now, when people hear the word GANG, they should think of the Girls of an Active New Generation. Our GANG

won’t hurt or harm you in any way, but will protect you and make you feel safe. You can speak about the struggles you have to us, or a struggle that someone else you know is facing and is too scared to talk about or has no one to trust. Our GANG helps to make you aware of your rights and what you can do to protect yourself.

“Our teacher allows us to put up posters about GANG

in the library, so all the students can read about us.

We say:

- Dream big. Don’t let alcohol and violence stop your dreams.
- Aim high. Don’t believe others who tell you that you are not worthy.
- Make a difference. Join GANG and help other girls.
- Change. We are change-makers and you can be one too.”

Taylor, 16



CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Corporal punishment is an act of violence against a child, that causes pain or discomfort. It includes slapping with an open hand, hitting with a fist or spanking, caning with a rod, stick, ruler or other object, pinching, ear-twisting or pulling the child. It also includes forcing children to eat things like chillies or washing the

inside of their mouths with soap.

Corporal punishment has been banned in South African schools since 2007, but is still widely practised by many teachers. An inquiry revealed that at least one million children experienced corporal punishment at schools during 2019.

When a teacher hurts a child, it should be reported to the

principal, but if he does not cooperate, it should be reported at a police station and the Department of Education’s nearest district office. They are required by law to launch a full investigation into the case.

Some parents believe that they are disciplining their children by hitting them. Perhaps their own parents beat them

when they were children, because they never learnt how to teach discipline to their children without violence. Corporal punishment teaches children to solve problems with violence and can lead to becoming bullies themselves.



Apologised for doing right

“ I have lived with my aunty since I was twelve, because it was at that age that things got rough for me. My mother and father were both jobless and had no income. Some nights we had to go to sleep hungry and wait until after school the next day for something to eat, whether it was porridge, bread or whatever was available, and it had to be enough for me and my siblings.

“One evening gunshots went off in the street. We crawled under the bed, because my aunty said that the shots could fly through the window and hit us. The next day I got into an argument with my teacher at school because I was disturbed and could not concentrate. I kept on crying, even though I did my best to keep back my tears. He said that the classroom was no



place to discuss gangsters and that we should work. I told him that he did not respect me and then he threw the chalkboard duster at me. It hit my head.”

Forced to apologise

“I was so upset about all this violence in Bonteheuwel. Why did my teacher get so aggressive? That afternoon I told my aunty what had happened. She went to the principal the next day to complain and to tell him that hitting a child was illegal. And that it is forbidden by our country’s children’s rights laws. Then the principal got into an argument with her and asked her if there were any eyewitnesses. My school friends were too scared to speak up against the teacher. I did not blame them because there are many things adults can do to hurt children.



Blackboard eraser

This was what Jody’s teacher threw at her head.



My voice for rights

“I was forced to apologise to the teacher or be expelled from school. I did not want to be expelled from school, so I apologised. In my head I said to myself that I was saying sorry for doing the right thing.”

My voice for rights

“I know my rights. As a Child Rights Ambassador, I am committed to using my voice

and my story to stop violence against children and adults. One day, if God helps me, I want to study law so that I can take legal action against people who hurt children. I want to be a child rights advocate.”

Jody, 16



Jody and her siblings live with their aunt.



Make your voices heard!

Kim and Hassan spoke to Zimbabwe TV's ZBC News, describing to viewers the changes they want to see for girls' rights and the climate.

Would you and your friends like to get involved in sharing knowledge about the rights of the child? Make your voice heard through the media. Raising awareness puts pressure on those in power, and makes them think more about children when they're making decisions.

Every year, when millions of children's votes have been counted in the Global Vote, the children organize their own World's Children's Press Conference on the same day, across the globe. They demand respect for children's rights and reveal which of the nominees has received the most votes and is the recipient of *The World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child*, and which two will receive the *World's Children's Honorary Award*. Only children can speak and be interviewed by journalists during the press conferences. Interested in getting involved?

This is what you do: Tell the WCP contact in your country that you want to hold a Children's Press Conference. Are there several schools in your area? Hold a joint press conference with one representative from each school on stage.

Good venue If possible, choose the most important building in your area for your press conference to show that the rights of the child are important! Holding it at your school is fine too. The 2023 press conferences will be held at the WCP Ceremony Day in October. The exact date will be published on the WCP website.

Invite the media Allow plenty of time to contact your local media. You might need to nag them a bit. Phone, email and send text messages to newspaper offices and individual journalists. Unfortunately, not all adults realise how important the rights of the child and the

Child Rights Heroes are. So you'll need to explain it to them.

Prepare Write down and practise what you want to say about WCP, and about what life is like for the children in your area and in your country. The day before the press conference you will receive secret information from the WCP focal point in your country about the result of the Global Vote.

- Hold the press conference**
1. If possible, begin with music and dancing, and explain that other children all over the world are holding press conferences at the same time.
 2. State facts about the WCP and show short video clips.
 3. Explain what life is like for children and what you know about violations of children's rights where you live and in your country. Talk about the changes you'd like to see and place demands.
 4. Share information about the fantastic efforts of the Child Rights Heroes and reveal the result of the Global Vote.
 5. Hand out press releases and child rights fact sheets.

At worldschildrensprize.org/wcpc you'll find:

- The exact date of the press conference.
- Press releases, child rights fact sheets and draft scripts.
- Advice on how to invite journalists and questions for politicians.
- Films about WCP, the Global Vote and the Child Rights Heroes.
- Press images.



Queen Silvia of Sweden



Nelson Mandela



Malala Yousafzai



Desmond Tutu



Graça Machel

We are patrons of the World's Children's Prize

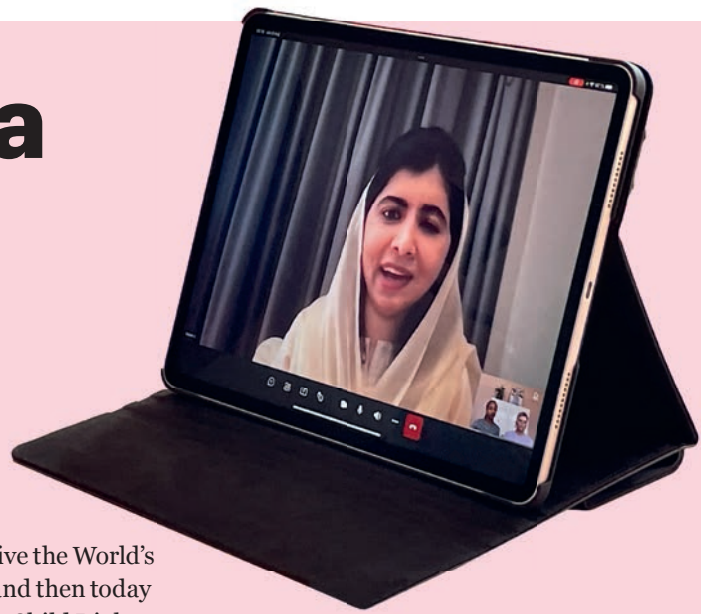
Malala Yousafzai and the late Nelson Mandela both chose to be patrons of the World's Children's Prize. They are also the only recipients of both the Nobel Peace Prize and what the media often refer to as the "Children's Nobel Prize", the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child. Both are also WCP Decade Child Rights Heroes.

Anyone who has done something good for children's rights or the World's Children's Prize can be an Honorary Adult Friend and patron of WCP. Queen Silvia was WCP's first patron. Malala and the late Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu are joined by Xanana Gusmão, Graça Machel, former Swedish prime ministers and ministers for children, who are also WCP patrons.



Viggo and Samra meet Malala ...

Samra and Viggo sit nervously looking at their tablet. They have a huge responsibility. In a short while they will be revealing to their guest, who will soon be signing in for their meeting via tablet, that almost two million children have now voted and made their choice ...



“Hi Malala, I’m Viggo.”
“And I’m Samra.”

“Hi Viggo and Samra,” says Malala. It feels surreal to Viggo and Samra to hear Malala say their names.

“Today we represent close to two million children who have participated in the latest World’s Children’s Prize Program. We have learnt about our rights and studied the work of the Child Rights Heroes before taking part in the Global Vote, the democratic vote that only children can take part in,” Viggo explains.

“And we have all learnt about your life and your work for girls’ rights,” says Samra.

The big reveal

Viggo prepares himself and leans towards the tablet ...

“We 2 million children have, in our Global Vote, decided that you, Malala, are our Decade Child Rights Hero!”

“Wow, thank you so much!” Malala exclaims and continues:

“I was honoured to receive the World’s Children’s Prize in 2014, and then today to have this title as Decade Child Rights Hero added is a huge honour. It will give me more motivation to continue my activism for girls’ education. I have this mission to see all girls receiving twelve years of safe, quality and free education.”

“Dear Malala, please tell us more about your advice regarding girls’ equal rights,” asks Samra.

“All over the world there are 127 million girls who don’t have access to school. These girls have dreams, just like us! They want to be doctors, teachers, computer scientists and leaders, but lack of education deprives them of these opportunities.

“I have started Malala Fund to see a world where all girls can lead without fear. Sometimes girls are denied the right to education just because they are girls so this is a big mission, but we can make it happen.

“We know that when girls are educated we reduce poverty and the likelihood of conflicts, we also help in mitigating climate change. So education has social and economic advantages for whole countries, and for girls. It is important for you children to keep dreaming big and to help bring the change that you want to see, and make this world a better place for all,” concludes Malala.

“Meeting you Malala has been like a dream come true for us. You really are a Child Rights Hero,” says Viggo.



... and speak at the WCP Ceremony

Samra and Viggo are just as nervous when they go up on stage during the World's Children's Prize ceremony as when they spoke to Malala. They bow and curtsy to the Queen before taking the final few steps towards the podium, where they stand in front of all the jury children.

“When I was six years old, we fled from Eritrea. I had to leave my grandmother and everyone I love. I really like working with the World's Children's Prize Program. I have learnt about people who fight for children's rights. I have learnt the rights that I have by taking part in the program.

I have learnt a lot about girls' rights. For me it is important that everyone around the world makes sure that girls' rights are a priority. Leaders should put this on the top of their agenda.

It is really cool that millions of children take part in the program at the same time. It makes sure that we, the children, know about our rights.”

Samra, 12, Gate School, Arvika

“I really do believe that the Child Rights Heroes are more powerful than any superheroes you see in the movies.

World's Children's Prize has helped a lot of children to learn about their rights. Something they wouldn't have known otherwise. I now have more knowledge about how girls are treated and their rights. I didn't know much about this before.

I strongly believe that taking part in the World's Children's Prize Program has made an impact on me and changed the way I look upon the world we all live in. I am sure that if all children around the world could take part in the World's Children's Prize Program we could create a better future for everyone!”

Viggo, 12, Gate School, Arvika

Yanga, winner of Idols SA in South Africa, performed at the WCP ceremony together with fellow singers Simthandile and Thato.



Be a whistleblower when something isn't right!

All the adults who help you and other children to organize the WCP program must respect children's rights. If, while working with the WCP program, you witness a child being treated wrongly, or you yourself are treated wrongly, you must say something. People who report something that is wrong are called whistleblowers.

You should always try and talk to an adult you trust at your school or where you live first. If that's not possible, you can contact WCP.

Some examples of things that should not happen in connection with running the WCP program are if an adult, such as a teacher, headteacher or another person, subjects a child to:

- Violence, including sexual violence.
- Bullying, hate speech or another form of psychological violence.
- Infringement of a child's privacy (for example, if someone takes a photo of you or publishes personal information about you, even though you don't want them to or you haven't been asked).

If what you're reporting has nothing to do with the WCP program, you must always contact an adult you know and trust instead. If you or someone else needs urgent, immediate help, you should contact the police.

The Globe is free!

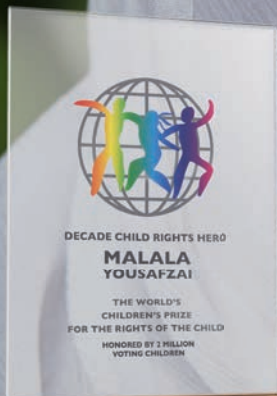
The Globe is a free teaching aid that can be used by the children taking part in the WCP program. If you see anyone selling The Globe, or selling something else related to the WCP program in order to earn money, that's wrong. Tell us here at WCP, or ask an adult you trust to contact us.

How to report

The safest way to report what has happened to WCP is to use our Whistleblower form at worldschildrensprize.org/whistle. Then your report will be sent to a person in a position of responsibility at WCP, who will handle your information in confidence.



Malala



“I was honored to receive the World’s Children’s Prize in 2014, and then today to have this title as Decade Child Rights Hero added is a huge honor. It will give me more motivation to continue my activism for girls’ education. I have this mission to see all girls receiving safe, quality and free education. All over the world there are 127 million girls who don’t have access to school. These girls have dreams, just like us!”

In the 2014 Global Vote, two million children voted for Malala Yousafzai to receive the *World’s Children’s Prize for the Rights of the Child*. And now almost another two million children have chosen Malala to be the *Decade Child Rights Hero* from among all the Child Rights Heroes who received the World’s Children’s Prize between 2011 and 2019.