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WORLD'S CHILDREN'S PRIZE MAGAZINE #54/55 2012

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

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

PREMIO DE LOS NIÑOS
DEL MUNDO POR LOS
DERECHOS DEL NIÑO

PRÊMIO DAS CRIANÇAS
DO MUNDO PELOS
DIREITOS DA CRIANÇA

बाल अधिकारों हेतु
विश्व बाल पुरस्कार

WORLD'S CHILDREN'S



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

Thanks! Tack! Merci! ¡Gracias! Obrigado!
धन्यवाद நன்றி سپاس! شكراً! ขอบคุณ CẢM ƠN

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PRIZE for the Rights of the Child



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شکریہ! مہربانی! :ကျေးဇူးတင်ကြား!

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WHAT IS THE WORLD'S CHILDREN'S PRIZE?

The goal of the World's Children's Prize programme is to work towards a more humane world, where the rights of the child are respected by all. Students at all schools that have registered as Global Friend schools are welcome to participate. There are now 57,530 Global Friend schools, with 27 million students in 102 countries.

Every year the programme ends with the children holding a Global Vote to decide who should receive the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child and who should be the children's honorary prize laureates. As many as 7.1 million children have voted in one year. Before the prizes are awarded, several million children have learned about the rights of the child and democracy in the following stages:

1. The opening of the 2012 World's Children's Prize

(page 110)

The World's Children's Prize programme is launched by children all over the world announcing the three prize candidates of the year, who have been selected by the World's Children's Prize Child Jury. The children also discuss how the rights of the child are respected where they live and in their country. You can organise a World's Children's Press Conference on 25 January and invite local media, or you can hold an opening ceremony at your school on any day. It may be just for students, or you might want to invite parents and/or local politicians and others. Naturally, it should be you children who lead the press conference or opening ceremony – the adults should only be there to listen.

2. The rights of the child in your life

(pages 14–15)

You can also read the factsheet on the child rights situation in your country (available on the website). How are the rights of the child respected in your and your friends' lives? At home? At school? Where you live? In your country? Discuss how things should be, and prepare presentations on how things should be, for parents, teachers, politicians, other adults and the media.

3. The rights of the child in the world

(pages 5–13, 16–17, 49–109)

Read about the jury children,

how the world's children are, and about the prize candidates and the children they fight for.

4. Prepare your Global Vote

(pages 18–48)

Read about children all over the world who vote in the Global Vote, set a date for your own Global Vote Day, and prepare everything you'll need for a democratic election. Invite the media, your parents, and politicians to experience the day with you.

5. Global Vote Day

Celebrate the day with a party and some performances. Report the results for all three candidates by 15 May 2012, in the ballot box on the website, or to the coordinator in your country, if there is one.

6. The big announcement!

On the same day worldwide, it's time to announce who has been selected to receive the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child. Invite all media representatives in your area to a World's Children's Press Conference on that day. Take the chance to talk about the improvements in respect for the rights of the child that you'd like to see. If you can't hold a press conference you could hold a ceremony for your school to announce the results.

7. The Award Ceremony and close of the programme

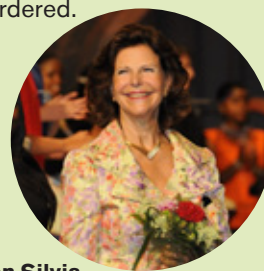
(pages 113–115)

The World's Children's Prize programme ends with the

Award Ceremony at Gripsholm Castle in Mariefred, Sweden. All three prize candidates receive prize money towards their work for children. The total prize money for 2012 is 100,000 US dollars. The jury children lead the ceremony, and Queen Silvia of Sweden helps to present the prizes. Every school that has participated in the World's Children's Prize can organise its own closing ceremony, which could include showing the video from the Award Ceremony, which can be ordered.

Queen Silvia and Mandela patrons

Three global legends are serving as patrons and Honorary Adult Friends of the World's Children's Prize: Nelson Mandela, democracy champion Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma, and freedom fighter Xanana Gusmão, now Prime Minister of East Timor. The patrons also include Queen Silvia of Sweden and world leader Graça Machel (theelders.org). You can find more patrons at www.worldschildrensprize.org.



Queen Silvia of Sweden



Nelson Mandela and Graça Machel.

Age limit for the World's Children's Prize

The World's Children's Prize programme is open to anyone from the age of ten up to the age of 17. The upper age limit is because the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child says that you are a child until you turn 18. There are several reasons for the lower age limit.

Too upsetting

To be able to vote in the Global Vote, you must first read carefully about the three candidates and the children they fight for. Sometimes, the children's

life stories are terrible, and can be frightening for younger children. Unfortunately, we are not yet able to create resources for anyone under ten.

Talk to an adult

The prize candidates often work for children who have been subjected to terrible violations of their rights. Even children over ten can find it upsetting to read about them. It is therefore important that you have an adult to talk to once you have read the stories.





▶ WHAT DOES THE CHILD JURY DO?

The members of the World's Children's Prize Child Jury are experts on the rights of the child through their own life experiences. They can be members of the jury until they turn 18. Every jury child primarily represents all the children in the world who share the same experiences. However, they also represent children of their own country and continent. Whenever possible, the jury includes children from all continents and all major religions.

- The jury members share their life stories and what violations of the rights of the child that they have experienced themselves or that they fight for. In this way, they teach millions of children around the world about the rights of the child.
- 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 Child jury leads the annual conclusion of the World's Children's Prize program, the grand Award Ceremony.
- The jury members are ambassadors for the World's Children's Prize in their home countries and throughout the world.
- During the week of the Award Ceremony, the members of the jury visit schools in Sweden and talk about their lives and about the rights of the child.

You can meet the jury members here.



Gabatshwane Gumede, 17, SOUTH AFRICA

Gabatshwane's parents died of AIDS when she was little. Despite the fact that Gaba is HIV negative, many people were afraid of catching HIV from her. She had no friends, and everyone at school laughed at her. Where Gaba lives, most people are unemployed. Many are HIV positive, and many children are orphans. Violations of the rights of the child are common. These days, no-one laughs at Gaba. She is a singer and a child rights champion, and many children look up to her. Whenever she can, Gaba buys food for the poor, and gives orphaned school friends food parcels.

"I demand that our politicians work for the rights of the child. I have discussed this with South Africa's Minister of Education, and with many other politicians."
Gabatshwane represents children who have been orphaned by AIDS and children who fight for the rights of vulnerable children.



Hannah Taylor, 16, CANADA

When Hannah was five, she saw a homeless man eating out of a garbage can. Since then, she has been speaking to school children, politicians, executives and the Prime Minister of Canada, to tell them that no-one should have to be homeless. She founded a charity that has raised over a million US dollars for projects for the homeless, and she has started an educational programme for schools.

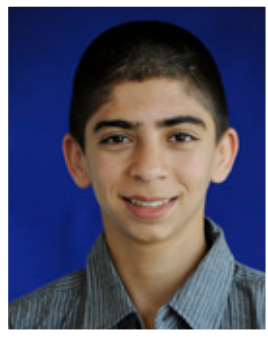
"We want to show that everyone can get involved and make a difference for homeless people and the rights of the child. We all need to share what we have and care about each other. When I was at a home for homeless teenagers, I gave all the children a hug. One of the quiet ones said: 'Until today I thought no-one liked me, but now I know that you like me.'"
Hannah represents children who fight for the rights of the child, especially for homeless children's rights.



Maria Elena Morales Achahui, 16, PERU

Maria Elena left her village in the mountains when she was 12, without telling her parents. She has seven siblings, and she knew that her family was struggling financially. She also thought the teaching in the village school was poor. In the city of Cusco, she became an unpaid maid for her aunt, receiving only pocket money. She had to work so much that she couldn't go to school. When she complained, her aunt threatened to beat her. Maria Elena missed her family so much, and eventually went home for a visit. When she returned to her aunt's house, she was thrown out onto the street. Now Maria Elena lives at a home run by an organisation called Caith. She goes to school and is part of a group that works to defend maids' rights.

Maria Elena represents girls who work as maids, often under slave-like conditions, and fights for their rights.



Hamoodi Mohamad Elsalameen, 14, PALESTINE

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

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

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

"I like playing football, but we don't have a pitch in our village. We usually play on a field further away, but when the Israeli soldiers come to arrest someone, they drive us away. They take away all the fun things," says Hamoodi. *Hamoodi represents children in conflict areas and children living under occupation.*

Brianna Audinett, 15, USA

When Brianna was eleven, her mother left her violent father. Brianna and her three brothers became homeless in Los Angeles. They moved around a lot, sometimes staying in motels, but motels don't allow five people to share a room. Eventually they found a place in a shelter. They lived here for many months, sleeping with other homeless people in bunk beds in a dormitory. They always had to be quiet, and



could hardly ever play. But opposite the shelter was the School on Wheels, which gave Brianna and her brothers somewhere to play, school materials and help with their homework.

"When I grow up I want to be a doctor, and help homeless people," says Brianna. "They don't have any money, but I'll help them anyway." Brianna and her family now have their own home. *Brianna represents children who are homeless.*



Lisa Bonongwe, 16, ZIMBABWE

When Lisa was four, her father drank and beat her mother almost every night. Sometimes until she was unconscious on the floor. When Lisa cried and shouted at him to stop, he chased her and her big brother out of the house.

"We had to sleep on the veranda, even in the middle of winter when it was freezing," she says.

When she was seven, her mother threw her father out and Lisa joined the Girl Child Network girls' club at her school. They teach girls about their rights.

"At the girls' club, we talk about things that are important to us. Girls aren't safe at all in Zimbabwe. We are abused and raped, and we have to do all the housework. If there isn't enough money for everyone, it's always the boys who are allowed to go to school. I help organise meetings and demonstrations for girls' rights." *Lisa represents children who fight for girls' rights.*



PHOTO: KIM NAYLOR

The members of the child jury open the Award Ceremony. Queen Silvia helps them present the awards.





Mae Segovia, 13, THE PHILIPPINES

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

"I miss my family, but I love going to school and my life is better here," she says. *Mae represents children who have been exploited by the sex industry and children who fight for the rights of the child.*

Nuzhat Tabassum Promi, 14, BANGLADESH

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

"Global warming is causing the ice at the North and South Poles and in the Himalayas to melt. As a result we are hit harder by cyclones and flooding," says Nuzhat. "When I was on my way to school the day after the mega-cyclone, there were dead and injured people all over the place."

Nuzhat lives in the little town of Barisal in southern Bangladesh. Every morning

she puts on her school uniform, hails a cycle rickshaw and gets a lift to school. "Cyclones – very severe storms – affect Bangladesh every year. But the country is well-prepared, and has a good cyclone warning system. The absolute worst thing that has happened to me in my life was when I thought our school had been destroyed by the mega-cyclone."

Nuzhat represents children who have their rights violated through natural disasters and environmental degradation, as well as children who demand respect for girls' rights.



Mofat Maninga, 15, KENYA

"I want to talk to the President of Kenya and tell him that life is hard for children. I want to tell him that his policemen beat children who live on the street and put them in prison. In prison! How can you lock a child up just because he or she is forced to live on the street? How can you steal a child's freedom? I would tell the President that he should take care of the children instead. Give them a place to live, something to eat and the chance to go to school."

When Mofat was eight years old, his mother died of AIDS.

"My grandmother had taken care of her, and she hadn't told me how ill my mother was. It came as a shock. I felt so alone."

A couple of years later, Mofat also became ill. His grandmother took care of him, but when she died, the rest of the family kicked him out of the



house. Mofat was 13 years old and had to live on the street. But today Mofat lives in a home for street children and goes to school again. *Mofat represents children who are HIV positive and children who live on the street.*

Liv Kjellberg, 13, SWEDEN

"It starts with being teased for something, like wearing the wrong clothes, being shy or looking different," says Liv. "Then it continues with pushing and shoving, and it just gets worse and worse." Liv found herself excluded by the other girls right from the first year of school. She had to sit on her own in the school canteen, and she was subjected to shoving and taunting.

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

Liv got involved and raised money so that the organisation Friends, which works to combat bullying, could come to her school.

"Now things are better in class and no-one bullies other people. And I have seven close friends at school."

Liv represents children who are bullied and children who fight against bullying.



MORE CHILD JURY

Poonam Thapa, 16, NEPAL

Represents and fights for trafficked girls who are sold as slaves to brothels, and all girls who are subjected to abuse. *Pages 8–9*



David Pullin, 15, UNITED KINGDOM

Represents children who have been separated from their parents and are cared for by society, as well as children who fight for the rights of the child. *Pages 10–11*



Ndale Nyengela, 14, D.R. CONGO

Represents child soldiers and children involved in armed conflict. *Pages 12–13*



Emelda Zamambo, 12, MOZAMBIQUE

Represents orphans and children who fight for the rights of the child. *Pages 34–39*



Children who are being appointed to the jury:

A representative for child slaves and child labourers, PAKISTAN

A representative for children in conflict areas and children who want to have a dialogue for peace, ISRAEL

A representative for disabled children





The man who sold Poonam was taken away. Nepal has a new law against trafficking, and he could be sentenced to 20 years in jail and made to pay the equivalent of five years' salary to Poonam.

Traffickers often visited the village, trying to lure young girls away with false job offers. Their parents didn't always understand the danger. They thought the offers sounded like fantastic opportunities – and they meant one less mouth to feed and one more wage.

Since Poonam was an orphan, she travelled to the Indian city of Shimla at a very young age, to pick apples and mushrooms and work as a waitress. That was where she met the man, who was a few years older than her.

Tricked and sold

When Poonam was 14 and living back in her home village in Nepal, the love of her life suggested that they should run away together to the big city of Mumbai to get married and live together.

"But you have to run away the day after me, so that nobody suspects that we ran away together. Then we'll meet in India," the man said to Poonam.

After several days in different cars and buses, Poonam arrived at a house in a dark alleyway on the outskirts of the Indian city of Mumbai, home to fourteen million people. But something wasn't right. The room was full of girls. Some of them were even younger than her. The man she was meant to be meeting was nowhere to be seen.

One of the women in the house told Poonam to have a bath and change into a short skirt. Then someone put

"You tricked me!" shouts Poonam angrily at the man who sold her to a brothel.

Poonam

got trafficker jailed

When Poonam Thapa from Nepal met an older man, he tricked her and sold her to a brothel in India. Today, Poonam is free and a member of the World's Children's Prize child jury. Recently she managed to get the man who sold her arrested and put in jail.

"You tricked me into running away and promised we'd get married!" shouts Poonam to the older man being held down on a bench at the Maiti Nepal centre in the capital city of Kathmandu.

Poonam recognised the man when he visited Maiti Nepal a week ago to look for

his missing wife. She didn't dare say anything until he had left. But when Poonam explained that he was the man who had sold her, they tricked him into coming back.

"I have never seen this girl and never been to India," says the man. Poonam can't hold back any longer.

"I know your father's name, I know that he's blind in one

eye, so don't lie to me!"

The founder of Maiti Nepal, Anuradha Koirala, calls the police and asks Poonam, who is now 16, to tell the whole story from the start.

Poonam grew up in the village of Ichtko, in one of the poorest countries in the world – Nepal. The young people in the village used to dream of another life.





make-up on her. The men who turned up forced her to drink alcohol, and she heard the others talking about ‘customers’.

“What’s a customer?” she asked Mala, one of the older girls.

“You’ve been sold. This is a brothel,” replied Mala.

Living hell

That evening, lots of men came to the brothel. Poonam refused to let them touch her. She cried, screamed, kicked and bit them. They held her down, whipped her with electrical cables and burned her with cigarettes until she gave in. Poonam was exploited by ten to fifteen men every day. When she tried to escape she was captured. After ten months, the Indian police stormed in. They had received a tip-off that there were children in the brothel, and they took Poonam with them.

That was how Poonam came to the organisation Maiti Nepal, which received



the 2002 World’s Children’s Prize for its work with girls who have been trafficked and exploited.

Police on their way

The Chief Inspector’s walkie-talkie crackles as he stomps into the room at Maiti Nepal where Poonam and the man who sold her are waiting.

“Yes, okay, I sold Poonam for 40,000 Indian rupees (USD 1000), but it was the first and last time I’ve ever sold a girl!” confesses the man who Poonam reported.

The room falls silent. According to Nepal’s new

Human Trafficking Act, the man could be sentenced to 20 years in prison and have to pay Poonam the equivalent of five years’ salary.

“As long as there are people who are prepared to sell other people, it’s hard for us police to react fast enough,” says the police officer. He thinks Poonam is incredibly brave.

“If she hesitates even slightly, it makes it hard to get him convicted,” he says, leading the trafficker to the prison van.

Poonam slumps down in a seat, exhausted. Despite everything, the future looks

bright for her. At Maiti Nepal, she and other survivors receive support and training.

On the World’s Children’s Prize jury, Poonam represents and fights for girls who have been subjected to trafficking and sold to brothels as slaves, as well as all girls who have been abused.

Poonam gives H.M. Queen Silvia of Sweden flowers during the World’s Children’s Prize ceremony at Gripsholm Castle in Mariefred, Sweden.

More slaves today

200,000 girls and women from Nepal are slaves at brothels in India. Every year, 12,000 new girls arrive, many of them under 16. There are thought to be 1.2 million sex slaves in the world. The turnover of the global sex trafficking industry is estimated to be at least USD 9.5 billion, and up to USD 32 billion.

There are at least 12.3 million slaves in the world today, roughly the same amount as the total number of slaves sent to Europe and America from the 15th century to the 19th century. Others estimate that there are 27 million slaves in the world today.



"All the members of Staffordshire's County Council have signed an assurance, The Pledge, drawn up by us in the Children in Care Council, in which they promise to fulfil our rights," says David.

STAFFORDSHIRE'S PLEDGE

To Children & Young People in Care.

The Pledge is a set of promises made to children in the care of Staffordshire County Council. All adults who work for and with the Council have a duty to make sure you

David fights for children

David's mother and father were alcoholics, and when he was young he was often left alone all day long. Today, he lives with a foster family and fights for children with a similar background. David Pullin, 15, from the UK, is a new member of the World's Children's Prize jury, representing children who have been separated from their parents and are taken care of by the state.

"I lived with my mum and dad when I was young. They were alcoholics and they often left me alone in our flat when they went out drinking. Sometimes I was alone all day long. Because I was locked in, I couldn't go anywhere. There was never enough to eat, only things like crisps, biscuits and maybe a little bit of bread. I had no friends and often put myself to bed. That was hard, because I was afraid of the dark. When I started going to pre-school, the teachers realised something was wrong. I was malnourished and I was

always wearing dirty clothes that were too small. And since I wasn't used to being with other people, I mostly just sat on my own in a corner. My mum often smelt of alcohol when she dropped me off and picked me up. My dad ended up in jail and my teachers contacted social services and told them I wasn't being looked after properly at home.

When I was seven, it was decided that I should move in with a foster family. I was really worried – even when everything's terrible at home,

you still want to be with your own mum and dad. Would the new family be nice to me? Would they like me?"

Children's Voice

"But as soon as I got there, I felt safe. They hugged me and welcomed me. It wasn't long before they felt like my own family. And I started to make friends at school. Despite all that, I still felt a bit lonely, since nobody else shared my experiences. Then my social worker told me about the Children's Voice Project, a forum where children who have been in care can meet up and talk about what they've been through, and support one another. I have now been involved with Children's Voice for three years. To begin with it was all about me

needing support, but now my focus is more on supporting others who need my help. Because even though I had a tough time when I was younger, I've still been lucky. I have a fantastic new family and life is good for me. But I know that not all children in care are as lucky as me, and I want to fight for their rights.

"I've been involved in developing a child-friendly information pack that every child who is taken into care will receive. It's full of information about the rights of the child and bullying, as well as important phone numbers for hospitals, social services and

"It is my dream for all children who are in care, to be able to live a good life and to have their rights respected, just like other children."



“I have now been involved with Children’s Voice for three years. To begin with it was all about me needing support, but now my focus is more on supporting others who need my help,” says David.



in care

the people responsible for the rights of the child in the government. It’s important that all children in care know their rights, and who they should turn to to make sure they are respected.”

Children in Care Council

“Where I live in Staffordshire, there is a Children in Care Council. All twelve members of the Council are children who have been in care. The other children in the Children’s Voice Project wanted me to be on the Children in Care Council, so I’ve been on it for two years now. One of the things I’ve helped achieve is to make sure that children in care get more pocket money. Along with adult members of the County Council, I visit children’s homes to make sure that that the children who live there are well looked after. If the furniture and doors are broken, or if the windows aren’t clean and the place is dirty,

I report it to the County Council and it gets fixed. One boy at one of the homes only got half the amount of pocket money he was entitled to. I went to the Director of the home and the County Council and complained, and it was sorted by the next day! Another very important job I have through the Children in Care Council is to help interview adults who want to work with children in care. I look for adults who always put the children’s best interests first, and who are understanding and good fun! So far, the adults have always given the jobs to the people we have recommended!”

Adults listen

“In general, I feel that the authorities here in Staffordshire are good at listening to us children in care. It was actually the authorities that started both the Children’s Voice Project and the Children in Care Council

– things that give us the chance to have an influence on important issues that affect us. Recently, all the members of the County Council signed a special pledge drawn up by the Children in Care Council. In it, they promise to fulfil our rights. I am so happy about that, because that’s exactly what I’m fighting for. For us to be respected and to have a voice. My dream is for all children in care to have good lives, and to have their rights

respected just like all other children.

My mum has stopped drinking now, and we meet up regularly, but we have decided that I’m going to stay with my new family until I’m an adult.”

David represents children who have been separated from their parents and are taken care of by the state, and children fighting for these children’s rights.

TEXT: ANDREAS LÖNN

Bikes for all!

“Children in care often don’t have a bike of their own, and I think that’s wrong – we want to have fun like everyone else. I talked with the authorities about this, and said that I thought all children who couldn’t afford it themselves, or whose foster families couldn’t afford it, should get a free bike from the County. They agreed! But they said that they’d leave it to us on the Children in Care Council to start up the project. Right now there are twelve children cycling around on bikes they have received from us!”



“This is your pen now,” said the soldier, handing a rifle to Ndale Nyengela, who had been kidnapped by an armed group in D.R. Congo at the age of 11.

Today, Ndale is 14, free, and a new member of the World’s Children’s Prize jury.

“It was an ordinary day. I woke up at sunrise, washed and put on my school uniform. I picked up my bag with my pen, jotter and ruler, and went out to meet my classmates. There were six of us,

Ndale

forced to swap his pen for a rifle

half walking, half running, because we were a bit late.

We took a shortcut on a path through the forest. Suddenly we spotted two armed soldiers among the trees. They shouted for us, and it was too late to run away.

‘Where are you going, boys?’ asked one of the soldiers.

He took our schoolbags and emptied them onto the

ground. They also found the money I had with me to pay my school fees and buy beans. It was market day, and my mother had asked me to buy two kilos of brown beans.

‘You understand, boys, that in this country there are not enough soldiers. So now it’s time for you to help out,’ said the other soldier.

‘But we’re on our way to school,’ I said.

‘Listen! If you think you can refuse, we might as well just shoot you right here. Got it?’ he said, smacking our heads with a stick.

Ndale was on his way to school when he was kidnapped and forced to become a soldier. After three years he managed to flee.

“Now my life has begun again,” he says.

I was terrified, and I thought God must have forgotten about me. Otherwise why would I have ended up in this mess? I thought about my mother and father and my siblings.”

Nightmare was real

“We walked for three days without eating or sleeping. We weren’t allowed to talk to one other. When we walked too slowly they kicked us and shouted all sorts of things. I was so tired. One evening they burned our school uniforms. The whole thing was like a nightmare. But it was real.

After three days we reached their camp. When I saw all the soldiers and the terrible huts they lived in, made of branches and sheets of plastic, I thought:

‘This is the end of my life.

“Yes to school, no more military camps”, says one of the placards. With the organisation, BVES Ndale and other freed child soldiers receive help working through their terrible experiences and get to start going to school again. But first they have to take off their uniforms.

I’m a schoolchild, what am I meant to do among all these weapons?’

One of the soldiers gave us uniforms and weapons.

‘This is your pen now,’ he said, passing me a rifle.

The uniform was much too big for me, but a woman cut off the sleeves and legs.

There were other child soldiers in the camp. They asked me if we had any money. But we didn’t. The next day, we started rifle training. The whole time I was thinking:

‘I don’t want to learn to shoot. I’m a schoolchild!’

Once we knew how to handle our weapons, they said now it was time to learn to kill people.

‘That tree there is a person. Make sure you hit the heart!’”



At war

“One morning, after two months in the camp, we woke up to shocked voices:

‘The enemy is coming for revenge! Everyone take up your arms!’

A few days previously, soldiers from our camp had attacked another army and stolen a cow and lots of other things. Now this army was coming to take back the stolen goods.

We children had to go first. That was always how it worked. We hid in the forest, near a road. Someone began to shoot. I can’t describe how scared I was. It was my first battle and it was still dark. I couldn’t understand what was happening. People were falling down dead beside me. People were screaming. All the shooting. I felt utterly overwhelmed by feelings of fear. When I tried to hide, the other soldiers shoved me forward and said:

‘If your friend dies, it doesn’t matter. Just step over him! It’s your duty.’

Two of my school friends were killed on the very first day. The fighting continued for twelve days. All that over a cow.

When I got back to the camp, I hadn’t slept or eaten for several days. But when I finally got the chance to sleep, I couldn’t, because of all the thoughts and nightmares about what I had been through.”

Flight

“I spent three years in that army. One day one of my friends, a grown-up soldier, came to me and said:

‘Let’s run away together! I heard on the radio that UN troops and people from something called BVES are here to help set child soldiers free.’

His plan was to get hold of civilian clothes from one of the travelling salesmen who came to the camp. We would

put the clothes on under our uniforms and run away during the night.

We crept out at night. Once we were deep in the forest we threw away our weapons and took off our uniforms. We slept in the forest and then we managed to walk in our civilian clothes, all the way to the place where we had heard child soldiers were being set free. We hurried there.

‘We just fled from an army and you can see that he is a child. Will you take care of him?’ said my friend to a man from BVES, who was standing beside a large white UN car.

‘Don’t be scared, we’ll take care of you,’ the man said to me.

I was so happy, and my life began again. Here at BVES, I am calm. Here, I get to go to school. My favourite subjects are music, English, geography and history.

When I am finished my studies I want to make music about what it’s like to be in the army, and about the rights of the child, so that everyone understands what rights children have. I want

to stop children from being made to become soldiers. All adults must remember that they have been children. Many adults forget that. But I also want to be able to take care of my parents.”

Ndale represents child soldiers and children in armed conflicts.



“Yes to school uniforms” and “No more military uniforms” it says on two of the placards. The child soldiers have taken off their uniforms to burn them.





ILLUSTRATION: LOTTA MELLGREN/ESTER

Celebrate the rights of

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child consists of 54 articles. We have summarised a few of them here. Read the full text of the Convention here: www.worldschildrensprize.org

Basic principles of the Convention:

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

Article 1
These rights apply to all children under 18 in the world.

Article 2
All children are equal.
All children have the same rights and should not be discriminated against.

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

Article 3
Those who make decisions affecting children must put the interests of the children first.

Article 6
You have the right to life and the right to develop.

Article 7
You have the right to a name and a nationality.

Article 9
You have the right to live with your parents unless it's bad for you.

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

Articles 12–15
All children have the right to say what they think. You are to be consulted and your opinions respected in all matters concerning you – at home, at school and by the authorities and the courts.

Article 18

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

Article 19
You have the right to protection from all forms of violence, neglect, abuse and mistreatment. You should not be exploited by your parents or other guardians.

Articles 20–21
You are entitled to receive care if you have lost your family.

Article 22
If you have been forced to leave your country you have the same rights as all the other children in your new country. If you are alone you have the right to special protection and

20 November is a day of celebration for all the children in the world. It was on that day in 1989 that the UN adopted the CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD. It applies to you and all other children under 18. All the countries in the world except Somalia and the USA have ratified (pledged to follow) the Convention. This means they are obliged to take children's rights into consideration and to listen to what children have to say.

I demand respect for the rights of the child!

the child

help. If possible you should be reunited with your family.

Article 23

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

Article 24

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

Articles 28–29

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

Article 30

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

Article 31

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

Article 32

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

Article 34

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

Article 35

No one is allowed to kidnap or sell you.

Article 37

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

Article 38

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

Article 42

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





How are the world

2.2 BILLION CHILDREN UNDER 18 IN THE WORLD

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

Name and nationality

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

Every year, 137 million children are born. Around 51 million of these children are never registered. There is no documented proof that they exist!

A home, clothing, food and security

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

More than half of the world's children live in poverty. Around 700 million children have less than 1.25 US dollars (0.80 UK pounds) a day to live on. An additional 500 million live on less than 2 US dollars a day.

Survive and grow

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

1 in 17 children (1 in 8 in the poorest countries) dies before reaching the age of 5, usually due to causes that could have been prevented.

Health and health care

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

Every day 21,000 children under the age of 5 die (7.6 million a year) of diseases caused by lack of food, clean water, hygiene and health care. Vaccinations against the most common childhood illnesses help save 2.5 million lives a year. But 1 in 5 children is never vaccinated.

Every year, 2 million children die of diseases that can be prevented by vaccination. 4 out of 10 children in the 50 poorest countries do not have access to clean water. Every year 1 million people die of malaria, most of them children. Only 2 in 10 children with malaria receive treatment, and only 2 in 10 children in the poorest malarial countries sleep under a mosquito net.

Children with disabilities

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

Children with disabilities are among the most vulnerable in the world. In many countries they are not allowed to go to school. Many are treated like inferior beings and are kept hidden away. There are 150 million children with disabilities in the world.

's children?

Children who live on the street

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

For 60 million children, the streets are their only home. An additional 90 million work and spend the day on the street but return home to their families in the evenings.

Hazardous child labour

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

Around 306 million children work, and for most of them, the work they do is directly harmful to their safety, health, morale and education.

Some 10 million children are forced into the worst forms of child labour, as debt slaves, child soldiers or prostitutes. Every year, 1.2 million children are 'trafficked' in the modern day slave trade.

Crime and punishment

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

At least 1 million children are being held in prison. Imprisoned children are often treated badly.

Minority children

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

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

Protection in war and flight

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

Over the last 10 years at least 2 million children have been killed in war. 6 million have suffered serious physical injuries. 10 million have suffered serious psychological harm. 1 million have lost or become separated from their parents. Tens of thousands of children have been used as soldiers, carriers or mine clearers (over 1000 children are killed or injured by mines every year). 18 million children have had to flee their homes or countries.

School and education

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

More than 8 out of 10 children in the world go to school, but there are still 93 million children who get no education whatsoever. 6 out of 10 of these children are girls.

Protection from violence

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

Every year 40 million children are beaten so badly that they need medical care. 30 countries have forbidden all forms of corporal punishment for children, so only 4 out of 100 children are fully protected from violence by law. Many countries still allow corporal punishment in schools.

YOUR VOICE MUST BE HEARD!

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

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

WHAT IS THE GLOBAL VOTE?



All pupils at Global Friend schools have the right to vote in the Global Vote up until you reach the age of 18. In the Global Vote, you decide who should be given the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child 2012. You can visit Global Vote Day in different countries on pages 19–48.

Once you have discussed how children's rights are followed where you live, and once you've read about the jury members and the children who take part in the Global Vote, about the candidates and the children they are fighting for, then it's time to start preparing for your own Global Vote Day.

Invite the media

As soon as you've agreed on the date of your Global Vote, you need to invite all the local media to attend. The newspaper cuttings here are from Global Votes in Sweden and India.

Secret ballot

A lot of preparation is needed to make sure that the Global Vote is a democratic election, in which voters are guaranteed that their vote will be kept secret. No-one should know who you voted for unless you tell them yourself. You need to prepare:

- *Electoral register:* Everyone who has the right to vote should be on the list and should be ticked off when they are given their ballot paper, or when they vote.
- *Ballot papers:* Use the ones you get from the World's Children's Prize, or make your own.
- *Voting booths:* You can borrow voting booths from adult elections, or make your own. You enter the booths one at a time so that no-one sees who you're voting for.
- *Ballot boxes:* You will see various kinds of ballot boxes in The Globe. They can be made out of cardboard boxes, for example, or a large can or woven palm leaves.
- *Ink to prevent cheating:* Ink on the thumb, a painted nail, a mark on the hand or face, there are lots of ways to show that you have already voted.
- *Appoint presiding officer, election supervisors and vote counters:* The election officers tick off the names on the electoral register and hand out ballot papers. The election supervisors make sure that the election, ink marking and vote counting has been done correctly. The vote counters count the votes and send in the results.



A calabash ballot box for the rights of the child in Nigeria.



Children in Kenya preparing ballot boxes and posters.



Election supervisors at Ogbomoso School of Science in Nigeria.



Children counting votes at an SOS Children's Village in Cameroon.

Celebration time!

When the vote is over, many celebrate children's rights and their Global Vote Day with performances, biscuits, tea and cake, or in some other way. Some organise a demonstration for children's rights.



Watch Global Vote video at www.worldschildrensprize.org

Lesson in democracy at Mbizi Primary School in Zimbabwe

The atmosphere is calm and ceremonious as the children drop their ballot papers in the clay pots that are Mbizi Primary School's ballot boxes. The school is in Zimbabwe's capital, Harare.

"This is so important for us. The World's Children's Prize is a lesson in democracy," says Vernon Muzorori, 12.

Visit the different Global Vote stations to see free and democratic elections!



Global Vote Presiding Officer declares polling station open



"I declare this polling station open at this hour: 14:18 hours! So we can start by sealing our ballot boxes," says Tinotenda Tongogara, 11, in a loud voice, padlocking the clay pots so that no-one will be able to add or remove ballot papers without being seen. Then the first students are allowed into the polling station and the voting is underway.

"I am the Global Vote Presiding officer today, and it is my responsibility to ensure that everything works here at the polling station. And so far it's going well! Everyone seems well prepared. Before the Vote, we all read The Globe magazine carefully – in our lessons at school, but also at the Girl Child Network girls' club, where I'm a member. Then we talked about what we have



learned, both about the rights of the child and about the candidates. And we can identify with many of the stories. For example, many children in Zimbabwe are forced to work too. The Globe is fantastic! I love the magazine!" says Tinotenda.





POLLING STATION →

Police officers

“OK, now you can enter the polling station,” says Panashe Makamba, 12, letting in the next student in the long, long queue of his schoolmates, all waiting to vote. Panashe is one of the day’s three police officers, and he’s in charge of letting people in.

“We monitor the queues, to make sure there is no fighting or confusion. It’s important that things stay under control, because otherwise everything could be ruined, and then we wouldn’t even have a voting result. When adults vote in their elections, fighting and unrest often break out. That makes it very difficult to get a fair, genuine election result. But there’s nothing like that at our election!” says Panashe.

“I help those who need help at the voting booth and ballot boxes. And I make sure everyone knows where to go,” says Munyaradzi Mazhangara, 13.

“I show people the way out of the polling station, and check that everyone who has voted has ink on their finger,” says Tanaka Murungweni, 12.



Panashe Makamba, 12, Munyaradzi Mazhangara, 13, and Tanaka Murungweni, 12, are police officers at the Global Vote.

The election police usher one voter at a time into the polling station.



Presiding officer 1 – the voting register



Pamela Madhibha, 10, Belinda Makawa, 12, and Everjoy Dumbu, 11, are presiding officers.

“We ask the name of each person who comes to vote, and then we strike their name off the voting register. If the person’s name isn’t on the list, they can’t vote. We also ask for the names to make sure no-one votes more than once. That’s important if the voting is to give a fair and genuine result,” says Everjoy Dumbu, 11.



Scanner operator

"I ask everyone who wants to vote to put both their hands into the scanner. Inside you can see whether they have ink on their fingers, and if anyone does they are not allowed to vote, since that means that they have already voted. I made this scanner myself. First I cut off the top and one of the sides of a milk carton. Then I covered the hole on the side with plastic film. Done!" says Monica Masvavike, 11, laughing.



Tsitsidzashe Chikanga, 11, is responsible for making sure everyone who votes dips their finger in ink.

Presiding officer 2 – ink marking

"I make sure that everyone who votes dips their finger into the ink, so that no-one can vote more than once. Now that we've learned all these steps for the Global Vote, we'll know how free and democratic elections work when we grow up," says Tsitsidzashe Chikanga, 11.



Rumbidzai Gondora, 11, Chantel Mhembere, 11, and Paidamoyo Mukwinya, 11, explain how to mark your ballot paper to vote for your chosen candidate.

Presiding officer 3 – ballot papers

"Choose your candidate and put a cross in the right place. If you do more than one cross, your ballot paper will not be counted!" says Paidamoyo Mukwinya, 11, passing a ballot paper over to one of her friends in the queue.

"Most of them are well prepared and know exactly what they're doing. And it's important to be prepared, to know who you're voting for and why. After all, this is about us and our rights!" says Chantel Mhembere, 11.



Monica Masvavike, 11, made her scanner to uncover any voting cheats.



Voting observers

Two girls stand diagonally behind the presiding officers, carefully watching the whole voting process.

“We make detailed notes of everything that happens here, inside the polling station. Our notes then become the documents that show what actually happened here today. It’s important that someone monitors democratic elections, otherwise it would be really easy for people to cheat, and then the voting wouldn’t be fair and the result would be wrong,” says Nyaradzo Muduve, 12.



Rutendo James Chakala, 11, Drusilla Tapah, 11, and Ashton Masona, 11, represent the candidates in the Global Vote.

Voting observers Kimberly Nhika, 13, and Nyaradzo Muduve, 12.



Candidate representatives

Sitting at a table in the polling station are representatives of the three candidates for 2011, who can offer last-minute information to undecided voters.

“I think Monira is fantastic! Just think about all the children who have been injured in acid attacks in Bangladesh who she has helped. She’s my hero!” says Drusilla Tapah, 11.

“Cecilia’s fantastic too! She fights for children affected by trafficking and child labour. I want to be like her when I grow up. I also want to give vulnerable children safety, love and the chance to go to school!” explains Rutendo James Chakala, 11.

“Murhabazi is a man who helps and protects children who are forced to be

soldiers and slaves. He is a very special, unusual man. All grown men should be like him. I want to be like him when I grow up,” says Ashton Masona, 11.

‘Opposition candidate’ Drusilla seems glad to hear that:

“Good! Because men exploit children here in Zimbabwe too. Children are subjected to rape and trafficking. Guys like Murhabazi are needed here too!” says Drusilla.





Finishing party!

As Mbizi Primary School's Global Vote Day draws to a close, all the students gather in the schoolyard to celebrate the rights of the child and the success of their voting day. Some of the students have put on dancing costumes and perform for the others.



Voting

"I participated in the Global Vote today, and it felt fantastic to be able to vote for people who fight for us. For vulnerable children all over the world. By voting, we support the candidates in their work, and so it feels like we're helping them out. And I think it's right that children are allowed to join in and help with really important things! There's also another reason why it's so important to participate in the Global Vote – because we children find out how a democratic election works, and we'll still remember that when we're adults. The World's Children's Prize is one big lesson in democracy!" says Vernon Muzorori, 12.



Impossible to cheat!

On the way out of the polling station, you have to show your ink-marked finger to the police officers on the door before they will let you out. No-one with an ink mark is allowed to come back and vote a second time.



Tanaka dreams of being a Prize candidate



“I got this strange feeling, almost like a dream, when I voted in the Global Vote today. I saw myself one day becoming a candidate who children can vote for, because I fight for vulnerable children. That’s a dream I plan to make a reality,” says Tanaka, 15, from Zimbabwe. She is an orphan, and was herself abused when she was small.

Tanaka grew up with her mother and grandmother, as her father died before she was even born. Her mother and grandmother worked on a tobacco farm, and all three of them lived there. When the adults were working in the fields, Tanaka went to nursery school with the other children. In time, she started school, and they always had enough food to eat.

“That was a really good time. A normal time. My mother and grandmother loved me and took care of me,” says Tanaka.

Tanaka casts her vote in the Global Vote. She wants to help other children whose rights have been violated, and she dreams of one day becoming a candidate for the World’s Children’s Prize.

But when she turned seven her mother fell seriously ill, and everything changed.

Mother died

“I tried to help my mother as much as I could. I fetched water and cooked food for her, but nothing helped. She just lay there. I was so worried I couldn’t even sleep.”

Tanaka found it hard to concentrate in school. Because her mother couldn’t manage to work, Tanaka had to quit school. They couldn’t afford for her to carry on. One night, after several months of ill health, Tanaka’s mother died in her sleep.

“I was so sad, I just screamed and cried. I missed my mother so much. Since my grandmother was getting too old and tired to work, I realised that nothing would be the same again.”

Things got worse

After the funeral, her grandmother managed to get in touch with Tanaka’s uncle, who promised to take care of her.

“I was surprised, and worried, since my uncle had thrown my mother out of our house when my father died. Why did he want to take care of me now? The only thing I



The friends at the safe village are like a family. Here they are eating breakfast together.

wanted was to stay with my grandmother, but that wasn't possible."

To begin with, life at Tanaka's uncle's house was much better than she had expected. They gave her food and clothes and let her go to school. But it didn't last long.

"One day, they accused me of spreading lies about their family. My uncle said I had told people that his family was bad and that they didn't treat me well. Although none of it was true, from that day

he treated me differently. He said the family had always disliked my mother, and they disliked me just as much. They started to give me less food and refused to pay my school fees, so I had to stop school again. My uncle's own children were well fed and went to school. I thought life couldn't get any worse or more unjust than this. But I was wrong.

"One night my half-brother, who was 26, had been out drinking beer at a bar and he

came home drunk. I woke up to find him in my bedroom, shouting at me because there was no food on the table. He tied a rag around my mouth and ripped my clothes off. I was only nine years old and I didn't understand what was going on. Afterwards, he said he'd kill me if I told anyone what had happened."

Girl Child Network

Early the next morning he went off and Tanaka was home alone for a few days.



Weekend clean up

"At the weekends we always clean inside our house, and sweep the yard. We also wash our clothes. But most importantly, we have time to play and just have fun!"

Violations of girls' rights in Zimbabwe



Tanaka's list of how girls' rights are violated in Zimbabwe:

No education

Girls often end up having to quit school if they lose their parents, because there is rarely anyone who is willing to pay for their education.

Being exploited

Girls who are orphaned often end up on the street, where they have to sell their bodies to survive.

Trafficking

Poor girls are tricked into moving from villages to cities, believing they will have a better life, but instead they are forced into hard agricultural work or prostitution. These girls are often taken to neighbouring countries like Botswana and South Africa.

Child marriage

Poor families can earn money from a young girl by selling her to a grown man as a bride – sometimes for as little as two sacks of maize.

➔ She was terrified, hoping and praying that this awful thing wouldn't happen again. But that didn't help. A while later, her half-brother took advantage of her again.

At first, Tanaka didn't dare tell anyone, because she was so afraid he would kill her. But one day, she met a friend from school who was a member of the Girl Child Network (GCN) girls' club. Without knowing what had happened to Tanaka, the girl told her about another girl at school who had been abused, and about how GCN had helped her.

"I couldn't bottle it up any longer – I told her everything. I wanted to get help too. I didn't dare tell my paternal grandmother, so my friend told her instead."

At first, Tanaka's grandmother was furious that



"The other girls in the safe village have been through similar things to me, and they understand me perfectly. They are like my sisters, and I feel loved."



Loves dancing

"I love dancing! I was so happy when we celebrated our Global Vote with singing and dancing, because our songs are all about us girls having rights too!" says Tanaka.

Tanaka had told a friend about what had happened. But when rumours started to spread among their neighbours, Tanaka's grandmother was persuaded to take Tanaka to Girl Child Network, where she would be safe. GCN took care of Tanaka. First they took her to hospital for medical care, and then she was allowed to move into a safe village for vulnerable girls. Her half-brother was arrested and ended up in jail.

"It was so wonderful to get to the safe village. It was as though I had come home. Finally, I had people around me who cared about me. The other girls in the village had been through similar things and understood me so well. They became my sisters, and the village mothers became my new mothers. I felt loved."

Loves The Globe

After a while, Tanaka was able to start back at school, and joined the Girl Child Network girls' club, who meet every Wednesday after lunch to talk about girls' rights.

"We often read *The Globe* at girls' club, and I have learned there that what happened to me when I was abused happens to children all over the world. It is so tragic. At the same time, just



Tanaka, 15

LOVES: Playing games and volleyball, dancing and singing.

HATES: Girls being abused.

BEST THING THAT'S HAPPENED: When GCN rescued me and brought me to live in the safe village for girls.

WORST THING THAT'S HAPPENED: That I was abused.

WANTS TO BE: A doctor and save girls and fight for their rights.

DREAM: For all girls to be well and happy and have the chance to do important things in life, like becoming a doctor.

knowing that means I don't feel so alone. We girls who live in the village support one another, and I feel the same way about all the vulnerable children in *The Globe* too. I think *The Globe* is incredibly important, since it's a magazine where children get the chance to tell their stories and give advice to other children on difficult and important matters. It feels like through reading it, we become friends with the children who share their stories, and that in some way we actually make life easier for one another. And reading about the candidates gives me energy and inspiration to be able to work hard at school, so that I can grow into someone who spends their life

fighting for vulnerable children. That's my dream!"

Global Vote

For Tanaka, it's not just the stories in *The Globe* that inspire and bring energy, but also the chance to participate in the Global Vote.

"When I voted today, it felt like I could freely state what I think. I could express my opinion completely. And my opinion is that the rights of the child must be respected everywhere, all over the world! Oh, and of course it was wonderful that the Global Vote, such an important day for us children, happened right here in my village, right beside my house. It's almost too good to be true!" 🌐

Girl Child Network

In 2007, Betty Makoni received the World's Children's Prize for her long struggle to ensure girls in Zimbabwe are protected from abuse and get the same chances in life as boys. Through her organisation, Girl Child Network (GCN), Betty has built three safe villages for particularly vulnerable girls, and started 500 girls' clubs with 30,000 members, mostly in rural areas and in poor townships. Betty rescues girls from child labour, forced marriage, maltreatment, trafficking and abuse. She gives the girls food, clothes, medical care, a home, the chance to go to school, and safety. Most of all she gives the girls the courage to demand respect for their rights. Tens of thousands of girls have gained a better life through Betty's work.

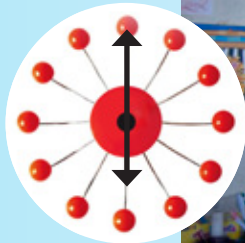
Read more at www.worldschildrensprize.org

At the weekends, the girls in the safe village have a lot of fun together. But they also have time for volleyball and some play every evening.



6.00 a.m.
A new day begins

“We almost always wake up first, but our village mothers also check that everyone’s up, just like an ordinary mother would. Then we make our beds and wash and brush our teeth.”

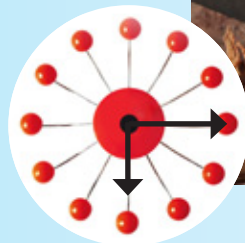


Tanakas’



6.15 a.m.
Making maize porridge

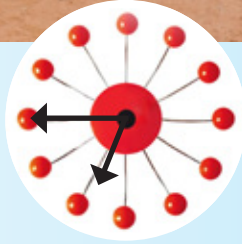
“Every morning, I go to the cooking house and make breakfast for everyone. Usually I make a kind of maize porridge we call bota. Since I’m the oldest one, I’m like the big sister who takes care of the other girls. Once we’ve eaten, each person washes their own plate. The only one who doesn’t have to is our youngest girl who is only six. She never has to cook or wash up - we do it for her.”





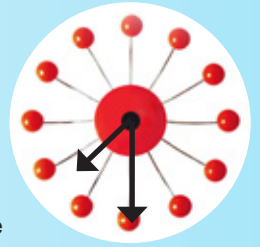
6.45 a.m. Singing our way to school

“Once we have changed into our school uniforms, we walk to school together. It takes about 45 minutes. Often we talk and sing the whole way, to make the journey feel shorter!”



7.30 a.m. – 4.00 p.m. Lessons

“Girl Child Network pays for our school fees, uniforms, books, everything! Otherwise I wouldn’t be able to go to school. The first break is at 10 o’clock and we eat the lunch that our village mothers made for us the night before. If there’s time before classes start again, even if it’s only two minutes, I take the chance to play volleyball and games with my classmates! Not only the ones who live in the safe village, but everyone. And I get treated just like everyone else, which feels so good. I think it’s because all the girls are members of the Girl Child Network’s girls’ club at school. We meet every Wednesday and talk about girls’ rights and about things that can happen to girls. Everyone understands what happened to me and the other girls who live in the safe village.”

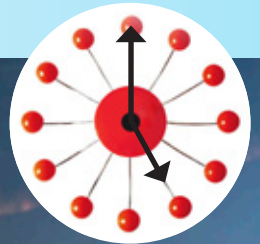


day in the safe village

5.00 p.m. Dinner

“When we get home we change into other clothes and go to the cooking house, where the village mothers are waiting to serve dinner. All the food is good here, but my favourite dish is another kind of maize porridge called sadza and vegetables.”

“One of our two village mothers is here around the clock. They are just like ordinary mothers who ask how our day was at school, and how we’re getting on and that sort of thing. The girls who live here are my sisters and we take care of each other. We are one big family. So even though my half-brother has been released from jail, I feel safe here,” says Tanaka.

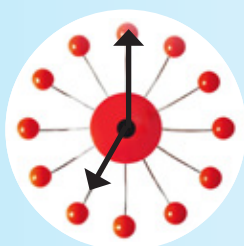
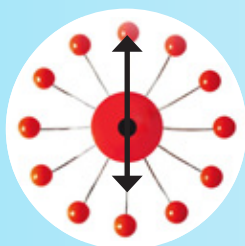


Today, village mother Tagoma has made sadza with meat, vegetables and rice.





Tanaka hangs her newly washed socks carefully. Barbed wire makes a good clothesline, but she has to hang the socks between the barbs.



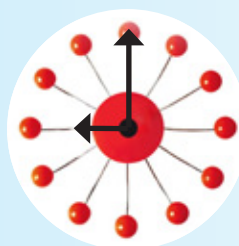
6.00 p.m. Chores and play

“Girls who are on ‘washing up duty’ do the dishes after we eat, and whoever is on ‘sadza duty’ makes the sadza that we eat for supper later on. When everyone is finished, we wash our school uniforms and socks for the next day, if we need to. On weekdays we don’t usually have much time to play, but we always try to play a bit of volleyball every day. At the weekends we play and sing and dance all the time, and I love it!”



7.00 p.m. Homework

“We go to the house that we call the library and do our homework. We are in different classes and year groups so we have different tasks, but we always help each other.”



9.00 p.m. Bedtime

“We all sleep in the same house, apart from our youngest girl who sleeps in the village mother’s house. We often lie talking for ages before we fall asleep. Telling secrets, that sort of thing. We trust each other completely. The girls are my sisters, my family. I love them!”

Global Vote in the girls' safe village



Voting booth made from rubber trees



There's a long queue at the two voting booths under the Mupangara tree in the girls' safe village. A couple of days ago, Forward and his friends went out to chop down two large rubber trees and gather grass to create the voting booth. When they arrived at the girls' safe village, they dug deep holes in the ground for the posts made from the rubber tree trunks. Then they tied grass onto the posts, using strips of

bark from the Musasa tree. The voting booths turned out lovely, but Forward isn't completely satisfied ...

"It turned out OK, but I had hoped the booth would be much more beautiful. For me it's important to make everything as beautiful as possible for the Global Vote, since this is such a significant day for us children. Everything has to be perfect!" says Forward Takawira, 16.



We made the voting booth!

From left to right: Misheck Mureverwi, 15, Trymore Munemo, 15, Faith Mudyiwa, 15, Godknows Chinyangu, 16, Forward Takawira, 16.





Guys vote in girls' village

"Today I voted here in Girl Child Network's

safe village for vulnerable girls. I think the village is a fantastic place to hold a Global Vote. Surely there's no better place to vote for our rights than at a place that protects the rights of the child? The Global Vote and GCN's girls' villages are almost the same thing! GCN fights for girls' rights and I really do support that fight. It's important that girls and boys have the same rights. Before, things weren't like that at all. For example, back then most girls didn't go to school. Back then, we boys also believed we were better, stronger and cleverer than girls. That's so ridiculous - it's not true at all! We are all of equal value, regardless of

whether we are boys or girls. That's what I think, and so do all my friends. It is all thanks to GCN's struggle that the situation for girls has improved so much in Zimbabwe."

"After voting, we sang and danced to celebrate our Global Vote. You have to celebrate a day like today because it's an important day. We have shown our support for those who fight for our rights, and our rights are the most important thing there is. We are the adult leaders of the future, and if we are treated badly, without respect, there is a great risk that we will also become poor leaders who treat children and other people badly. That is really not a good future."

Anesu Tomondo, 15, Manyira Secondary School



Girls' club and

"I'm a member of the girls' club at school.

That's where I read The Globe and prepared for the Global Vote. The girls' club is a place where we girls have a

chance to make our voices heard and talk about things that are important to us. That can be tough in a normal classroom, because here in Zimbabwe, girls and boys are not treated equally. It's much easier for boys to make themselves heard. People listen to them. Hardly anyone listens to us. That's very bad news, since we are all of equal val-





Girls treated badly around the world

"I don't live in the safe village

myself, but it's a very important place. The girls who live here have been subjected to the worst things you could imagine. They are like my sisters. We belong together and we must support one another. Because girls are very vulnerable here, I know

that what has happened to the girls in the safe village could just as easily have happened to me."

"When I read The Globe I realise that it's not just here in Zimbabwe that girls are treated badly. It happens all over the world. Many are exploited, not allowed to go to school, forced to get married although they are only children, and much more

besides. That makes me so angry! But reading The Globe makes me happy too, because I can see that there are also people who fight for girls to have good lives. And one day I actually believe that's how things will be. The stories in The Globe give me that hope! When I grow up I want to be a Girl Child Network leader, and lead the way in the fight for girls' rights here in Zimbabwe!"
Tnkozile Mafumo, 14, Manyaira Secondary School



Every girl's village

Every Saturday there's a girls' club in the safe village, and around 100 girls from the nearby schools and villages come. Together they learn about their rights, act out plays, write and recite poetry, play volleyball, sing and dance.

"Of course, this village belongs to the girls who live here. But not only to them. It belongs to all girls, because this is a girls' empowerment village. This is our place," says Faith Mudyiwa, 15, who is responsible for organising today's Global Vote, and is president of the girls' club at Manyaira Secondary School.

TEXT: ANDREAS LÖNN PHOTOS: JOHAN BJERKE

Global Vote give us courage!

we and should be treated the same. But we are not given the same rights, and that's why the girls' clubs are so important. The clubs give us the knowledge and strength to help us dare to raise our

voices. The Globe magazine and the Global Vote do the same thing - they give children all over the world knowledge, strength and courage to demand respect for the rights of the child!"

"I was so delighted when I

read in The Globe about people who were abused as children but who have been able to move on and who, as adults, now help children in difficult situations. I want to be just like that when I grow up!"
Heather Samuriwo, 14, Manyaira Secondary School





Emelda is a teacher and Global

“When I’m an adult I want to be someone who risks danger in the fight for children who need help. Just like the candidates for the World’s Children’s Prize,” says Emelda Zamambo, 12, an orphan from Maputo in Mozambique.

But Emelda isn’t content to wait until she’s an adult to fight for the rights of the child. Early every morning, she runs her own school at home, for children who would not otherwise have the chance to go to school. She teaches them to read, write and count.

“**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10!!!**” The children count out loud together as Emelda points to the different numbers on the chalkboard.

“Great! One more time!” she says, and they start again.

It is 8.30 in the morning, and around ten children are sitting on the ground outside Emelda’s house, as they do every weekday. Their eyes are fixed on their young teacher as she writes new numbers on the simple piece of chipboard that is the school’s chalk-

board. Emelda started her morning school almost a year ago, and most of these children have been attending since then.

“I have always helped my younger brothers and sisters with their homework. We used to do it sitting in front of the house. Then word started to spread that I helped them with homework early in the morning. Suddenly, other children who wanted help started to turn up. To begin with it was just a few, but now I teach twelve children every day. For free, of course!” says Emelda, laughing.

Some of Emelda’s students are neighbours who need a

Eraser

I bought this with my lunch money, instead of buying food at school.





Chalk

My grandmother bought it for me as a present, because she was so pleased that I was helping other children.



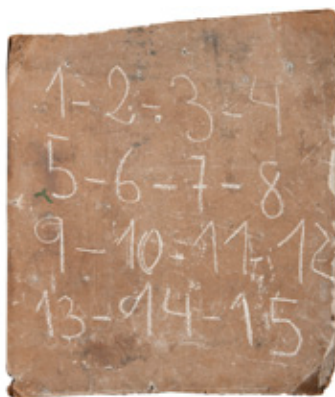
Vote president!

bit of extra help to keep up with their studies in school. Others are so poor that they can't afford to go to school at all.

Father shot

"I really hate to see poor children who can't go to school and never get opportunities in life. Often they have lost their parents and end up on the street because there's nobody to take care of them. Many of them are forced to work. It is so horribly unfair!" says Emelda.

Injustice makes her really angry, and she is well aware that she could have been one of those deprived children.



Chalkboard

An old piece of chipboard I found nearby.

Pointer

I got this from my uncle, he's a carpenter.



The Globe at morning school

"Going to school is one of the most important things there is. It gives you a better chance of finding work later in life, which means you'll be able to take better care of your family. If you don't get an education, there is a big risk you'll always be poor and live a really tough life. And one of the most important things you can learn in school is the rights of the child. If we know about that, we can learn to defend ourselves and we won't be exploited so easily. That's why I use The Globe at my morning school," says Emelda.

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

"Everything fell apart. I didn't think anything could ever be good again. I was terrified that I would be left alone and end up on the

street. But in spite of all the bad things that happened, I was so lucky."

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

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



Corporal punishment banned in 30 countries

According to article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, you have the right to protection from all forms of violence, neglect, mistreatment and abuse. So corporal punishment is a violation of the rights of the child. Despite this, every year 40 million children are beaten so badly that they need medical care. Only 30 countries have banned all forms of physical punishment of children, and therefore only 4 in 100 children in the world are totally protected from violence by law. The most recent country to ban corporal punishment is the newest country in the

world, South Sudan.

Many countries allow corporal punishment in schools. In Mozambique, adults are allowed to beat children at home within the family, and at school. What happens in your school and your country? Do you dare to tell teachers, parents, politicians and other adults that beating children is a violation of the rights of the child? Tell us how you and your schoolmates are treated. Share your thoughts and experiences on corporal punishment by email to myrights@worldschildrensprize.org or online at www.worldschildrensprize.org.



Corporal punishment banned at Emelda's school!

"I only use the pointer for teaching, never for beating! At almost all other schools in Mozambique, teachers often beat the students on the palms of their hands or on their bottoms. I think that is terrible! If there's something we don't understand, or if we don't behave as we should, the teachers should explain and demonstrate things properly instead. I think it's easier for us children to learn things if we are not beaten, if we're not afraid. You can't learn well if you're scared. And after reading *The Globe*, I know that beating children is a violation of our rights!"

The Child Convention in *The Globe*



"We can learn a lot from the page in *The Globe* that describes all the rights a child has! For example, before I didn't know that according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, children who live on the street actually have a right to a home, an education and a good life," says Emelda.

They hugged me and said that I belonged to their family. That they would take care of me, and that everything would be ok. And it was true. Now my uncle and aunt have become my father and mother, and my cousins are my brothers and sisters. I have been given the chance to live a good life, and I want to find a way to share that with others who need help. That's why I run my school," says Emelda.

The *Globe* at school

At eleven o'clock, Emelda thanks her students and says that she'll see them tomorrow.

She goes inside to change into her school uniform, because after lunch Emelda is a student, not a teacher. She loves going to school, and recently it has been even more fun than usual. They have been preparing for the Global Vote by reading *The Globe* magazine lots.

"I realised straight away that the stories in *The Globe* could be about us here in Mozambique! Stories of poor children who are hungry, exploited, lose their parents to AIDS, and end up on the street, forced to work. They could easily be from here.





Emelda as ... a student ... a teacher ... and in her favourite clothes!

Before, I just had a feeling inside that these things were unfair and wrong. Now that I've read *The Globe*, I know that these are violations of our rights."

Emelda was one of the students who got most involved in *The Globe* and the preparations for the Global Vote at her school.

"So much happened inside me when we were working on it. I had so many thoughts and feelings buzzing about in my head that I could hardly sleep."

Global Vote president

A couple of nights before the Global Vote, Emelda was

lying reading about street children's rights in *The Globe*. She felt that her school should do something for all the children who don't have the chance to get an education. The next morning she rushed to school earlier than usual to talk to the headteacher about her ideas.

"I explained that I had read in *The Globe* that all children, even street children, have a right to go to school. I suggested that those of us who were better off could maybe donate some money to allow children who live on the street to buy school uniforms and eat lunch here. So that they could eat a square

meal and learn things in peace and quiet."

The headteacher took Emelda seriously and listened to her ideas. She couldn't make any promises straight away about street children, but she did want to give Emelda an important task.

"The headteacher said that she could see I had a passion for the rights of the child and that she was delighted about that. So she wondered whether I would like to be Global Vote president, taking responsibility for the whole event at our school. At first I was really nervous, but most of all I was happy. Because I believe that the stories in *The*



Emelda Zamambo, 12

LOVES: Being with others and helping others.

HATES: Fighting, violence, and seeing poor children live on the street.

BEST THING THAT'S HAPPENED: Having a family who love me.

WORST THING THAT'S HAPPENED: When I lost both my mother and father.

WANTS TO BE: A doctor and help others.

DREAM: For all children to be happy.

Globe are so important, I plucked up the courage to do a welcome speech, even though there were over 300 students gathered at school on that special day!"

Candidates inspire

And the people who have inspired Emelda to be courageous for the rights of the child are the candidates for the World's Children's Prize.

"I want to be a doctor, and just like the candidates, I want to be someone who risks danger in the fight for children who need help."

Right now though, Emelda is still a few years off starting her studies to become a doctor, and there are at least twelve people who are pleased about that. Her students. Tomorrow at half past eight, they'll be waiting for Emelda's morning school to get started. As usual. 🌐

"When mum and dad died, my grandmother and uncle gave me a family who love me," says Emelda.

Emelda helping her grandmother with the washing up.





Sharing

"I have several schoolmates who are orphans and who struggle to make ends meet. They are poor and hungry. It's not fair and it makes me angry and sad. Sometimes I take my lunch money and buy a drink, some crisps or some bread for someone who needs it more than I do. I have had great opportunities in life and I'd like to be a voice for those who have not had those opportunities and who don't have the strength to demand respect for their own rights. If things had been the other way round I would have wanted someone to fight for me!" says Emelda.



The polling booth

The boys put the finishing touches to the chair that has been transformed into a polling booth.



Global Vote flowing smoothly

"This is where everybody comes to queue to cast their vote in the ballot boxes at the front. And it is our task to explain things and help everyone so that things flow smoothly," says Emelda as she shows the other voting officials around the Global Vote area at Unity 19 Primary School in Maputo.



I want to be like the nominees!

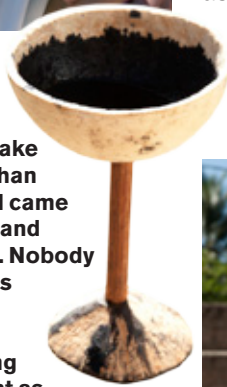


"I think it's really important that we join in with the World's Children's Prize here in Mozambique. We get to learn about our rights and about how we should be treated. Once we know that, it's easier to protect ourselves from injustice, and that's something we really need to be able to do. Lots of children here are so poor that they have to work instead of going to school. Many of the children are alone, because their parents have died as a result of AIDS or poverty. I lost my own mother and father to AIDS when I was five years old. But still, I've been lucky. I live with foster parents who love me and treat me just as they treat their own children. I can go to school, I have enough to eat, and

I'm loved. Many children aren't nearly as lucky as I am. They end up on the street, where nobody cares about them. It hurts me to see that. I think the government and all other adults have a responsibility to take care of these children. To make sure they get an education, clothes, a home, medical care and love. After all, that is every child's right! When I read in *The Globe* about the nominees who fight for a good life for all children, it makes me so happy. I want to be like them too. When I'm an adult, I plan to fight for children who are in need."
Crescência Eulalia Macave, 15, Unity 19 Primary School, Maputo

Coconut inkwell stops cheating

"Today, it was my job to make sure nobody voted more than once. Everyone who voted came straight to me afterwards and dipped their fingers in ink. Nobody with ink on their finger was allowed to vote again. It's important that there's no cheating when we're voting on something as important as the rights of the child!" says Crescência. The inkwell is made from two coconut halves and a stick.



Final check

It's a difficult choice, but now it's time to decide which candidate to vote for.



The ballot box

Emelda checks that the ballot box is in order before putting it in position.

Global Vote in Maputo



Yúmina made Global Vote beautiful

“In preparation for the Global Vote, my friends and I made a rug in the design of Mozambique’s flag. We made it by tying strips of fabric in knots in a special way. We’re learning that in our needlework class. We use old, worn-out clothes and fabrics to make beautiful new things. We created the flag to make our Global Vote feel special and ceremonial. I love Mozambique, and I think our flag looks great. Lovely colours and great design. Our country is beautiful, but unfortunately, many people have major problems here. For example, there are lots of abandoned children who live on the street. They have no parents and no home. Street children have nothing. Through reading *The Globe* and getting involved in the Global Vote, we learn that even street children have a right to a good life too. We also learn to help each other, to take care of each other. I think everyone who is able should help those who are in need.”

Yúmina Rui Balate, 12, Unity 19 Primary School, Maputo



Everyone waits their turn in the voting queue.

Náid’s tree friends at G

“Once a week, all the children plant a small tree here at school. I usually bring different kinds of seeds with me from home and plant them. And at every break I water the plants here in the school garden. Once in the morning, once at lunchtime and once in the afternoon before I go home. I love working with plants, and I’m probably the person who spends the most time in the school garden. I see the trees and plants as our friends – after all, they do give us oxygen. I think it’s almost as much fun to be with my tree friends as with my other friends playing football and that sort of thing!”

Today, because it’s the Global Vote, we have lined the path to the ballot boxes with small lemon trees from the school garden. Because this is a party for the rights of the child, it has to be beautiful! But it’s also good to have lots of trees around when you’re voting, so that you get lots of oxygen to help you make the right decision at the ballot box!

“When I grow up I want to be a diplomat and live in Paris, the capital of France. Diplomats have an important job because they work for peace.”

Náid Fi-Yen Bangal Nequice, 11, Unity 19 Primary School, Maputo





Emelda (on the left) and her friends look after the ballot boxes.

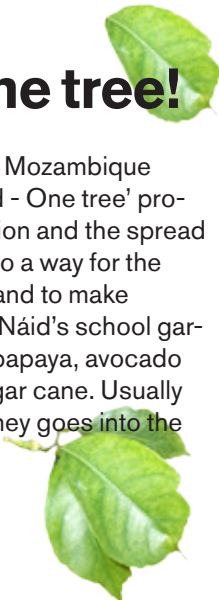
Global Vote



The lemon tree saplings have been placed by the sticks that mark the route of the voting queue.

One child – One tree!

Since 2006, all state schools in Mozambique have been part of the 'One child - One tree' project, to stop deforestation, erosion and the spread of deserts in the country. It's also a way for the population to get healthy food, and to make Mozambique more beautiful. In Náid's school garden, they grow orange, lemon, papaya, avocado and mango trees, as well as sugar cane. Usually they sell the plants, and the money goes into the school funds.



Orphaned best friends vote

“Celina is my best friend and I love her. She lost her parents too, so we understand each other totally,” says Alice Zacarias, 13.

Today, Alice and Celina have voted for the rights of the child in the Global Vote at Unity 19 Primary School in Maputo.

I voted because I want children to have a good life. The people we voted for fight for children in different ways, and it felt great to help them. Here in Mozambique too, there are loads of children who are struggling and need help. Many are orphans, like me. My mother died when I was just two, and my father died last year. Now I live with my grandmother. I love her, but it's hard for us to make ends meet. Often we can't afford my school uniform and we don't have enough to eat. I miss my mother and father all the time. It's really hard,” says Alice.

She often feels sad and different. But she's lucky to have Celina.

“If we're sad we comfort each other. And we laugh together!” says Alice.

Celina Langa, 11, is sitting next to Alice, nodding.

“I trust Alice completely and I can tell her anything. I lost both my parents when I was one. Now I live with my grandmother and things are hard for us because she is old and poor. I often feel sad and worried when I'm here at school, but yesterday was different. I helped to make our beautiful ballot boxes for the Global Vote. I felt just like everyone else, like my life was normal and good. In the future I hope that life actually will be like that. I want to be a teacher then!” says Celina.

“My dream is to work at the airport in Maputo. I also dream of seeing other countries and meeting new people. Imagine going to Brazil! I think it's really beautiful there,” says Alice, putting her arm round Celina.



Alice Zacarias and Celina Langa made the ballot boxes for the Global Vote.



On our way
to the Global
Vote.



The voting queue is long to the polling booths made of chairs.



TEXT: ANDREAS LÖNN PHOTOS: JOHAN BJERKE



Child rights violated

“Before reading The Globe, I didn’t know that not being registered at birth is a violation of the rights of the child. That happens all the time here. And it’s serious, because if you’re not registered by name, it’s hard to be allowed to go to school or to get medical care. I know that Mozambique has signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, so we have to fix this, because it’s violating children’s rights!” says Cecilia.

We defend the rights of Every child should

The sun shines and the sea glitters as the children of Catembe Primary School in Mozambique hold their Global Vote on the beach. Those who have voted already are playing tag, football or diving into the Indian Ocean. Today is the children’s day, and Cecilia Carlos Magaia, 13, is happy:

“What a fantastic day! In Mozambique, adults often don’t listen to children. But

today is different. By voting, we have our say in matters that are really important.



Global Vote on Ladislau's beach

Ladislau, 15, stands on the beach in Catembe and looks out to sea. Yesterday, he voted in the Global Vote and celebrated the rights of the child along with his friends, here on the beach. But today things are back to normal, and the beach and the sea are his workplace. Ladislau Militon Nhca is a fisherman.

I have to fish to be able to go to school. I don't have any parents – I live with my grandfather. We'd never be able to afford for me to go to school otherwise," says Ladislau.

Ladislau's parents lived in South Africa when they were expecting him,

since his mother came from there. When Ladislau was born they were delighted, but they never got a chance to live together as a family. Ladislau's father died in a car accident on the way to the maternity hospital.

"My mother was very poor and realised that she

wouldn't be able to take care of me on her own, so she decided to put me into an orphanage. But my grandfather wouldn't agree to it. He brought me back to Mozambique with him instead."

All this happened a long time ago, but Ladislau still feels low when he thinks about it.

"I miss my parents, but at the same time I'm so grateful to my grandfather. Now I want to help him, since he helped me then and still takes care of me now. That's why I fish."

First school

Ladislau wakes up at five every morning to go to



Time to vote in Catembe Primary School's Global Vote on the beach.

about the candidates in The Globe that I decided I wanted to do something good for others too. The candidates fight for every child's right to be loved and cared for, and that's the most important job

in the whole world! Because if we don't take care of the world's children, who is going to take care of the world in the future?

"Before reading The Globe, US R&B star Nicki Minaj was my idol. Her music is awesome and I still love listening to her. But now the World's Children's Prize candidates are definitely my biggest idols. They are my heroes!"

Cecilia Carlos Magaia, 13, Catembe Primary School

the child join us!

And by voting, I am also defending the rights of the child! That's why all children, not just in Mozambique but all over the world, should vote!

Before voting we read The Globe magazine carefully, both in school and at home. The Globe is about our rights,

and the problems that children have in the world today. Before reading the magazine I thought it was only children in Africa who had a tough time. Now I know that life is hard for children all over the world, and that makes me really sad. I feel that I want to do something about it. My dream is to build a big house where I can give children who have lost their parents a new, loving home, food, clothes and the chance to go to school. It was after reading



➔ school. He washes, but he doesn't usually eat breakfast because there's nothing to eat. Then he goes to school until noon.

"When I get home I have a cup of tea and a bit of bread before going down to the beach. I often play football there with my friends, until the fishermen come back with their catch. My father was a talented footballer and I love playing football too. When I play I feel totally free. I actually play for three different teams and I've won tournaments and trophies with all my teams. The last time we played, I scored four of the goals that won us the match."

But when the fishing boats dock, there's no more time for football and games. That's when the hard work begins.

Hard work

"I help the fishermen to clean their nets and carry their catch to the beach. At the weekends and during school holidays I spend all day fishing on my grandfather's boat. We leave at four in the morning and get back to the shore around noon. But I never get paid. The money goes straight to grandfather. It covers my school fees, but we still don't have enough money for books or a calculator. I have to borrow from my friends in school, and I hate

Paying school fees

"Without this fishing work, I wouldn't be able to go to school. We could never afford it," says Ladislau.



Child labour common

At least 2 in 10 children in Mozambique have to work, just like Ladislau.

doing that. I feel ashamed. No-one teases me directly, but I still feel uncomfortable about not being able to manage on my own."

In the future, Ladislau would love to become a professional footballer, and have a good, simple life. So between school and work, he'll carry on playing football down at the beach with his friends, to work towards his goal. And Ladislau loves being on his beach. Even though it's a place where he

also has to work extremely hard. And yesterday, something extraordinary happened on the beach.

"Yesterday we voted in the Global Vote, here on the beach. I really looked forward to voting. It felt important to participate in voting for people who help children - it made me feel like I was part of their work, in a small way. Like I was supporting other children around the world who are in need." 🌐

Valuable catch

Fishing is a major industry in Mozambique, and prawns have become one of the country's most important export products.



© TEXT: ANDREAS LÖNN PHOTOS: JOHAN BJERKE

Loves football

Ladislau loves football and his idol is called Elias 'Dominguez' Pelembe. 'Dominguez' is one of the most famous footballers in Mozambique. He plays for Mozambique's national team, 'Mambas', and for the big South African club Mamelodi Sundowns.





Responsibility for all adults

"The rights of the child is the most important thing for all the world's children, but it is also a responsibility for all the world's adults. None of our rights really work unless adults take their share of the responsibility. It is also our responsibility to remind ourselves of our rights and stand up for ourselves and others.

My opinion is that we all belong to the same people. If you really think about it, the only difference between us is where on the earth we were born or who our parents are. And I'm prepared to stand up for that at any cost.

For me, the World's Children's Prize is a symbol for all the brave people who fight for children's rights every day and never give up. The World's Children's Prize helps highlight our rights. For children who didn't previously know about their rights, the Prize makes it possible for them to stand up to adults who treat them badly. They also get the opportunity to join in and fight for their own and other children's rights. Here in Sweden, The Globe and the World's Children's Prize make us more motivated to get involved and make a difference."

María Einarsdóttir, 11, Vänge School, Uppsala, Sweden



Biggest school in the world votes in India

There are over 30,000 students at the world's biggest school, City Montessori School in Lucknow, India. All students over the age of 10 participate in the World's Children's Prize. Here are some of them, voting in the Global Vote.

GLOBAL VOTE IN BRAZIL

We show them appreciation

"It is extremely important to participate in the Global Vote, so that we can show appreciation to those who do good work for future generations of our world. Although many people think our world is already lost, we must keep our hopes up. Only then can we save the planet. Do what you can, and you will be rewarded."

Pedro Henrique Gibim Fracaro, Colégio Notre Dame de Campinas, Brazil



The beginning of a better country

"This is a very important project. It's the beginning of a better country. All governments should link in with the World's Children's Prize and help these children. Only then will we have a decent world with love and respect for others."

Nikolas Gules Batista, Colégio Positivo Angelo Sampaio, Curitiba, Brazil





Shankolla is a presiding officer, but of course she is allowed to vote too.

Global Vote at desert school that

It's the end of March 2011. The students at Ragho Mengwar School in the Thar Desert in Pakistan have been looking forward to their Global Vote Day for weeks. They celebrate the day with a party where they eat rice and then dance and play games. Before the children go home they all get tea and biscuits.

In September, the rain is pouring in the desert. Many children become homeless when their families' mud houses collapse. The rain keeps on falling, and the desert floods. When their school collapses, the children are devastated. Their families now have to borrow money to survive, and the children risk becoming debt slaves.

the next village. That's so wrong."

"The Globe is so exciting. It teaches us about children who have big problems, but also about the many people who fight for children's rights. We learn so much from The Globe. Now we know how they deal with problems in Bangladesh. We have heard that the same problems exist in Pakistan and if those things happen here we'll have to fight too. We can vote for whatever we want, that's our right," says Anita in Year 7.

"It's a special day when we get to vote. We learn about heroes who work for others. We're going to do that too. I like everything in The Globe.

The atmosphere is full of expectation. Some girls paint the final brushstrokes on the ballot box, made from a big empty can. Students flick through copies of The Globe, discussing it in small groups. Everyone is wearing their finest clothes, with their hair combed. Some former students, who have quit school, come to visit. They have been kept informed over the last couple of weeks and they know they're allowed to join in and vote as long as they have found out about the candidates.

The gathering begins with the students jointly telling

the stories of this year's candidates and why they have been nominated. The prize candidates are heroes and the children have spent the last few weeks discussing their work.

Wants to be a hero

"I dream about becoming a hero too," says Anil. "I want to fight for everyone in our area to be able to go to school. If their parents don't let them, we should at least try to teach them to read, write and count. I feel so sad when I think about children who don't go to school. We have children who work in carpet factories in our village and



Voting queue



Anita



The students in front of Ragho Mengwar School in the Thar Desert, which was destroyed by flooding.



Final preparations for the Global Vote. Urmula and Anil read The Globe.



Rice for everyone.

disappeared in the rain

I dream about having electricity in our village, so we can read it in the evenings. Our teacher Hernath is a hero in our village. He teaches us so well and helps us when we have problems. Everyone is allowed to come to school,” says Kevil in Year 7.



Kevil

villages were affected and two million hectares of land ended up under water. Fields and roads were destroyed and many families’ goats, cows and camels died.

The children at Ragho Mengwar School come from poor families. When it’s not raining, the families are often forced to take jobs working in fields or brick factories. Many people take out loans from the factory owners or have debts with the village shopkeeper, and whole family become debt slaves. Children

at school and in neighbouring villages also work weaving carpets. Now that the flooding has destroyed everything, many families have to take out new loans and more children risk being forced to work as debt slaves. 🌐

Risk of slavery

The severe flooding in Sindh, where the Thar Desert is, forced 5 million people to abandon their homes. Almost a million houses were damaged or destroyed, 17,000

Alima on her way out of the polling booth.



The Global Vote is celebrated with games and dancing...

...and the day ends with tea and biscuits.





Cried when I left World's Children's Prize Club

"When I graduated from Magongo Secondary School I cried because I was leaving behind the World's Children's Prize Club. It is a club I cherished so much and loved like my parents, and it is the fastest growing club among others that have existed for decades at school. The founder, Nasiru Suleiman, is now the Speaker of Kogi State Children's Parliament. He won this election on the platform of the World's Children's Prize Club. Today if you say that you are a member of WCP Club, it is seen as a club that is appreciated like water. One of the good things The Globe created in our society is the culture of reading among students; once students start reading

they will not want to give it away until they have read all the contents." *Deborah Oluwabusola Taiwo, 17, Magongo, Nigeria*

Get called Miss World's Children's Prize

"At home my parents call me Miss World's Children's Prize. At school my friends call me Miss Globe because I used to go about with The Globe magazine wherever I went, places like school, my friend's house, the market with my mum and sister, even playgrounds, hair salons, restaurants. Except for in church, you always find a copy of the magazine with me. We established our World's Children's Prize Club at school three years ago."

Ruth Sanni, 10, GRAMP School, Nigeria



Mother and father love The Globe

"I love reading The Globe magazine. As the President of the World's Children's Prize Club in my school I am working with students and teachers in my school to promote the rights of the child, with The Globe magazine as our tool. Our principal is so seriously in support of the program that at every morning daily assembly a student must come out and tell the crowd what he has read in The Globe. Both my father and mother love The Globe very much. We study it together at home every evening before going to bed. My mother told me that whoever would like to borrow the magazine should come and read it in my house. Because is so educational and soul-touching that one cannot lose it and do without it.

It's about serving humanity

"We need the World's Children's Prize program to be taught also in Nigerian churches, to children in Sunday schools, since it is all about rights and justice. The magazine is all about services to humanity. It preaches love your brothers and sisters. It also touches individual lives positively. My church has been an active participant in the World's Children's Prize program since 2007."

Joy Akapta, 14, President of WCP Club, Community Comprehensive High School, Ogori, Nigeria

"If I become president of Nigeria I will respect the rights of every child. I will cancel school fees for the sake of the poor children, to let them go to school. I will also tell all hospitals to treat children free of charge." *Adeola Deborah Nathaniel, 13, Universal Basic Education JSS RCM Compound, Magongo, Nigeria*



My friend The Globe comforts me

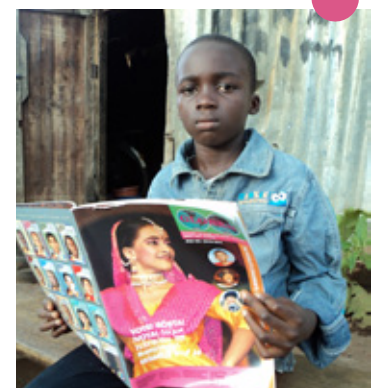
"I was President of the World's Children's Prize Club at school. I was not born deaf, but had fever when I was 10, and my two eardrums were damaged. Since then I have not been able to hear. I was forced to leave school, because they don't have teachers for deaf children. They advised my parents to stop my educa-

tion. I cried that this would kill my dream to become a doctor. The Globe magazine is my comforter and my best friend for now. All my friends ran away from me, because when they speak I don't hear and my attitude equally drove them away. I got angry with them. The Globe gives me courage and hope when I read the stories of other chil-

dren with greater problems than my own.

"If I become president of Nigeria at age 12 I will give every child free medical care. I will make a policy to stop discrimination against the disabled, give special care to them, and make them happy that they belong to society too."

John Oboromeni Olayere, 12, Akpafa Nursery and Primary School, Ogori, Nigeria



▶ WHO ARE THE CANDIDATES?

Every year, the World's Children's Prize child jury selects the three final candidates for the *World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child* from that year's nominations. To be able to make a fair choice in the Global Vote, it's important that you have equal knowledge of all three candidates – and you will if you read about them on the pages that follow. The two candidates who do not receive the voting children's prize receive the World's Children's Honorary Award. All three candidates receive a sum of prize money to go towards their work with children.



Candidate 1

ANNA MOLLEL

Tanzania

Pages 50–69



Candidate 2

SAKEENA YACOobi

Afghanistan

Pages 70–89



Candidate 3

ANN SKELTON

South Africa

Pages 90–109





WHY HAS ANNA BEEN NOMINATED?

Anna Mollel has been nominated for the 2012 World's Children's Prize for her over 20-year struggle for children with disabilities in poor rural areas in northern Tanzania.

Thanks to Anna and her organisation, Huduma ya Walemavu, thousands of children with disabilities have a chance to live a life in dignity. They get medical care, operations, physiotherapy, therapy, wheelchairs and other aids, the chance to go to school, safety, and love. Anna is constantly speaking out on behalf of the children through talking about their rights with politicians, organisations, and more than anything, with people living in remote rural villages. Since 1990, 12,500 children, mostly Maasais, have had a better life thanks to Anna and Huduma ya Walemavu. These are children who would have been neglected, abandoned and could even have died if it hadn't been for Anna's struggle for their rights.

Anna Mollel

NOMINEE • Pages 50–69



At the age of six, Anna Mollel saw for herself how difficult life is for children with disabilities in northern Tanzania. Her worst experience came many years later, once she had started fighting for the rights of those disabled children. Anna arrived at what she thought was an empty village. But lying on the floor of a house she found an eight-year-old girl, alone and abandoned, who couldn't move and would have died if Anna hadn't come. On page 55 you can find out what happened to the girl, Naimyakwa.

Anna, who belongs to the Maasai ethnic group, was six years old and had just come home from school. She helped her mother fetch wood and water and then ran to see her friends in the next village. They were playing out in the yard when Anna heard a noise from inside one of the houses.

“When I asked my friend

what it was, she looked down at the ground before replying that it was her sister.”

Anna's friend explained that her sister wasn't allowed to go out, since their mother didn't want to show that she had a daughter who was 'not quite right'.

“I went into the house to look. And there actually was a little girl in there. She was

lying on the ground, completely alone, and she smiled when she saw me,” recalls Anna.

Anna meets Nauri

Anna helped the girl to sit up and they started to play. The girl, who was called Nauri, was about the same age as Anna. She was thrilled to finally have some company. The next day Anna came back while Nauri's mother was out fetching water, so that she wouldn't see her.

“But we were having such fun that we didn't notice the time. Suddenly, Nauri's mother rushed in and hit me hard with a cane. She shouted at me never to set foot in their house again.”

Anna had to run away, but she was determined to come back the next day.

“The other children were



afraid. Afraid of being hit, and afraid of playing with Nauri, who they thought was strange. But I told them that everyone needs friends. And since Nauri was one of us, I thought it was obvious that we should go and play with her too.”

Anna managed to convince the others. They took turns in keeping watch while the others played, and when the person keeping watch shouted that Nauri’s mother was coming, they all rushed away as fast as they could. After a few days, Anna helped Nauri stand up, and they practised walking together. Soon, Nauri was able to come out to the yard and play.

Unfair

After a couple of weeks, Nauri’s mother came to Anna’s house.

“I thought she was going to

shout at me, but instead she said that she knew what I had been up to, and that she wanted me to keep doing it! She said that Nauri had never been so happy and that it was a miracle that she could walk and run.”

Since Nauri’s mother was so happy, Anna took the chance to ask her whether Nauri could start going to school, but she didn’t agree to that.

“So I went to Nauri’s home every day after school and taught her the things I had learned that day. Even though I was young, I became her teacher – the only teacher she ever had. I never forgot that sense of unfairness. I was allowed to go to school, but she wasn’t, just because she had a disability. She had the same rights as me. But on my own I couldn’t help her more than I already was. I always

felt as though I should have done more.”

Became a nurse

Anna trained as a nurse and began working. One day, a German woman from the Catholic Church in Arusha came to the hospital. She was called Elifrieda and she wanted to talk to Anna.

“She knew that I was a Maasai, and she wanted me to tell her what life is like for children with disabilities in our villages. I explained that a long time ago, it was common for those children to be killed or abandoned as soon as they were born. People believed that a disabled child was punishment from God for doing something wrong.

But I explained that the main reason was that we Maasai people are nomadic herders, and to survive we need to walk many miles on foot over the savannah to find fresh pastures for our animals. A child with a disability who couldn’t move around freely was seen as a major hindrance to the whole group.

“I explained that children with disabilities still had their rights violated. That they were hidden away and didn’t get the medical care they needed, and weren’t allowed to go to school or play.”

Huduma ya Walemavu

Elifrieda asked whether Anna wanted to help start a new project for children with disa-



Proud Maasai

“I am a Maasai and I’m proud of that. I want my people to live a good life. That’s why I’m fighting for the rights of our disabled children,” says Anna.

Vulnerable Maasais

The Maasai people are nomadic herders. There are around 1 million Maasais, half in Tanzania and half in Kenya. Since the early 20th century the areas of land that the Maasais can use to pasture their livestock have shrunk. The authorities have handed over large parts of the Maasai people’s land to individuals and private companies for agriculture, as private hunting territories, and as national parks with wild animals. The Maasai people have been driven onto the least fertile areas. In 2009, armed riot police burned eight Maasai villages to the ground in northern Tanzania because the land was to be used by a private hunting company, for paying tourists to go on big game hunts. People were beaten and driven from their homes. Over 3,000 men, women and children were made homeless. Any Maasai people who allowed their livestock to continue grazing within the fertile area were imprisoned.

“The Maasai people are already the poorest people. If the animals don’t have grass to eat, they will die. And the people who are hit hardest are always the children,” says Anna.





“Our goal is always for the children to return to their villages, and live the life that the rest of their families live. For the children to be able to go to school with the other children and be a part of society,” says Anna, who is visiting Lomniaki’s village here.

➔ abilities in the Maasai villages, called Huduma ya Walemavu (Care for the Disabled).

“I said yes straight away. This was what I had been waiting for! Hopefully now I could do more for disabled children than I had been able to do for Nauri when I was little.”

In 1990, Anna began driving to the villages to talk about the rights of children with disabilities. At the same time, she searched for children who needed help. One of the first children she met was an orphan called Paulina, 15, who had had polio and

couldn’t walk. She had to get around by crawling on the ground. Anna thought it would be easy to persuade the village elders that Paulina could have a better life if she just had the right operation. She thought they’d think it was a great idea. But Anna was wrong.

Didn’t give up

“They didn’t know that some children with disabilities could have operations to help them get better, so they didn’t believe me. Because they lived so far away from hospitals and couldn’t read or afford a radio, they had never heard this. And even if it was true, they thought it was a waste of money. These children would still never be able to help with the livestock or go to school. But my biggest problem was

that I was a woman. In our society, women quite simply don’t have a voice. So they didn’t take me seriously.”

Anna didn’t give up. Just as she had challenged Nauri’s mother, she now challenged the village elders to help Paulina. It took four hours to get to the village, but in the space of two weeks, Anna travelled there five times! Every time she met with them she explained the rights of the child and said that they had managed to arrange a free operation for Paulina. And

finally she managed to persuade the men.

“I was so happy! But my problems were not over. I had booked a room for Paulina at a basic hotel in town, so that she had somewhere to stay before and after the operation. But when I carried Paulina in to the reception, the staff stared at her as if she was an animal. And they refused to take her in.”

Anna’s house

Anna was a divorced mother of six children, living in

Welcome!





cramped conditions in a small house. But Anna took Paulina home with her. There was no other option.

“My children had to share beds so that Paulina could have a bed of her own. The children were a bit annoyed at first, but they understood once I had explained. I bathed Paulina and gave her clean new clothes. Since she couldn’t sit at the table and eat, we all sat on the floor and ate dinner, so that Paulina wouldn’t feel lonely.”

After the operation,

Play is important!

“When I was young my parents always gave me love, and I got to play outside with my friends. These things are incredibly important for a child. Being alone and excluded is one of the worst things a child can experience. That’s why play and closeness are important to us here at the centre,” says Anna.

Paulina came back to stay with Anna. Slowly she began learning to sit and stand. After a few weeks, she started to practice walking with the crutches Anna had bought.

150 million children with disabilities

According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, children with disabilities have the same rights as all other children. They have a right to extra support and help to have a good life. Despite that, children with disabilities are among the most disadvantaged children, not only among the Maasai people in Tanzania, but all over the world. There are 150 million children with disabilities in the world, and 2 million of them are thought to live in Tanzania.





Anna playing with the children in their own school in her village.

→ “She was delighted, and so was I! When Paulina went back home three months later and could walk into the village on her own, people started to cry with happiness!”

Although Anna was happy that Paulina could walk, she knew that Paulina would still need an education to be able to get by in the future.

“Paulina wanted to be a seamstress, so we helped her get onto a sewing course. She was really talented!”

Centre in Monduli

Rumours of Paulina spread rapidly around the villages. People began to pluck up the courage to talk about their disabled children and ask for help. Anna spent long hours travelling to reach children in remote villages who needed her help. On every journey, she picked

up more and more children.

“But the hotels still refused to accept the children, so they had to stay at my house. Even though we had mattresses on the floor and children sharing beds, there just wasn’t space. We wrote to friends and organisations in Tanzania and Germany to ask for money to build a house of our own where we could take care of the children.”

To begin with they got enough money to rent a couple of rooms with space for twelve children. There was even enough to employ another nurse, and for the first time Anna got a small wage. Before that, Anna and her family had lived off their small vegetable patch.

“New children were arriving all the time, and we asked for more money. An organisation called Caritas in

Germany helped us, and in 1998 our centre in Monduli was finished.”

Physiotherapists and nurses were employed. And there were even teachers, because Anna knew that the children they helped hardly ever had the chance to go to school. There was space for thirty children, but sometimes there were 200 children there at once.

Not just Maasais

“To begin with we only worked with Maasai children, but not any more. We take care of all children who need our help, regardless of their ethnic group or religion. There are both Muslims and Christians here, as well as children who have fled wars in neighbouring countries. The fight for the rights of the child has no borders!” says Anna.

“Although we didn’t have space, we took in every child. Their families were so poor that they couldn’t pay for the children to stay with us, but we never sent anyone away.”





Now over 20 years have passed since Anna helped Paulina, and since then 12,500 children with disabilities have gained a better life thanks to Huduma ya Walemavu. Today, 30 people work for the organisation.

The new school

“I wanted to be sure that this work for children will continue after me. So I handed over responsibility for the work to a fantastic woman called Kapilima, and I retired in 2007,” says Anna.

When Anna retired, she carried on fighting for disadvantaged children. She has built a school in her home village for children who would not otherwise have had the chance to go to school. You can visit Anna’s school on page 68. 🌐



Anna saved Naimyakwa

“I’ll never forget the day I found little Naimyakwa alone in the abandoned village. She was eight years old and she was lying on the floor in one of the houses. She was hardly breathing. There was a strong smell of urine, since because of her disability she couldn’t move. I didn’t think she would survive,” says Anna. Even now, seven years later, she tells the story with tears in her eyes.

We took our mobile clinic to the area where a young orphaned girl affected by cerebral palsy lived. Many children with disabilities came to see us that day, but Naimyakwa didn’t appear with her older siblings and their families, as she usually did. When I asked if anyone knew where she was, a wom-

an said that her family had moved away with their livestock to try to find fresh pastures, since it was the dry season.

“I had a bad feeling about that. I knew how hard it was for Naimyakwa to move, so I wondered how they had managed to take her with them. I knew I had to go to her village and look.

Just to be on the safe side.

“We parked the jeep under a tree and walked the last bit of the road into the village. It was in silence. We couldn’t see a single person. The village was completely aban-



Naimyakwa's wardrobe

"I love clothes! When I grow up I want to be a seamstress and sew my own dresses. I keep my clothes in my locker, here in the dormitory."



"This is my best skirt. I got it from the minister."

"A girl from Canada who visited us gave me this beautiful dress..."



"...and these gorgeous silver shoes! She really is a good friend!"



done. I felt calmer, and thought that the family had somehow managed to take Naimyakwa with them. "We were walking back towards the car when I heard a strange, whimpering sound."

response was a tiny whimper. "I couldn't see anything to begin with. But then my eyes got used to the darkness, and I'll never forget what I saw. There on the earthen floor lay Naimyakwa, stock still and hardly breathing. There was a smell of excrement – she was helpless because of her disability. Beside her was a calabash that had had milk in it. It was empty, but it still smelt of old milk. And there was another calabash with a few drops of water left in it. "Naimyakwa was very weak and hardly noticed that we were there. No-one could

A lion? "At first I thought it was a lion. My two workmates and I plucked up the courage to go back to the village. When we passed one of the houses, we heard the strange sound again. I was afraid, but I cautiously leaned in and asked if there was anyone there. The



"This fleece top..."



"...and these sweatpants I got from Anna and Huduma ya Walemavu."

Paralysis through brain injury

The damage done by cerebral palsy, CP, happens during pregnancy, birth or during a child's first two years. Common causes are lack of oxygen and bleeding in the brain. The effect on some children is just a slight disability, while others can be paralysed. Many of those affected by CP, as well as having reduced mobility, also have

other related problems such as epilepsy, speech difficulties and visual impairment. There is no cure for someone with CP, but with physiotherapy, occupational therapy and training, it is possible to make life as good as possible for CP sufferers. "CP is very common here, since it can be caused by difficulties in

childbirth. Many people live so far away from hospitals and clinics that they have neither the time nor the money to get there when they go into labour," says Anna Mollel. If a child is born with CP, then parents, neighbours and village elders can attend a two-week course at Huduma ya Walemavu's centre to learn how best to

take care of the child. They are taught things like simple exercises and physiotherapy that are good for the child's development. Huduma ya Walemavu runs these courses so that the whole village is better informed, to make it easier to share responsibility for the child.



say how long she had been lying there, but we guessed at least a week, since she was already so dehydrated and thin. Had her family really just left her there? I was used to families leaving children with disabilities at the centre and the parents never coming back. But to leave your child like this?"

Naimyakwa saved

"I knelt beside Naimyakwa, leaned in close to her ear and asked her if she was alone. She gave a slight nod. Then I asked her if she wanted me to take her to the centre, so that we could take care of her. She nodded again. She wanted to come. I wept. All my colleagues from Huduma ya Walemavu wept. As I held Naimyakwa in my arms I thought to myself that although others hadn't given this child the love she needed, I would. I would love this child.

"Later, we understood that Naimyakwa had never realised that her family had gone off on a long journey. She was lying there waiting for them to come back, as usual. Day after day. Night after night. But they never came. They didn't come back until the rainy season started, two months later. If we hadn't come to the village, Naimyakwa would have died of starvation and dehydration.

"The moment we found Naimyakwa was one of the worst things I've ever experienced. At the same time, I felt filled with a great strength to be able to fight on for her right – and other vulnerable children's right – to a good life. There and then, I decided to continue fighting for their rights until I die." 🌐

There are 30 children living at the centre. Some are awaiting operations, others have had operations and are in rehabilitation (physiotherapy and training). Some children spend a few days at the centre when their boarding schools are closed. And then there are children like Naimyakwa, for whom the centre is home.



6.00 a.m. Good morning!

Naimyakwa and her friends are woken by the housemothers who live in the children's dormitories. When Naimyakwa came here she could hardly use her arms and hands. It was impossible for her to brush her teeth, put her clothes on, or feed herself. After a lot of training, her life is now totally different. Here she is brushing her teeth with her friends Modesta, 13, and Mdasat, 11.

Naimyakwa's day at Anna's centre



7.00 a.m. Breakfast

It's a maize porridge called Uji for breakfast.

8.00 a.m. Morning assembly

Every morning, everyone gathers in the hall for prayers and morning exercises.



8.30 a.m.

Morning rounds

The staff members talk to each child and decide whether they need to go to physiotherapy, the nurse, or straight to the school at the centre.

Naimyakwa has to show that she can put her top on by herself. That helps them to know what kind of physiotherapy she will need to get even better.



Anna never lets anyone down

"Naimyakwa came here seven years ago, and she's still here. We never send a child back unless we know that they will be well cared for. And if we're not sure of that, we try to find a new family for them. But it's hard to take care of a child with a severe disability. Even just pushing Naimyakwa's wheelchair on the sandy ground in her home village is almost impossible. Joining the families' migration with their livestock is even harder," says Anna.





9.00 a.m.



1. School

Naimyakwa gets help from her teacher, Flora Moses Kiwelu. When the children's treatment is complete, they get help either to start going to an ordinary school in their village, or to go to specialised schools, like boarding schools for children with visual impairments or mental illness.

2. Physiotherapy

Naimyakwa gets half an hour of physiotherapy every day to help her cope better in the future. She gets help from the physiotherapists at the centre, Eva Paul Mush and Anna Njuu (with plaits).

3. Clinic

Loserian Simanga, 11, is having the wounds from his operation washed and re-dressed by nurse Veronica Kirway.



4. Orthopaedics

Orthopaedist Mireille Eusebius Kapilima tries out new leg splints for Modesta Crystin, 13. The staff at the centre make their own splints and artificial or 'prosthetic' limbs.



5. Home economics

Neema Mevukori, 11, stands in the kitchen, where she and her friends are cutting a vegetable called sukumawiki. Today it's their turn to help with the cooking.

"I think it's fun to learn to cook. And I'll be able to help my family better when I get home."



6. Disability aid workshop

At the disability aid workshop, Loshilari helps Kadogo Songura to adjust her crutches.

"I got an infectious disease in one leg when I was little. When I came here the leg was so bad it had to be amputated. Afterwards I got a prosthetic leg and started to learn to walk again. It has been really tough, but now it's starting to go well," explains Kadogo.



10.00 a.m. Playtime!

Breaks and playing are important. The children have fun and train their bodies as they make different movements. Naimyakwa tries to catch the ball and throw it again.





12.30 p.m. Lunch
 “My favourite dish is beans and rice. We get that twice a week,” says Naimyakwa.



4.00 p.m.
 Free time and laundry:



Most people play football, go on the swings or the roundabout, or just talk. Anyone who needs to wash clothes can do that. Doing laundry is also part of the treatment at the centre. The children learn useful physical movements, while also learning an important skill.



1.30 p.m.
 School and dishes

Every day some of the children help with the dishes before going back to the classroom. Today, the helpers are Tupiwa Longorini, 12, Rebeca Peter, 16, and Kadogo Songura, 19.



8.00 p.m. The News

Every evening the children watch the news. Anna and the others at Huduma ya Walemavu think it's important for the children to find out what's going on in Tanzania and the wider world. But of course they also get to watch films and fun programmes.

6.30 p.m.
 Dinner

9.00 p.m. Good night!

“Sleep well,” says house mother Halima Mkopi, patting Naimyakwa on the cheek. Halima sleeps in the same room as the children so that she can hear if anyone needs help or comfort during the night. There are three dormitories, and there is a housemother in each.



Come on dads!

“I don't like dads who don't take responsibility when they have a child with a disability. Unfortunately, it's very common here that when children are abandoned, it's their fathers who do it. Mothers and fathers need to work together to care for these children, who are particularly vulnerable,” says housemother and cook Martha Lota.



Four-wheeled clinic reaches 51 villages

Huduma ya Walemavu works in a large, sparsely populated area in northern Tanzania, which is made up of savannahs, semi-deserts and mountains. Most of the people here live in small villages that often don't have any roads leading to them.

"Because the families are often extremely poor and can't afford to get to us, we visit the children with disabilities in their villages instead," explains Anna.

The work of Huduma ya Walemavu reaches 51 villages. They have a mobile clinic outreach programme, with nurses and physiotherapists who travel round in a four-wheel drive to reach all the children who wouldn't otherwise get help. It takes over two days to get to the furthest village. Every village is visited once every three months.

Endeshi has no language

Under a tree in a little village sits a group of children with disabilities and their parents, talking to staff from Huduma ya Walemavu. An 8-year-old girl called Endeshi, who is deaf, is there. She has no language, but her mother Nailolie Lebahati says:

"Endeshi's two older siblings Esther and Loito are deaf too, and we have always had support from Huduma ya Walemavu for them to go to a school for deaf children. I know that it is every child's right to go to school, but I can't afford to pay for it myself, so I'm incredibly grateful!

"Now I want Endeshi to be able to go to school as well, and learn to communicate. She has a right to be able to talk to others and explain her thoughts and feelings. And not be isolated as she is now. I came here today to ask Huduma ya Walemavu whether they can help Endeshi too. And they can! I'm so happy!"

Future dreams

Endeshi's big sister Esther, 18, and brother Loito, 15, know sign language, and they explain their dreams for the future:

"I want to be a nurse," signs Esther.

"I haven't decided yet," signs Loito.

Their mother Nailolie gets a bit sad when she sees her children talking about the future.

"Just think – we have no idea what Endeshi dreams of. Hopefully she'll be able to tell us once she's been going to school for a while. I want to know what you dream of!" says Nailolie, giving Endeshi a hug.



Loeku wants to be president

The mobile clinic stops in a village where three blind siblings called Loeku, Tetee and Phillippo live. They are orphans and Huduma ya Walemavu supports them so that they can attend boarding school. Normally the siblings live at school, but right now it's the holidays and Anna wants to check that they're enjoying staying with their grandmother and grandfather. Big brother Loeku explains:

"We would never have been able to go to school if it wasn't for Anna. Both because we have a disability, and because we come from a poor family. If a poor family has two children and one of them has a disability, and they can only afford to send one child to school, then it's always the 'healthy' child that gets to go.

"Most people think there's no point in letting children

Would have had to beg

"If Anna hadn't helped us, our lives would have been terrible. We would have been forced to beg on the streets to be able to eat," says Loeku.

with disabilities go to school, since they don't think the child can learn anything. Many people also think that if children can't see or have some other disability, then there must be something wrong with their heads too. And so they don't believe that children like that will ever manage to work, earn money, and help their families. That's why they think it's a waste of money to send children like that to school. That's how things were for us. The other children in the village were

sent to school, but not us."

Anna gave us the chance

"Then along came Anna and gave us the chance of a better life. We got good health-care and the chance to start attending a school for blind children. Now, Huduma ya Walemavu has supported us financially for seven years. Our grandparents would never have managed that on their own.

"At Anna's centre, we have learned that what we were

subjected to – not being allowed to go to school – is discrimination, and a violation of our rights. All children have the right to go to school. All children are equal! Now I tell that to everyone I meet. I hope that might gradually make life better for children with disabilities here. I hope we'll be treated with respect and have our rights fulfilled like other children. In the future I want to be president, and fight to defend all children's rights in Tanzania!"



Anna supports dreams

Younger siblings Tetee, 16, and Phillippo, 15, dream of becoming teachers when they grow up.

"Without Anna, a dream like that could never have come true. But since Huduma ya Walemavu supports me, I really think it's possible now," says Tetee.



Lomniaki kept in secret



Lomniaki was born with his legs pointing the wrong way. He found it hard to sit up and he couldn't learn to walk. His father didn't want the other people in the village to see him, so he kept Lomniaki locked up. He wasn't allowed to play with the other children or go to school.

"I didn't count. It was as though I wasn't a real person. But then Anna Mollél came and saved me. She gave me a new life, and I love her for it," says Lomniaki Olmodooni Mdorosi, 15 years old.

When Lomniaki was small, he lay alone in the dark house all day, every day. He could hear the other children in the village laughing and playing. The only thing he wanted was to join in. Sometimes he closed his eyes and could almost imagine that he was really playing with them. He was heartbroken every time he realised that he still couldn't use his legs, and he was still lying alone with an earthen wall separating him from the other children.

"I don't really know why my father didn't want other people to see me, but I think he was ashamed that there was a child with a disability in his family. That's why he never let me go out. My mother didn't agree at all, but my father was in charge. My mother didn't have a say in the matter. But sometimes when my father was out with the livestock, she would carry me out in secret and lay me under a tree in the village for a little while. When I was there I saw how the other children played with one another. But nobody played with me, or even talked to me," recalls Lomniaki.

Hated his father

Then, when all the other children in the village started school, Lomniaki's father wouldn't allow him.

"He said I was deformed. And that he couldn't understand the point of me going to school, since I'd never be

able to take care of the livestock anyway, or get a job and earn money to help the family when he got old. What's more, he said that he would



Lomniaki as a student at the boarding school in the city...

Girls' rights



"It didn't matter that my mother thought I should be allowed to play with others and go to school. My father was in charge. And that was that. My mother's opinions were unimportant. Anna Mollel taught me that that is totally wrong. Boys and girls are equals, and should have the same right to express their opinions and be listened to. We have the same rights. As a lawyer in the future, I'm really going to fight for girls' rights."



be forced to carry me back and forth to school, since I couldn't walk. I hated my father then. I hated him for destroying my life."



Finally, his mother Paulina reached the end of her tether. She felt so bad about how Lomniaki was being treated that she decided to leave her husband. One day, she lifted Lomniaki up onto her back and left the village forever. Paulina walked over the savannah to her parents' village, where they received a warm welcome from Lomniaki's grandfather and uncles and their families.

Might as well be dead

To begin with, Lomniaki thought everything seemed much better. He wasn't locked up in the house, and he met other people who were kind to him and talked to him. Either his mother or one of his uncles would carry him out in the morning and lay him on a cowhide under the big acacia tree, so that he didn't feel lonely. But even though his life was much better, gradually he started to feel lonely, there under the

tree. Lonely and different.

"Since I couldn't join in with their running and playing, the other children quickly tired of being with me. They ran off. And when they went to school, I stayed there under the tree. It was impossible for me to get there, since the school was so far away. The adults didn't really have time for me either. The men were out with the livestock and the women worked hard in their homes in the village."

Besides, Lomniaki needed help with absolutely everything. Getting dressed, eating, moving around, and going to the toilet.

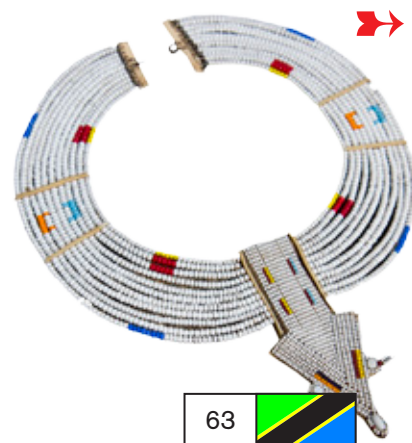
"It was embarrassing not be able to manage on my own, and I got more and more depressed. I often wondered why my father was ashamed of me, and why I had been born like that. Slowly it sunk in that this was what my life was going to be like. I would never be able to play and spend time with the

Tree of life

Anna Mollel visits Lomniaki's home. They sit under the big acacia tree and talk. Anna wants to know what his life is like, and whether there is anything he needs.

"Before, this used to be the tree of sadness. This was where I was left lying alone when the others played or went to school. But these days I see it as a great place where Anna saved me and where my new, real life began!" says Lomniaki.

others in the village. And I'd never be able to go to school. Never get a job and never be able to take care of the family's livestock. I thought it was

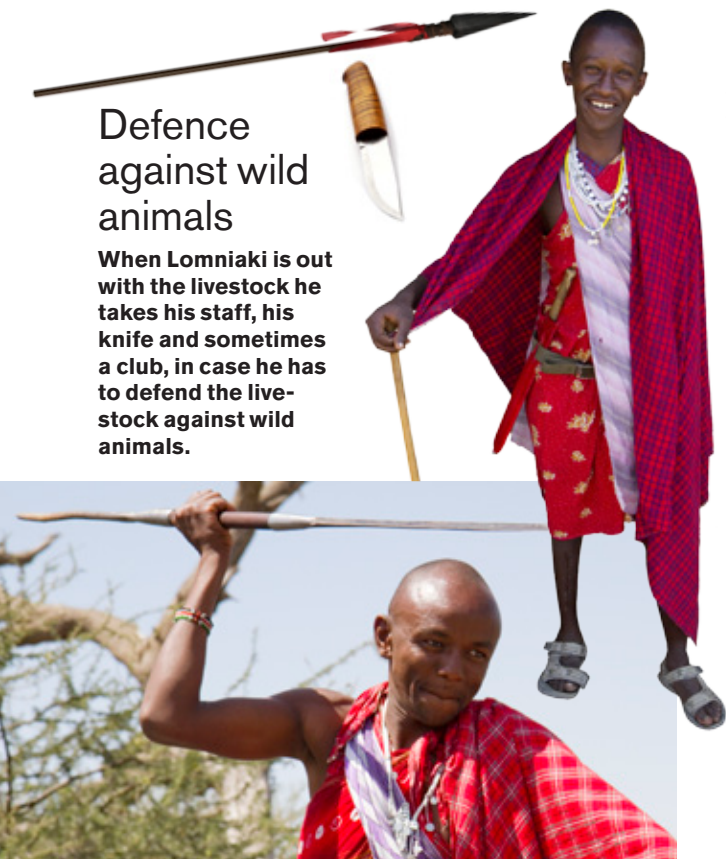


... and as a Maasai shepherd out on the savannah.



Defence against wild animals

When Lomniaki is out with the livestock he takes his staff, his knife and sometimes a club, in case he has to defend the livestock against wild animals.



unfair – I was worth just as much as others. I felt that I might as well have been dead.”

Anna Mollel

“My name, Lomniaki, means ‘blessing’ but I thought I had been given the wrong name. That name was surely meant for another boy. I was no blessing. I was a curse.”

But there was one person who had heard of Lomniaki, and who thought he was worth just as much as all other children, and who didn’t plan to give up until Lomniaki had a good life. That person was Anna Mollel.

“I’ll never forget the afternoon when Anna came to the village for the first time. I was almost nine and was sleeping alone under the tree. I woke with a start when I heard the noise of a jeep. I had never seen a car before, so I was terrified as I watched it approach. I screamed and cried. A woman stepped out, came over to me and sat down. She smiled and stroked my head gently, trying to comfort me. She said that I

shouldn’t be afraid, and that she had come to help me. Her name was Anna.”

Anna told Lomniaki’s mother Paulina that Lomniaki could have an operation that would make it possible for him to walk on his own. She also explained that Lomniaki could go to school just like all the other children.

“My mother was delighted and wanted Anna to take me with her straight away. But because my uncles weren’t home, I couldn’t go. My mother needed her brothers’ permission, so Anna had to leave without me.”

Third time lucky

Anna knew that the more Lomniaki grew, the harder it would be to fix his legs. If he didn’t get the operation soon, the damage would worsen, and he would never be able to learn to walk. There was no time to lose. So instead of waiting for three months, which was when the mobile clinic was due to visit the village again, Anna came back a couple of weeks later to talk to the uncles. They sat under

Lions and hyenas

“Elephants and giraffes often walk around here, and the hyenas come out every night. I love the wild animals that live here, but to make sure hungry wild animals can’t get at the livestock, we’ve made a barrier of tough spiky bushes right round the village. Closer to the mountains and the forest there are lions, cheetahs and leopards. Once when I was out with the livestock and saw a lion, I was terrified and ran away! When I’m older I’ll get a spear like all the other Maasai warriors. Maybe then I’ll be braver,” says Lomniaki, laughing. Here is his uncle, Simon, practising using his spear.



Together

“When I come home during the school holidays I can now manage to tend my family’s livestock, just like all the other boys my age in the village. We often do it together. Livestock is one of the most important things for us Maasai people, and being able to work with the animals together means a lot to me,” says Lomniaki. Here he is tending goats with his friends Juma (in red) and Musa, both 16.



the acacia tree and Anna explained about the operation and Lomniaki's future to his uncles and grandfather. Lomniaki had never seen anything like it.

"I had never seen a woman who dared to talk to men like that before. And I had never seen men listen to a woman the way my uncles did under that tree. Anna really was different."

Lomniaki's family would contribute some money to cover the cost of some of his food at the centre. Since they didn't have any money at the time, they decided that Anna would come back in three weeks to get Lomniaki.

While he waited for Anna to come back, Lomniaki dared to hope that his life was actually going to change. But his newfound hope died before the three weeks had passed. When Anna came back for the third time, Lomniaki's mother Paulina was in despair as she explained that the family had not managed to raise the money they needed. They couldn't pay.

"I remember that moment,

how Anna turned to me and said, 'Don't worry Lomniaki. It's OK. I'll help you anyway. We'll figure it out somehow!' At first I thought she was joking, but she wasn't."

That very afternoon, Anna lifted Lomniaki into her jeep. His journey towards a new life had begun.

One of the gang

Lomniaki was wonderfully happy at Anna's centre from the word go. As well as Anna and the housemothers doing all they could to make him comfortable, he finally got to start school and learn to read and write. He also learned about the rights of the child. And for the first time in his life, he met other children with disabilities.

"It felt so good to meet everyone. At home I had always felt like the only child with a disability. I had always been alone and felt like an outsider. At the centre I made loads of great new friends straight away. We could talk about everything, since we understood each other so well. And I didn't have to lie on my own like I did at home – one

of my new friends was always around to push me in a wheelchair, so that I could join in with things. For the first time in my life I didn't feel different, I felt like one of the gang. It was a fantastic feeling!"

Two weeks later, Lomniaki had his operation at the hospital in the city. When he came back to the centre, he started doing physiotherapy and learning to walk.

"For the first week my legs were really painful and I fell over all the time. But I gradually got better, and soon I was able to walk with crutches. After a year of training, I plucked up the courage to leave the crutches behind and managed to walk all on my own. That was the happiest day of my life!"

Wants to be a lawyer

After another year, Lomniaki's legs were in such good condition that he was able to leave the centre. Anna helped make sure he was able to go to school. At first they thought he could go to the school in his home village, but soon realised it would be too far to walk there.



Lomniaki Olmodooni Mdorosi, 15

LOVES: Reading and learning about the world. Geography and history.

HATES: Not being allowed to be with others. Being alone is no life at all.

BEST THING: When Anna gave me the chance to get an operation and go to school – the chance to be an ordinary person, a real person.

WORST THING: That my rights were violated when I was little. I was kept hidden away and not allowed to go to school.

LOOKS UP TO: Anna Mollel of course! She saved my life.

WANTS TO BE: A lawyer and fight for all the children who need me.

DREAM: For all children with disabilities all over the world to be able to live a good life and be happy. ➔➔





“My legs were not strong enough for me to manage to get to the school in the semi-desert, and I wouldn’t have had a chance of escaping any wild animals that came along. So Anna helped me find a boarding school in the city instead. Now I’m in Form 1 at secondary school and Huduma ya Walemavu still pay for everything I need. My uniform, my books, everything! And I’m so grateful for that. If they hadn’t

done that I would never have had the chance to go to school.”

Lomniaki loves going home to the village for the holidays, and these days he has no trouble helping with the livestock along with his friends. But he’s still dreaming – this time of studying to become a lawyer.

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

for me. Just think, she made the long, difficult journey across the savannah to my village three times, to rescue me. She really cared about me. I’ll never forget that. If Anna had given up and not come back, I would still be lying alone in that house or under the tree, unable to move. Instead, she gave me a life worth living.”



Computer technician

Lomniaki’s little sister Naraka, 12, fetches water, milks the livestock and helps to cook every day. But she goes to school too.

“Now I’m starting Year 7, and in the future I want to work with computers,” says Naraka.



Stories round the fire

Lomniaki sits round the fire with his oldest uncle, Karaine (on the left) and a few other men. They are grilling a goat.

“In the evening, every family sits round the fire in their house, cooking food and talking. We often tell stories about livestock and the wild animals we’ve seen on the savannah. I love it,” says Lomniaki.

Born with skeletal fluorosis

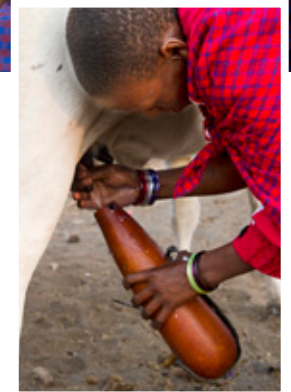
The bone disease that Lomniaki was born with is called skeletal fluorosis, and is caused by too much fluoride in drinking water. The fluoride builds up in the skeleton and can lead to stiffness, pain, distorted limbs and paralysis. It affects millions of people all over the world. Drinking water that is naturally high in fluoride often exists at the feet of high, volcanic mountains, like in the Rift Valley in East Africa, where Lomniaki lives. Many of the areas with dangerously high levels of fluoride are very dry, so the people are forced to drink that water despite the risks. In Tanzania, over 30% of the country’s drinking water has a high level of fluoride.



Beautiful calabashes

When Lomniaki gets home with the livestock, he sits down outside the house and drinks milk with his mother Paulina and younger sister Nashipai, 6. They drink from calabashes that Paulina has decorated with beautiful beads.

“I love my mother because she was brave enough to leave my father. That shows that she really loves and cares about me. I haven’t seen my father since then.”



Anna brought Everyday jump!



“Since the operation, I can dance with the others in the village. Dancing is important for us Maasai people, so that makes me really happy. I never thought I would be able to join in the dance. Never! But Anna made it possible.”

Here Lomniaki dances Longwesi, meaning Everyday. The dance involves the boys challenging each other in the high jump. Whoever jumps the highest is the winner. Here is Lomniaki battling with his friend Babu.

Jacob wants to run!

Jacob Loishooki Lazer is lying in a bed in the Arusha Lutheran Medical Centre, with both his legs in plaster. He has just been through the same operation that Lomniaki had. He’s happy.

“It was painful to start with, but it just keeps getting better and better. I’m so happy because soon I’ll be able to walk, and I’ll be able to help my family properly. Before I came here I tried to help take our cows and goats out to graze, but it was a struggle because it made my knees so sore. Soon I’ll even be able to go on long walks with the livestock during the dry season, when they need to search for fresh pastures. And I’ll be able to play with my friends. I’d love to just take off the plaster on my legs and run about on my healthy legs, right now!”

Not alone

Jacob has been in hospital for four days and housemother Neema from Anna’s centre has been with him the whole time, round the clock.

“It’s extremely important that the children don’t feel lonely. I tell stories, read books and comfort them when they need it,” says Neema Eliphias Mollel.

“When you leave here, you’ll have to take care of your leg. It’s important that you keep yourself clean so the wound doesn’t get infected, OK? In six weeks, you need to come back here. If everything looks good, we’ll take the plaster off and you can make a start on physiotherapy and learning to walk at the centre,” says nurse Lilian Michael.



Child rights lesson

It's Monday morning and, as usual, Anna is greeting the children at the little school:

"Good morning everyone, how are you?" wonders Anna.

"Good morning Grandma! We are well!" the class replies eagerly.

"Good! Is it fun to come to school?"

"Yes, Grandma!"

"Good! Do you take care of each other?"

"Of course!"

"Good, that's really important. Can anyone tell me what rights you children have?" asks Anna.

The children's hands shoot straight up into the air. Lots of them want to answer.

"To be able to go to school," says Theresia, 12.

"To be able to go to hospital if you need to," says Baraka, 9.

"To be allowed to play and join in with others," answers Violet, 7.

"Exactly, those are a few of your rights. And what about disabled children's rights?"

"They are just the same, Grandma," replies Violet.

"That's right. Children with disabilities have exactly the same rights as others. To be able to go to school, to get medical care, to be able to play, and to be loved. We are all created by God and must be treated with respect. Don't forget that!" says Anna, smiling with her whole body as she looks out over 'her' children.



Anna's school for all

On a low hill in Anna Molle's home village of Moivo is the small school that she founded in 2009, when she retired from Huduma ya Walemavu and moved back to her village. In Maasai, the school is called Engilanget, which means School of Light. All 25 children come from very poor families. Many are orphans, some have disabilities, and others have HIV. At Anna's school, all children are welcome. Especially those children that nobody else wants to take care of.

"I knew that many children with disabilities didn't get the chance to go to the school that most other children went to. It was too far away, and too expensive. That is extremely unfair, and so I decided to start a school where children with disabilities could study alongside children who are not disabled. A school where the children learn to understand that we're all equal and have the same rights and the same need for love," says Anna.



"No hitting my children!"

"Hitting children is banned at my school. You should never hit a child. You should never frighten a child. Just explain, and love. A child who is hit will go on to hit others. Corporal punishment is common in schools in Tanzania, but if a teacher ever hit one of my children, they would be fired straight away!" says Anna.





Loves football

“At my school everyone is allowed to join in and play. We like each other,” says Fanuel, who loves playing football at break time.



Skyscrapers

“We’re building a skyscraper,” says Fanuel.

“Yes, and when we grow up we’re going to build real buildings like this. We’ve never seen any skyscrapers in real life, only in newspapers and on TV,” says Fanuel’s friend Baraka, 9.

Anna loves all children!

“I am happy when I’m at school. We’re all friends here. It feels like we’re brothers and sisters, and we take care of one another. I’m an orphan and I live with my grandmother. We would never have been able to afford for me to go to any other school. I like Anna so much for letting me come to this school. She has a big heart and always takes care of us, more than other adults.” *Theresia Edward, 12 år*



Theresia in Anna’s vegetable patch

“I grow beans and other vegetables that the children eat for lunch. That way I know that even the poorest students are getting at least one nutritious meal a day,” says Anna.

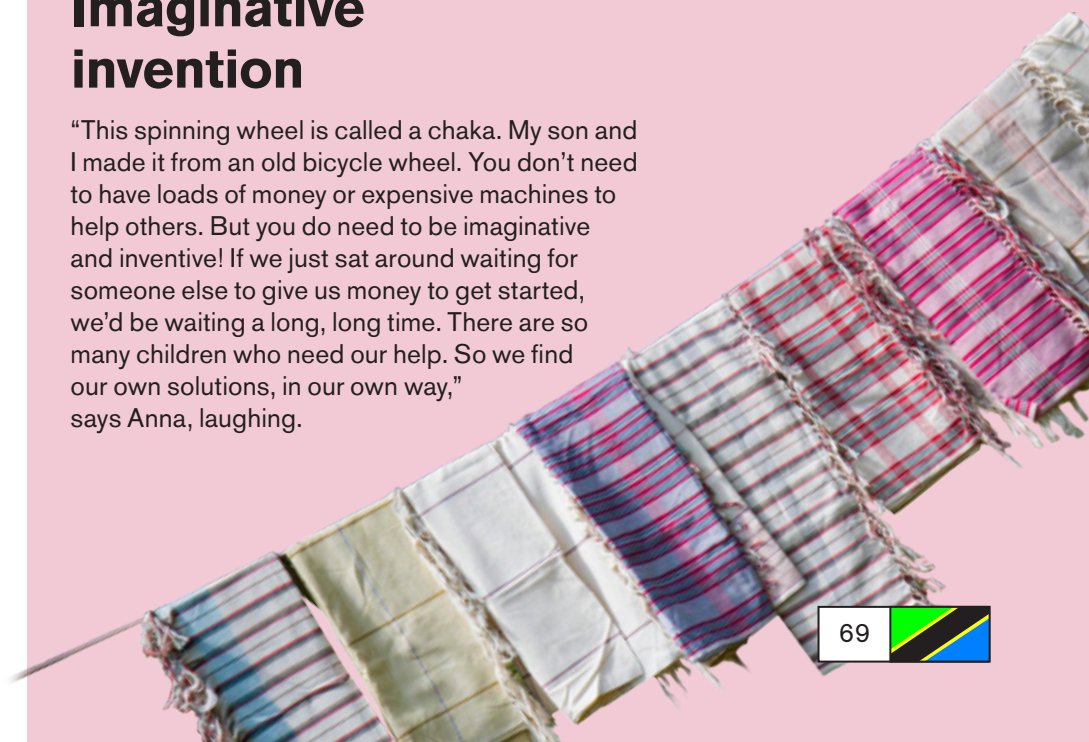
Anna’s sewing workshop helps children

“Many of the children at my school come from families so poor that they can’t afford school uniforms, books or the small fee that covers my two teachers’ wages. I have a little sewing workshop where I make textiles called koikoi, which I sell. I use the money to buy uniforms, shoes, books, pens and everything else that the poorest children in the class need help with,” says Anna.



Imaginative invention

“This spinning wheel is called a chaka. My son and I made it from an old bicycle wheel. You don’t need to have loads of money or expensive machines to help others. But you do need to be imaginative and inventive! If we just sat around waiting for someone else to give us money to get started, we’d be waiting a long, long time. There are so many children who need our help. So we find our own solutions, in our own way,” says Anna, laughing.





Sakena Yacoobi

NOMINEE • Pages 70–89

WHY HAS SAKENA BEEN NOMINATED?

Sakena Yacoobi has been nominated for the 2012 World's Children's Prize for her long and dangerous struggle to fulfil Afghan children and women's right to education, healthcare and to learn about their rights.

Sakena founded her organisation, Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL) in 1995, during times of oppression and intense conflict. The Taliban regime had banned girls from going to school. But Sakena opened 80 secret schools, trained teachers, and created secret mobile school libraries. Today, Sakena and AIL run hundreds of schools, health clinics and hospitals in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and have trained 19,000 teachers. The teachers learn new methodologies and have helped 4.6 million children learn critical thinking skills. Every year they give 125,000 children education and healthcare. Through Sakena's work more than 5.5 million Afghan children have gained new opportunities and faith in the future, despite extreme poverty and 30 years of war in Afghanistan.



"All you need is a classroom, a chalkboard, some chalk and a trained teacher. That's all that is needed to change the lives of all the children in a whole village," says Sakena Yacoobi. Her teachers giving lessons to girls in the computer room.

As a young girl Sakena Yacoobi is the only girl in her class. She thinks to herself, "Why can't girls go to school?"

When war hits Afghanistan, Sakena is studying in the USA. She wants to return home and help those worst affected by the war – women and children. When girls are banned from attending school, she opens secret schools.

Almost 20 years later, she is still fighting for Afghanistan's children, and more than 700,000 of them have received education and healthcare through Sakena and her organisation, AIL.

Sakena's own story begins many years ago, in Herat, a beautiful old city. Sakena's father buys and sells houses and fridges and radios from abroad. Her mother is a housewife.

Sakena is their first child, and for a long time she is an only child. So her father wants her to be both a daughter and a son to him. At the age of four, he sends her to a religious school,

where the teacher is a mullah, a Muslim priest.

"I was the only girl in a class of 15 students. I wasn't shy, but sometimes the boys did tease me. Why should a girl go to school, they asked. I thought: why shouldn't a girl study? Sometimes the boys hit me. When I complained to the mullah he didn't tell them off. Instead he got angry at me! But I found it easy to learn. By the age of 6 I knew as much as the mullah," recalls Sakena.

Dressed as a boy

When Sakena is young she wears a little headscarf, which is an Afghan tradition for girls. But sometimes Sakena's father dresses her up as a boy.

"I hid my long hair under



a hat. And I wore shirts and shorts. And hey presto! I was transformed into a boy. It was fun! I could join in with the boys' wild games. We did wrestling, arm-wrestling, and fighting. I was big and strong for my age, so I often won."

Sakena's father took her everywhere with him – on business trips, to dinners, and to parties where only men were allowed. He really wants another child, and would love a son, but it takes time.

"My mother was pregnant constantly, but the children didn't survive. Once she nearly bled to death giving birth. The babies were stillborn, or so weak that they didn't survive more than a couple of weeks. It was awful to see how sad my mother was every time she lost a child that she had carried for nine months. The same thing happened to

other women in our district. So I thought: why should so many women and children suffer? There and then I decided to change that!"

Father's secret

Sakena's father is strict. After school it's time for homework, not playing. Every evening she shows him her homework jotter and he reads, wrinkles his nose and says, "You can do better! Do it again, do it right!" And she has to start over.

One day when Sakena is 10, she shows him her homework as usual, and as usual she gets the response, "That's not good enough! Do it again!" But Sakena knows that there is not a single mistake, so she plucks up the courage to reply, "Read it and point out exactly what is wrong!" And she hands the jotter back to her father. He just looks at her, and says in a low voice, "I can't read."

"And then he turned his face away. I could hear he was crying. It was a shock. I thought my father could do anything, but he was illiterate. In all these years, he had only pretended to correct my homework. And I had let

myself be tricked. After that day, he never asked to see my homework again. I never told anyone what had happened. It was our secret. My father didn't want people to know that he couldn't read or write."

Turns down suitors

Sakena often hears her grandmother, aunts and other relatives on her father's side complain that Sakena's mother hasn't given him any sons. They say that she is useless, and that Sakena's father should take a new, younger wife. Sakena can't stand to hear this. But her father

doesn't want a new wife. He's happy with the wife he has.

Finally, when Sakena is 14, she gets a little brother. By now she is in Year 8 and she takes care of all her father's business paperwork. She is like his secretary. At school, she sees the other girls leave, one after another. They get married and become housewives, even though they are only children. Child marriage is common in Afghanistan. And Sakena has suitors too.

"I was fat, and not very pretty, but lots of people still wanted to marry me, because I had a good reputation. But my father always asked me,



Allah means God

In the stories about Sakena and her work for children in Afghanistan, sometimes Allah is mentioned and sometimes God. But it's the same thing – Allah means God.

Most dangerous country for women

Afghanistan is the most dangerous country in the world for women to live in. Violence, lack of healthcare and widespread poverty make Afghan women the most vulnerable. One in eleven women die when giving birth. Four in five girls are married off, through forced marriage or arranged marriage. Only one in ten women can read and write.





➔ ‘Sakena, do you want to marry this man?’ And I always answered, ‘No father, I want to go to school!’ And my father respected that. He was a good man.”

Coming home to the children

Sakena is the first person in her extended family to graduate from school. After high school, she wants to continue studying, but at this time there is only one university in the whole country. It’s in another city, far from home. The problem is solved when

Sakena makes friends with an American family who are visiting Afghanistan. They say that they can take her back to the USA with them to study. Sakena wants to go, but her father ponders the issue for a long time. Letting his daughter study near home is one thing, but letting her disappear off to the other side of the world is another. Finally, he agrees. Sakena is over the moon.

Just as Sakena Yacoobi moves to the USA, war comes to Afghanistan. Cities and villages are bombed, battles are fought in alleyways and

on mountainsides. Many are killed or have to flee. After much hardship, Sakena’s mother, father and brother manage to get to the USA. The family is reunited. And the story could have stopped there. But Sakena can’t forget her homeland. She isn’t satisfied to live in peace and safety, while her people suffer.

They need schools and hospitals.

“My heart burned for my people. I wanted to help those affected by the war, particularly the women and children. My parents were not pleased with my decision. My mother said, ‘You can’t leave us again. We need to stick together.’ But my father agreed with

Afghanistan

28 million people live in Afghanistan. It is a country of high mountains that are snow-capped all year round, deep valleys, forests and large deserts. The summers are hot, with temperatures over 40 degrees. In the winter they sink to

minus 20, with snowstorms and ice. The most common crops are rice, potatoes, pomegranates, mangoes and watermelons. There are many rare wild animals, like bears, eagles, gazelles and snow leopards. The people keep sheep and cows as



Sakena Yacoobi's goal is to make sure that there isn't a single girl in Afghanistan who is not allowed to go to school to learn to read.



me. 'If this is what you want, then it is also God's will,' he said."

Sakena travels to the Afghan refugee camps, where she gets a job as a manager of a teacher training program. Soon she opens a school for girls. And another. And another. After one year, there are 3000 girls attending

Sakena's schools. The next year, there are 27,000. Sakena also founds clinics and teacher training courses. When the Taliban, who govern Afghanistan at the time, ban girls from going to school, Sakena doesn't give up. Instead, she opens secret schools for girls. More and more, until there are 80 secret



Children and their mothers waiting at one of the hospitals run by Sakena Yacoobi and AIL in Afghanistan.



livestock, and horses, donkeys and camels as pack animals or for riding.

Wars

There have been wars going on in Afghanistan for over thirty years. Only the old people remember a time of peace. Sometimes foreign armies have occupied the country, and at other times

different Afghan groups have been at war with each other. Many innocent people have been affected by the wars. All Afghans have relatives who have been killed or injured, and many families have had to flee their homes. Today, the government is fighting the Taliban and other rebel groups, with help from soldiers from the USA and

other countries. Neither side seems to be 'winning'. The war just keeps going.

The Taliban

The largest rebel group is called the Taliban. They used to govern the country, and they made it illegal for women to work and girls to go to school. They also banned dancing, music, kite flying

and TV. Anyone who didn't obey was killed or whipped. The Taliban is an Islamic fundamentalist movement. They are fighting to regain power. They plant bombs, lay ambushes, and kill many people. But the government troops and the soldiers from the USA and other countries sometimes kill ordinary people too.





Learn Dari and Pashto

Over thirty languages are spoken in Afghanistan, but Dari and Pashto are the official languages.

	dari	pashto
One	yak	yau
Two	du	dua
Three	se	drei
Four	chahar	tsalare
Five	panj	penza
yes/no	Bala/Na	Hoo/Na
Good day	Salam aleikum	Salam aleikum
Goodbye	Khod hafez	De kuday pe aman
What is your name?	Nametan chist?	Staa num tse day?
My name is Muhammed!	Namam Muhammed hast!	Zama num Muhammed deh!

→ schools. Time passes, and Sakena works around the clock.

“I didn’t have any children of my own, but I feel proud and happy when I think of all the children I have helped. Thousands and thousands of Afghan girls. And quite a few boys too. I love them as though they were my own. Children are the future of Afghanistan.”

Death threats and bodyguards

Sometimes Sakena gets death threats from men who don’t believe girls should be allowed to go to school. So she gets protection from bodyguards. Sometimes her schools and clinics are closed by armed gangs. So she opens them again, in secret. Sakena Yacoobi never gives up. Her goal is for every girl to be

allowed to go to school and learn to read.

“Everyone has a right to go to school. It’s just as important as eating or breathing. In the USA and Europe, children have computers, video games and mobile phones. Why should Afghan children not even be able to go to school? It’s not much to ask. All you need is a classroom, a chalkboard, some chalk and a trained teacher. That’s all that is needed to change the lives of all the children in a whole village. Look at me, I would never have come this far if my father hadn’t let me study.” 🌐

When Sakena Yacoobi was little and the only girl in class she thought: “Why shouldn’t a girl be allowed to go to school?” She has devoted her life to giving the girls of Afghanistan, and boys, this opportunity.



Nouria gets a lift to school. She doesn't have to go to a secret school any more.



Nouria went to secret school

Thunder roared and rain whipped the earthen houses in the village of Ghani Khel on the night she was born, fourteen years ago. The girl's father, Khan Wali, held her up in the light of a gas lamp and vowed:

"You will have the same chances in life as a boy, to go to school and learn a trade."

The girl was named Nouria, which means light in Arabic. "She will be a role model for other girls," her father wrote on the back of his copy of the Koran, the holy book of Islam, the night she was born.

The years passed. Nouria turned seven and started going to a school built by Sakena Yacoobi's organisation, AIL. Nouria was good at reading and writing, but found maths difficult. She loved her school, where boys and girls could study in

the same class. But one day when Nouria arrived at school, there was a note stuck to the door with a knife. "This school is closed. We will cut the throats of parents who send their children here," it said.

Nouria, who was 11 years



Nouria, 14

FAVOURITE FOOD: Sweets

BEST FRIEND: My cousin Fatima

WANTS TO BE: A teacher

LIKES: School, poetry, stories, sweets

HATES: War

FAVOURITE ANIMALS: Tigers and eagles

old by now, knew exactly what was going on. The Taliban had closed the school! She ran home and told her father. On the same day, Taliban soldiers turned up in the village. They went from house to house telling people that they had taken over the village. Everyone had to obey their orders.

"They had beards and black turbans. And so many weapons... pistols, rifles and rocket launchers. I was sad and afraid of what was going to happen," explains Nouria.

Took food

The Taliban soldiers started to invite themselves into people's houses. Late at night



→ they would knock on the door. “Give us food,” they would say, “or we’ll beat you to death.” Since there were so many of them and they were armed, no-one dared say no. Nouria’s father asked her mother, Amina, to lay everything they had on the table. Rice, lamb steak, raisins, nuts and vegetables. The soldiers sat there and wolfed down all the family’s food. Then they disappeared out into the night. The same thing happened time and again. The family didn’t have enough food, and Nouria often had to go to bed hungry.

Secret school

The school remained closed. Until Nouria’s father and the teachers at Sakena Yacoobi’s school came up with a plan to hold secret lessons.

“We would gather a handful of students and one teacher in someone’s kitchen or living room. We pretended to be running errands so we could get there without being found out. We hid our schoolbooks under our cans. Then we went home again, one at a time, not in a group. It was terrifying, but also a little bit exciting. We didn’t trust everyone in the village – some of our neighbours sided with the Taliban and thought girls

shouldn’t go to school,” recalls Nouria.

For over a year, the Taliban governed the village and Nouria went to the secret school. Then one day, there was news on the radio. The leader of the Taliban men who had terrorised the villagers had been killed in battle. Now Nouria and the other children could relax. The school would open again, in its usual building with classrooms, desks and chalkboards. The villagers who had supported the Taliban fled.

Future dreams

Two years have passed and Nouria is now 14. She has just moved in with her grandfather in the city of Herat to start a new school. The village school can only take students up to Year 6. Nouria dreams of becoming a teacher and educating girls about their rights:

“Unfortunately, girls don’t have the same chances as boys in Afghanistan. But there shouldn’t be any difference. We are equal. I learned that at Sakena Yacoobi’s school. Without that school, I wouldn’t even have been able to write my own name.”

Nouria’s parents miss her, as she lives so far from home, but her father says it’s worth it.

“My daughter will be a role model, a light for other children. I made that vow when she was born. So she has to go to a good school, even if that means we can’t see each other every day. It’s like the poet says: ‘A beautiful flower often has thorns’.”



“My daughter will be a role model, a light for other children. I promised that when she was born,” says Nouria’s father.

Father smoked opium

Nouria's cousin Fatima grew up in constant fear of her father. He beat her and sold everything the family owned to buy opium, a dangerous drug. Now Fatima's life is much better, and it has been ever since her uncle helped her.

My father used to beat us all the time. He hit me, my mother and my little brother with his hands, stones, sticks and a whip. He smoked opium and was addicted to drugs. When he didn't have enough money for drugs he went crazy. Once when I was watering the vegetables, he grabbed me and shouted: 'What are you doing here? You should be inside!' He aimed his pistol at my head and said that he'd shoot me if I didn't behave. I was shaking with fear," says Fatima.

Father sold everything

Fatima's family lived in a remote rural village, in a simple earthen house with high walls all round it. Fatima was sad and afraid all the time. She didn't dare tell anyone what things were like at home. After all, her father had told her that he'd beat her to death if she did.

At school, Fatima was quiet all the time so she didn't make friends in her class. The other stu-

dents thought she was strange. At night Fatima had nightmares. Before falling asleep she would lie awake and imagine running away. She wished that she had a different father, a big, strong, kind father.

"My father only cared about finding money for opium. He got fired from his job. Then he sold all our kitchen utensils, pots, glasses and knives. Our uncle gave us a little bit of food, otherwise we would have starved. But sometimes my father even sold that food. I got headaches from hunger and couldn't concentrate at school."

A new life

Once, Fatima's father tried to quit smoking opium. It went well at first. He managed to get a job and started to earn a bit of money. But soon he was fired again. He had started smoking again.

"It was a disappointment. But the worst thing was when I saw my little brother, who was only 5, copy my father. My brother lit a reed and pretended to smoke it, as though it was an opium cigarette. I began to despair. Would he become like our father too? Would it never end?"

When Fatima's father broke into her uncle Khan Wali's house and stole money and a mobile phone, it was to be the last thing he did in the villa-

Fatima, 15

INTERESTS: School, TV, music
BEST FRIEND: My cousin Nouria
FAVOURITE FRUIT: Mango and melon
WANTS TO BE: A lawyer
HATES: Drugs and war
FAVOURITE THING: My new schoolbag
IDOL: My uncle Khan Wali, who thinks girls should study

ge. Her uncle gave him a good hiding. Then he took Fatima, her mother and her younger brother to his house. Fatima's father was chased out of the village and a whole new life began for Fatima.

"It was like waking up from a nightmare. Nobody beat us and we could eat till we were full every day. I had a lot to catch up with in school and started to spend the afternoons studying at AIL's Learning Center. I learned to read and write there, and I got over my shyness. My mother started to study there too. She had always been so sad, but she became happy. Now she has a job telling the women in the village how to look after their health." 🌐

Opium

Opium is a dangerous drug. It comes from poppies, a beautiful red flower that is grown in large fields in Afghanistan. Opium can be smoked or used to make heroin, which is injected with a needle. Anyone who takes the drug gets addicted and can only think about how to get more of it, not about how to get food for their families. Those who use it are mostly men. Afghan farmers grow opium because they are poor and can sell it for lots of money, not because they like drugs.

When Aisha is orphaned early in her life, she is very sad and refuses to talk. But the kind lady at the orphanage and the teachers at Sakena Yacoobi's education program gradually give her hope for the future. After an operation, Aisha now has a 'pacemaker', and dreams of becoming a teacher and helping other children whose lives are hard.

Aisha doesn't remember much about her father. But she remembers that he had an ordinary, safe face and a lovely dark beard. And she remembers hearing he'd been murdered.

Aisha was sitting eating with her mother and younger sister when a relative came and told them the terrible news. Her father, Said Ahmed, had been shot by thieves on his way to Iran to find work. Aisha's mother, Makol, was sad, but she drew her three children in close and said:

"Don't worry! I'll make sure we get by. I will be like a mother and a father to you. It is God's will. God gives life and God takes life, and we humans must accept our fate."

Mother falls ill

Without a father to support the family, life became difficult. Their mother Makol took on cleaning work at hospitals and in rich homes, but she still couldn't afford the rent. The family had to move from their house to a one-room house with an earthen floor, and could only afford to eat bread and drink tea. Soon, Makol fell ill.

"Mother had something wrong with her heart. She couldn't work, she just lay at home in bed. We got some rice from an aid organisation and from our neighbours, but no support from our relatives. Often we didn't have anything to eat," recalls Aisha.

Her mother got weaker and



8.00 a.m.

The AIL teachers come to the orphanage.

"We learn about English, computers and sewing. My favourite teacher is Seddique, who teaches English and computer skills. She teaches us so much. She begins every lesson by talking about life and society, and telling us that girls have rights too."

weaker. One morning, she simply didn't wake up. She had died during the night. A neighbour found Aisha and her sisters, sitting crying beside their mother.

To the orphanage

Aisha was taken to an orphanage. A concrete building in the middle of the city, with a big courtyard. There were lots of children there in the same situation. They tried to comfort Aisha.

"They said don't cry, we know how it feels. We have no

6.00 a.m.

"I get up, make the bed and do my morning prayers. I pray to God that I won't become ill again! Then it's time for a breakfast of egg, bread and tea."



Aisha's pacemaker help

mothers or fathers – only each other."

And it was true. Some of the children didn't know where their parents were, and other children's parents had been killed, were in prison or were so poor that they couldn't care for their children.

"The girls at the orphanage said they'd be like my sisters and they gave me dolls," says Aisha.

But she was inconsolable.

"I missed my mother and I cried myself to sleep every night. I was only six years old



11.00 a.m.

Aisha goes to the girls' school next door.

"Children from the orphanage and children who live with their parents all go to the same school. We orphanage children stick together, especially when the other children tease us. School is fun, but the lessons are a bit noisy. There are far too many students per teacher."



Aisha, 13

LOVES: My sister Fariba

HATES: Disease and war

MISSES: My dead mother

LOOKS UP TO: My teacher Seddique

WANTS: To have a healthy heart!

LIKES: English, computers



As her heart beat for others

and I didn't really understand what it meant that my mother was dead. For a long time, I thought that one day she would come and get me from the orphanage."

"For a while, I was so sad that I stopped talking. I didn't join in with the classes, I just ran away and hid."

One kind lady

There was a kind lady at the orphanage, called Bibi Gul. She saw how sad Aisha was, and came to see her in the evenings to tell her stories

and cuddle her. Finally, Aisha started to talk again.

"Could you be my mother?" asked Aisha.

"You are safe with me," answered Bibi Gul.

So Aisha started to go to Bibi Gul's room at bedtime and fall asleep in her bed. Bibi Gul would never shoo her away, although she was tired after a long working day. She waited till Aisha had fallen asleep and then carried her to her bunk bed.

Bit by bit, Aisha began to feel safer and happier. She

started to go to school. And she also started going to classes run by teachers from AIL. They came to teach the girls to sew, speak English, and use computers. A new world opened up before Aisha's eyes.

"Before I came here I didn't know anything. I didn't even know that 'English' was a language! I had never seen a computer. And I couldn't even write my own name! Now I know so much, and I'm learning more all the time," says Aisha, who is very

fond of her teacher, Seddique from AIL.

Pacemaker

The years passed, and one morning when Aisha was eleven she was woken by a pain in her chest.

"It felt like a knife in my heart. A knife slowly turning, round and round," says Aisha.

Just like her mother, she had a heart defect. Her heart was too weak to pump all the blood around her body. The doctor who examined her





➔ **1.00 p.m.**

“We have rice and beans for lunch almost every day at the orphanage. Sometimes just rice. But now and again we get spaghetti bolognese, that’s my favourite. I’m pretty tired of rice.”

explained that Aisha needed an operation – otherwise she could die.

But it’s not possible to have a heart operation in Afghanistan. So the staff at the orphanage organised a concert, with singers and musicians who performed for free. All the ticket money went towards sending Aisha to Iran, to a modern children’s hospital.

“I was the only one who didn’t have my parents with me. But the other children and their mothers and fathers were kind. They gave me a book where they had all



Aisha stopped talking when both her mother and father died. All’s teachers helped her, and now she wants to become a teacher to help children who have had a tough time.

written messages or drawn pictures, and they prayed to God for everything to go well for me,” recalls Aisha.

She was put to sleep for the operation.

“When I opened my eyes after the operation I was lying alone in a white room. At first I thought I was dead, but then a doctor came in. He

said that they had put in a pacemaker, a little machine that helped my heart to beat. I have a scar from the operation,” says Aisha.

Wants to help others

Back at the orphanage, Aisha felt better. But she still gets sudden chest pains from time to time.

What people say about Aisha



Alone at New Year

“Aisha is my sister. We stick together whatever happens, because we have nobody else in all the world. Let me tell you about Nowrooz, Afghan New Year. All the other children from the orphanage were picked up by relatives to go to New Year parties, but nobody came for us. We thought our uncle was coming so we waited all day, but he didn’t come. We were so disappointed. The orphanage was totally empty, because the staff were on holiday. It was just me, Aisha and Bibi Gul who were left. Despite everything, we had a pretty good New Year. Bibi Gul told us stories until we fell asleep.”

Fariba, 10, sister

Drawing all the time

“When Aisha was younger she loved her dolls. She never tired of playing with them. But now they’re not as important to her. Her favourite pastime now is drawing. Every time she has a free minute, she runs to get paper and pens, and starts to draw. We usually draw together. Princesses, horses, and beautiful palaces. And families with mothers, fathers and children.”

Foziya, 12, friend



“Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night with a sharp pain in my heart. It hurts so much. Then I lie awake and think about death, and about not wanting to die. Because there’s so much I want to do,” says Aisha.

Even though she has a new pacemaker, Aisha still can’t run as fast as the other children. She gets tired and out-of-breath easily if she exerts herself.

“Sometimes I wonder why God made my heart so weak. And I ask to be made healthy and well. I just want to be like other children,” says Aisha.

But she’s doing really well at school.

“I love AIL’s lessons. They are much better than at the normal school. My teacher Seddique has changed my life. Now I know what I want, and I have plans for the future.

One day, I want to speak English as well as my teacher. And know as much as she does about the world! Then I’ll become a teacher too, to help children who have a hard life. That’s my dream,” says Aisha. 🌐

3.00 p.m.

“I go back to the orphanage and rest, play and do my homework. When I don’t have the energy to study any more I draw, or go and talk to Bibi Gul. Then we watch programs with singing and dancing on the TV.”



Sakena’s teachers at the orphanage

There are hundreds of girls at the orphanage in the city of Herat, aged from three to eighteen. There are also around 25 boys, but they are moved to another orphanage when they are ten or eleven years old.

The orphanage children sleep in bunk beds and eat meals in a large hall. Around ten women take care of them. In the yard there is a play park with swings and slides, and inside there is a TV and a classroom.

The orphanage is run by the government of Afghanistan, but six days a week, teachers from Sakena Yacoobi’s organisation, Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL), come in to teach the children.

Most, but not all, of the children also attend the school next door.



6.30 p.m.

“For dinner, we eat the leftovers from lunchtime. Then we can do whatever we like. I study a bit, pray and then go to my room to talk to my sister Fariba and draw.”



Whole body laughter

“I can’t be Aisha’s mother, I have so many children to take care of, but I try! She needs love and she hasn’t had it easy. But she is really sweet and when she laughs her whole body shakes. It makes me so happy to see her laugh.”

Bibi Gul, 64, who takes care of the orphanage children.

So hard-working

“Aisha is one of my favourite students – she is so happy, so hard-working and so kind. And she learns quickly! But I’m a bit worried about her future. When the girls turn eighteen they are adults and have to leave the orphanage. Some get jobs, and others get married off to distant relatives. But some just disappear, and we don’t know what happens to them!”

Seddique, 25, teacher

10.00 p.m.
Bedtime.





"I don't like wearing a burka. I think a headscarf is enough. The burka looks a bit dull. I have headscarves in different colours - today I'm wearing a red one. That's a happy colour," says Zarafshan, 16, who is a student and an ALL teacher.

"I wear a chador, because according to our tradition and religion, it is not suitable for a woman to show her hair or face to strangers. At home I just wear a headscarf," explains Makhfi, 14, who is learning to sew with ALL.

"I'm wearing a white veil, which I got at the orphanage where I live. It's beautiful," thinks Malalai, 7, who is taught by ALL teachers.



"I have worn a burka since the age of 14. All the women in my village do. It's our tradition and culture, and we are proud of our burkas. I feel safe in my burka," explains Freista, 20, a mother-of-three who is visiting ALL's clinic.



What are you wearing? Burka, chador or headscarf?

According to Islam, a woman should cover her hair. But there is nothing in the religion to say that a woman should cover her whole face or eyes. However it is traditional in Afghanistan for most women to wear a burka, a garment that covers them from head to toe, when they leave the house. Others wear a chador, which is a large piece of fabric, and a few only wear a small headscarf.

eyes and face visible. The wearer holds it together at the front. The most common colour of chador is black.

Burka

Covers the whole body and head. There is a piece of netting in it that lets the woman see out. Burkas are often sky blue, but can be white, brown or green. It's hard to move around in a burka, and in the summer it gets hot under the fabric.

When do girls start wearing a veil?

Baby girls don't wear a veil at all. Until the age of six or seven, girls have colourful skirts, blouses and sometimes a little pastel-coloured veil. From the age of 7 to about 12, most girls wear a white or black veil. When girls are around 13-15 years old and start to grow into women, it's usually time for a burka. Women over the age of 60 sometimes don't bother with a burka.

Headscarf

Wearing a headscarf isn't any different from wearing a hat or a cap. It is worn by girls and women from modern, educated families in the cities.

Chador
A cloak that covers the whole body, but leaves the



"I got my beautiful headscarf from my mother. But I can only wear it here at the center. Outside I wear a chador, because it's dangerous to draw attention to yourself - you can be kidnapped," says Fatima, 15, who is learning English with ALL.



Burka gives protection and oppresses

Many girls and women in Afghanistan are oppressed. Men make the decisions, and the burka is a way of limiting the freedom of women and girls. According to Afghan tradition, women should stay in the home and should not be seen outside, while the men are out in society.

However, all women in burkas are not powerless. They can have a lot of influence over the home, the housekeeping, bringing up children, and marriage. They can also wear a burka on the way to work, but take it off while they work. The burka can give a kind of protection.



Farid loves football and English

Farid never misses a football match with the boys who live nearby, nor his English lessons at the AIL Learning Center.

Farid lives with his mother, father and eight siblings in a small house with three rooms.

"My father is a teacher. He has an extra job as a bicycle mechanic, but he still struggles to provide for the family. Sometimes we get some money from relatives, and my father uses it for food and clothes," explains Farid.

Although Farid's family don't have much money all the children - even the girls - go to school. Farid's father knows how important education is. But he is also strict and bad tempered. Sometimes he hits Farid.

In the mornings Farid goes to an ordinary school, and in the afternoons he learns English at Sakena Yacoobi and AIL's Learning Center. That is his favourite thing - apart from football.

"My dream is to learn fluent English, then I want to study engineering. I want to build huge modern blocks of flats, so that people have a place to live. Every apartment would have lots of rooms, so that people don't need to live in overcrowded homes. But it's hard to become an engineer. Maybe I'll be a teacher instead."



Sport clothes

"I love football! Whenever I get the chance I play in someone's yard. I'm in a football team with the boys who live nearby, and we have a football strip of course. Unfortunately I don't have any football boots, but my father has promised that I can get some as soon as he can afford it. That's my greatest wish!"

School clothes

"When you go to school you need good, clean clothes with no holes, but they can't be so precious that they can't get dirty. I have an hour's walk to school, on dusty roads and narrow alleys. If it's hot and sunny the dust rises, and if it rains the road is muddy and full of puddles."



Good clothes

"It's important to look good at weddings. I got these clothes for my cousin's wedding. It was a big party in our home village. The food was great and there were about a thousand guests. The men celebrated together, and the women together in a different place. That's our tradition."



Baker boy escaped and became



5.00 a.m.

The alarm goes off and Muhammed wakes up. He lingers in bed for a few minutes, then wakes his brothers, Arif and Amin. Their mother and younger brother Yahya are up already.



5.15 a.m.

The call to prayer sounds from the mosque. Muhammed falls on his knees facing the Muslim holy city, Mecca, and prays Fajr, the morning prayer.



Seven-year-old Muhammed works from four in the morning until six in the evening at the bakery's hot oven. Sometimes he gets burns, and he is hit. When he accidentally burns a whole tray of loaves, he runs away and never comes back...

His dream of going to school comes true, and soon Muhammed, with help from the teachers at Sakena Yacoobi's Learning Center, has caught up with the others and became second top in his class.

When Muhammad is seven, he sells chewing gum and telephone cards at the market. But he hardly earns any money.

One evening, his father brings a stranger home.

"This is Hamid, the baker. You're going to be his assistant. It's a good job," says Muhammed's father.

The baker looks kindly at Muhammed and says:

"There are lots of boys who want to work for me, so you should be glad you're getting the chance to learn the trade. You start at four tomorrow morning."

Hot and dangerous

That night, Muhammed can hardly sleep. He's pleased to have got a job, but he's nervous too. After all, he doesn't know a thing about bread and ovens. The bakery is quite far away from Muhammed's house, so he has to get up at three to get there on time. The sky is pitch black as he walks to his new job.

Things don't turn out as Muhammed had hoped. His job is to lift the bread in and out of a large stone oven. It's hot and dangerous. On the very first day, he burns himself so badly he cries.

"Stop wailing and show some gratitude, otherwise

you're out," says the baker, lifting his huge right hand. Suddenly he slaps Muhammed hard, right in the face.

Muhammed swallows his tears. "It might get better if I work harder," he thinks. After six hours' work it's time for a break for prayers and a lunch of bread and water. Then Muhammed goes back to work until six in the evening.

Walking home, Muhammed is so tired he nearly faints. He carries a plastic bag with his wages for the day – two dry loaves. But he doesn't complain in front of his mother and father.

Runs away home

Days become weeks and months full of hard toil, abuse and dangerous work around the hot ovens. On his lunch break, Muhammed slips out of the bakery and sits alone under a tree, nibbling his bread.

There is a school next door, and Muhammed looks enviously at the boys on their way home from morning lessons. They laugh and swing their schoolbags. "I want to go to school too," thinks Muhammed.

After seven months, Muhammed has had enough. One morning he accidentally burns a whole tray of loaves, and is so afraid of the baker's

e second top in class



Muhammed, 12

IDOL: Singer Zahir Shah, father Atiq

INTERESTS: Taekwondo, football, TV

WANTS TO BE: A soldier or a martial arts master

FAVOURITE FOOD: Spaghetti

HATES: Child labour



6.00 a.m.

Tea and bread for breakfast.

punishment that he runs away and heads home. In the evening he tells his father Atiq about how awful things are at the bakery, how he is

hit, and how easy it is to get burnt. He weeps and says he wants to go to school, learn to read and write, and not work these long days. At first his father is furious, but after a while he calms down.

“You are disobedient. But

you are also brave. You can go to school on one condition – that you do your homework every single day,” says his father, Atiq.

“Thank you father, may Allah be with you,” says Muhammed.



6.45 a.m.

Muhammed runs to school – he doesn't want to be late!



Father's strict timetable

By this time, Muhammed's father has got a paid job as a government soldier. So the family can now afford to let Muhammed and his two older brothers study. But their father is strict. He writes a timetable that he pins to the wall in their small earthen house.

“You must make the most of every hour of the day. You must not waste a single minute,” says their father. The timetable tells Muhammed and his brothers what to do, hour-by-hour. In the mornings, Muhammed goes to school and after lunch he continues his studies at Sakena Yacoobi's Learning Center. The tough schedule has yielded results. Muhammed is now in Year 5 and is in second top position in his class.

“When I started school I was behind the others.





11.15 a.m.

Muhammed studies English at Sakena Yacoobi's Learning Center. His teacher Zahra Alipour, who is 18, helps him.

"Muhammed does well at school, but his family have no relatives here, so there's no-one who can help them. They are short of money, for example, Muhammed has the same shoes in summer and winter. It's freezing when it snows. But I think he'll be fine – he's smart and he has lots of friends," says Zahra.



1.30 p.m.

Muhammed and his brother take it in turns to sit in the rug-weaving chair.

"I'm so used to making rugs that I usually put a book on the chair and read my homework while I'm doing it," explains Muhammed.

and that means spending several hours on it every day.

But life is not all hard work and homework. Five days a week, Muhammed and his brothers go to a taekwondo club to train in the Korean martial art. They have special training clothes and they have entered competitions. Once Muhammed won a bronze medal.

Today, Muhammed is satisfied with his life, but there is

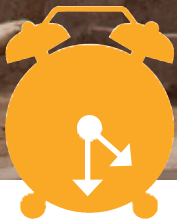
dy and noisy. And I get teased there because I'm clever."

Worried about father

Although Muhammed's father has a job now, the fam-

ily are not rich. To earn a bit of extra money, the sons take turns making rugs at home, beautiful patterned rugs that they can sell. It takes three months to make just one rug,

➔ Without the courses at Sakena Yacoobi's Center, I would never have caught up. The lessons at the Center are actually better than in school. The teachers are kinder, they know more, and they care more about us students. Ordinary schools are so row-



4.30 p.m.

Today there is no taekwondo training, because the coach is away. Muhammed and his brothers practice their high kicks in the garden instead. They do push-ups, stretches, and some sparring.

one thing that worries him. The war.

“My father is a soldier. He’s fighting the Taliban. Most days he works in town, guarding government buildings and manning checkpoints, but sometimes he’s out in the provinces with his unit. He can be away for weeks at a time. Whenever he is, I pray several times a day that he won’t be killed,” says Muhammed.

When his father comes home from the war, he doesn’t tell his wife or sons anything about what he has been through. He just sits quietly, drinking tea. And says extra long prayers.

8.00 p.m.

Muhammed does homework until his eyes ache. His father checks to make sure he isn’t cheating.

Muhammed's timetable

Time	Activity
5-7	Wake up, morning prayers and breakfast
7-10	Lessons at school
10-11	Homework
11-12	Lessons at the AIL Learning Center
12-13	Lunch and prayers
13-16	Rug making
16-19	Taekwondo training
19-20	Dinner and prayers
20-22	Homework
22	Bedtime!

Anyone found not sticking to the timetable will have to repeat their homework 6 times!



Sometimes Muhammed talks with him about what he wants to be when he grows up.

“I want to be a soldier too, but my father doesn’t want that. He says it’s a job where you never learn anything except obeying orders and killing. But I think it seems exciting. And the pay is good. My father wants me to be a teacher or a businessman instead. We’ll see what happens,” says Muhammed. 🌐



کامپیوتر
Computer

Zarafshan blogs about Afghanistan

A few weeks ago, Ismet, 19, and Hajatullah, 20, had no idea what the internet was. But a young girl has taught them all about it and now they're surfing the net, reading news about sport and politics.

A young girl in a red headscarf, Zarafshan, 16, is the computing teacher at Sakena Yacoobi's Learning Center in Herat. She has never travelled abroad, and yet she has friends all over the world. Because Zarafshan is a blogger. In her blog diary she talks about life in Afghanistan, in English.

"I write about real and tragic stories, about child marriage, war and abuse. About things I've heard at home, at the market or on the radio. It's important to tell the truth about our country. That's the first step towards changing and improving conditions for women and children," she says.

There is free internet access for both teachers and

students at the Learning Center, unlike the internet cafés. It costs money there, and most people in this poor suburb don't have any. Thanks to their internet connection, the Center has become a vantage point on the rest of the world.

"Through the blog I have made lots of foreign friends. We email each other and talk about our lives. I have learned lots of new things," explains Zarafshan.

But right now she doesn't have time to talk more. Ismet and Hajatullah want help. They've just created their own email addresses, but they don't have anyone to email. With a few instructions from their teacher, Ismet sends her first ever email. To her cousin Hajatullah, on the seat next to her. 🌐

A story from Zarafshan's blog

Where are my children?

"I was married off at the age of 14, to an older man. After a year of marriage, the war started and my husband lost his job. Life was hard. We had three children - two daughters and a son. One day, I sent my son to the market to sell cigarettes, and he never came home. I was praying to Allah, the all-powerful, when one of my son's friends came to our house. He said that my son had been killed when a bomb exploded. My whole body seized up, but I managed to walk there. The explosion was so powerful that I couldn't even find my son's body. That was the worst day of my life. One year later, my man fell ill and died. I was pregnant, and gave birth to twins. I couldn't provide for them, so I gave them to a woman who couldn't have children of her own. I often wonder what has happened to them. Where are they today? Where are my children?"



Zarafshan has just taught cousins Ismet and Hajatullah how to send emails.



Ahmed Muktar, 12

IDOLS: My father and grandfather
WANTS TO BE: Head of an aid organisation or a famous author
LOVES: Reading books and making up stories
HATES: Adults who beat children
DREAM: Peace in Afghanistan
FAVOURITE DISH: Meat stew

Ahmed

was beaten and wrote a book

Ahmed Muktar is something of a celebrity in Western Afghanistan. He's often on TV, on the radio and in newspapers, talking about the book he wrote. A book for and about children.

"Teachers must not beat children, they must listen to them," says Ahmed.

When I was eight, my father sent me to a religious school. The teachers were extremely strict and the students were beaten all the time," says Ahmed.

Ahmed was beaten often. He found it hard to concentrate and to remember his homework. Even if he had done his homework he was so

afraid of giving the wrong answer that he sat in silence. So the teacher thrashed his back with a whip.

"Once the teacher tied my feet together with a rope. He took my shoes off and whipped the soles of my feet. It was so painful," says Ahmed.

To Sakena's school

Ahmed's teacher may have kept the class quiet, but he was ignorant. There were too many students in his class and any who couldn't keep up didn't get any help. In the end, Ahmed was so afraid of going to school that he refused to go, however many threats or promises his parents made. His father realised the school must be bad. He moved his son to one of Sakena Yacoobi's schools instead, which had a good reputation. It was totally different.

"The teachers were kind,

attentive and knew lots. And they were not allowed to hit the students. I started to get so excited about going to school – there was so much to learn!" explains Ahmed.

No beatings allowed

At the new school, Ahmed got better grades and gained confidence. One day, the students' homework was to

make up a story. Ahmed enjoyed it so much that he just kept on writing. His story became a book, which his father helped to get printed.

"I want to be a role model for other children. And to show that there are Afghan children who do good things and can write books," says Ahmed.

The book is about what it's like to be a boy in Afghanistan and the difference between good and bad teachers. With it, Ahmed became the youngest author in Afghanistan. He got to go on TV, on the radio and in newspapers to spread the word about his book.

"It's important to do your homework and work hard. But it's just as important for the teachers not to be too strict. They must not beat children. They must listen to them," says Ahmed. 🌐





Ann Skelton

NOMINEE • Pages 90–109

WHY HAS ANN BEEN NOMINATED?

Ann Skelton has been nominated for the 2012 World's Children's Prize for her more than 20 year long successful fight for the rights of children affected by the justice system.

Ann has done ground-breaking work for South Africa's children both in the court rooms and by changing laws affecting children. When Nelson Mandela became president Ann was asked to chair the writing of the new law protecting children in trouble with the law. By assisting for example a child in a divorce case, a child mistreated at a children's home, an unaccompanied refugee child, children being ill-treated in prison, children in 'mud schools' in bad conditions, and reaching a court decision in favour of the children, Ann has helped and protected all South Africa's children in similar situations. Ann is the Director of the Centre for Child Law at the University of Pretoria and is assisted by two young women attorneys.



Ann with students at Pretoria Boys High School and Girls High School interested in promoting children's rights. PHOTO: MASILOSI

Ann grew up under the violent Apartheid regime in South Africa. When she was 15 years old, black children her age who protested were being shot and jailed. As a young prosecutor she saw children who had been beaten by police and bitten by police dogs, and who were sentenced to whipping. She became a lawyer fighting for children's rights and has written laws protecting them. She takes children's cases to court, and when she wins those cases, many children in similar situations to her clients are helped.

“Children are people. They need opportunity to participate in the decisions that affect their lives”.



When Ann was a teenager, she hated all the rules at school. “When I first started high school, my classmates and I had to wear placards around our necks with our names on them. I thought this was debasing and refused to wear it.”

But that was only the first in a series of humiliations

for Ann at her new high school.

“The older children picked on us, sent us to buy things for them and treated us like slaves just because we were younger. I rebelled against all this bullying and of course got into trouble, often ending up in the school's detention room. I always felt apart from this

system where you could be punished just for having your own mind and a different opinion.”

Apartheid rules

Ann went to a ‘whites only’ school in Pietermaritzburg – at that time black and white children were separated from each other in all walks of life. It was literally a crime for a black child to visit a white child in a white neighbourhood without a permit that was called a ‘pass’!

Ann recalls the day when black children took to the streets to protest against apartheid.

“When I was 15 years old and saw on television how black children in South Africa rebelled against apartheid rules, I understood their grievances differently to most people in my whites-only school and neighbourhood. This was in 1976, when black children protested against the apartheid government who



forced them to live in poverty and learn in Afrikaans – the white people’s language. But many children who protested on the streets on June 16th 1976 were jailed or shot dead by police, just for having their own opinions and for refusing to be treated like slaves. I remember writing a poem about my feelings and the children who had to pay for freedom with their lives.”

Ann’s family

“My father, who was the son of a coal miner in England before he came to South Africa, understood what it was like to be poor. One day, when we walked past a place where many black people were standing in a queue outside a factory to try and get work, my father said:”Poor people, I remember what it was like standing in a queue like that.” In that moment I

The Child Justice Act was developed by a committee led by Ann. The law emphasises the need for care and rehabilitation of child offenders rather than punishment. Most of the children who get into trouble with the law in South Africa are now released to parents, or if detained, most go to child care centres, not prisons.

knew that my family was no different to black families and that we were all the same, worthy of respect.

“In my final year at high school, I made a speech about inequality. This did not make me popular because it was still during the time of apartheid, but it was important to me because I learnt to put my rebellious feelings and thoughts into words. I did not realise then that I was to become a lawyer who would talk on behalf of children and fight for their rights. But that was what happened.”

Children in jail

“Years later, I went to study law and in 1986 got my first job as a prosecutor in court. In this job, I saw many children appear in court, arrested



When Ann was 15 years old she saw black children protesting against apartheid. Hector Pieterston, who was only twelve years old, was shot dead by the police. Hector posthumously received The World’s Children’s Honorary Award in year 2000.



Apartheid was legal racism

Racism started early in South Africa, but in 1948 it was made legal and named apartheid, which means ‘separateness’. In those days, black and white people were kept separate and blacks faced discrimination and persecution. South Africa was divided into black and white areas. Millions of black children and their families had to go and live in the ‘black’ areas. The children were left behind while their parents went to find work far away, in the homes, farms and factories of white people. Many children only saw their parents at Christmas. Black people were arrested if they entered a white area without a permit. They were not allowed to use the same buses, parks, public toilets, restaurants and countless other services reserved for whites only. When children protested against these inequalities and called for freedom, police and soldiers used violence to silence them.





By assisting Shaafi from Somalia and other unaccompanied refugee children in court cases Ann has protected the rights of all such children in South Africa.



➔ and beaten up by police, bitten by police dogs with their wounds still open. Some were or cold without clothes to keep them warm. They were often very young and was being detained without a trial and were kept in police cells for any amount of a long time. If they were found guilty of breaking a law, they could be sentenced to being beaten with a being whipped with a cane.

“I realised that the system was very bad for children who got into trouble with the law and that we needed to change it. I left the court, went to work for Lawyers for Human Rights and set up a project that was aimed at helping

children in jails. Now, my lawyer colleagues and I could go to court during the day and we could see for ourselves which children were arrested during the night.

“Sometimes, we would have to sit and wait on hard benches in the police stations for hours because the police would try their best to make us go away. But we sat and waited until they showed the children to us. We tried our best to contact their families to tell them that their children had been arrested, to help them to come to court so that they could take their children home with them. Now you must remember that during that time, there were no cell phones. It was very difficult to find even one family member who had a phone, but when we managed to do that, we could really help to get the child released.”

Beaten to death

“One day in 1992, a 13-year-old boy called Neville Snyman and his friends broke into a shop, where they stole sweets,

”I saw many children arrested, beaten by police and bitten by police dogs.”

chips and drinks. When the police found them, they were arrested and put in jail. Here, Neville was raped and beaten to death. Newspapers all over the country told this shocking story and many people realised, for the very first time, how bad things were for children in jails.“

To Ann, this was the final straw. She could not take it any more.

“I realised that up until then I had only been helping a few children in one town and that we needed to help all children in jail all over the country straight away. So we started a campaign called ‘Free a Child for Xmas’. I

called hundreds of people and every human rights lawyer in South Africa called another lawyer, who called another ... and so we made a chain of adults who worked together to make sure that we sent as many children as possible home for Christmas. I went to speak to the government and to prison authorities and managed to get them to co-operate with me. We got 260 children out of jail that year!”

Threatened with detention

One day, the apartheid security police raided the offices where Ann and her fellow human rights lawyers worked. They took their files



and many documents where Ann kept information about the children she was helping. Ann immediately realised that it was possible that she herself would be detained, as the security police were arresting her black colleagues and thousands of other people all over the country who were fighting against the apartheid laws at the time. Ann went home straight away and called her husband. She told him that he had to learn to bottle feed their small baby that very day, in case Ann was next to end up in prison. Her husband was shocked, but he did as she asked because he knew that Ann would not give up her work for children, even when faced with detention.

That was 1992 and things were changing fast. Apartheid was coming to an end and it was a very exciting time in South Africa. Finally, after many years of struggling against the apartheid system, Nelson Mandela and other freedom fighters were released from jail. It was a time to dream about how a good country would treat its children.

Nelson Mandela became President in 1994 and in his first speech to parliament he said, "We must empty the jails of children!" And he really meant it. Ann was asked to chair a special committee, which was to write a new law for children who got into trouble with the law.

Asked children

While writing the new law, Ann and her colleagues decided to ask children what they thought. After all, the new law was going to affect them! These were some of the comments children made:

"Children under 10 years of age are too little to plan a criminal act unless there is an older person encouraging them to do it."

"The police man talked nicely to me the time he came to arrest me. But at the police station things changed. I was tortured and I even confessed to things I didn't do because he said I did these things. It would be better if someone like a parent or social worker was with you when you told the police what happened so that you don't get scared."

"The police just took me and locked me up. They did not tell me it was my right to make a phone call. Even if you are arrested you have to be told your rights."

"There are no beds in a prison cell. You cannot buy food. There is no one to assist you when you are ill. You sleep with much older people who abuse you. Prison cells lead to suicidal thoughts when you are depressed."

"Courts must be more child-like with colour posters, paint, furniture, sweets. The adults must not wear long black jackets because they look scary."

Children are people

Ann explains that the children's views of prisons and

Ann became a lawyer who speaks out on behalf of children and fight for their rights.



When Nelson Mandela became President in 1994 he said: "We must empty the jails of children!" Ann was given the the task of chairing the committee which was to write a new law for children.

courts told them stories of despair and anger. They expressed the terror and loneliness children felt when they came into conflict with the law.

"The children's stories also told us how adults fail children when they get into trouble. But they also told us that if we genuinely consult their opinions and treat their thoughts with dignity and respect, they can express themselves in logical and sensible ways that in turn, can help us to help them."

Ann calls the children she helps her 'child clients'.

"Children are people," she says, "They need the opportunity to participate in the decisions that affect their





Ann believes that children are often failed by the system, and that adults need to learn to listen to the children.

lives. One of the things I find most joyful is to help a child organise his or her anger or rebelliousness into constructive action, so that the child can find ways to help change his or her own situation!”

Crime hurts

Ann smiles when she says: “Today we have that new law we wrote. It is called the Child Justice Act. It accepts that children make mistakes and that teenagers tend to break the rules. If we treat them like criminals there is a danger that they could come into contact with real criminals, become hardened and grow up to commit really serious crimes. If we realise that they have done wrong, but give them a second

“Today, when we take cases to court, it is no longer to help the children who are already in jail, as during apartheid. Now we have learnt that what happens in that court can affect thousands of children.”



In a case initially involving seven ‘mud schools’ in South Africa Ann pointed out that she and the Centre for Child Law represented children all over South Africa in the same situation to those in the seven schools. The result of the case was that the South African Government promised to spend a total of 8.2 billion rand (USD 1.2 billion) replacing all the mud schools.

chance to put things right without taking them into the courts and prisons, then it is likely that they will learn from their mistakes and grow up to be law-abiding citizens who respect the rights of other people.

“They should not be made to bear the consequences of their mistakes for the rest of their lives and be made into criminals. The law allows them to be diverted to programs where they can learn what is wrong and what is right, how to behave towards others and why crime is hurtful towards other people. They can grow up into law abiding members of society.”

“However, if they keep committing crimes or if their crime is very serious like murder, armed robbery or rape, the new law states that they may be put on trial and if they are found guilty, then they may be sent to a secure care centre or prison. If they do go to prison, it must be for the shortest possible time and they must be kept separate from adults. All children are

entitled to a lawyer and if they cannot afford it, then Legal Aid South Africa (which gets it money from the government) will provide a lawyer free of charge.”

One case helps many

“Nowadays my work is not only about children in prison. I take cases to court about many issues that affect children. Although we now have better laws in South Africa, these laws are not always fol-

lowed and children suffer. Sometimes we take a case on behalf of many children at once, so that their rights can be fulfilled. Sometime we take one case for one child, and if we win then we can help all the children in the same situation – Shaafi’s case is like that, the case was about Shaafi, but it helps all children who are asking to be refugees in South Africa, like Shaafi.”



Previously these two boys reading The Globe at a child care centre would have been in prison. But the new law for children that Ann has been involved with emphasises the need for care and rehabilitation of child offenders rather than punishment.

TEXT: MARLENE WINBERG PHOTOS: SATSIRI WINBERG





Shaafi was bombed, robbed, illegal and now legal

When Shaafi's home in Somalia was bombed he fled and travelled through four countries before he reached South Africa. There he became 'illegal' and was arrested. Ann Skelton and Lawyers for Human Rights took his and other refugee children's case to the High Court, to fight for his and other refugee children's rights to be 'legal'...

Open the door!" The man hisses his command in a low voice while Shaafi's eyes dart to the gun in the man's hand on the shop counter between them. He rushes to unlock the shop door. The two men step inside and hit Shaafi. He falls to the ground. "Where is the money?" the thieves demand.

Shaafi points to the coins and notes in the two cardboard boxes next to the shop counter.

"If you shout for help we will kill you," warns one of the men, pointing his gun at Shaafi. The other man empties the moneyboxes full of coins and notes





Shaafi sleeps underneath the shop counter.



into a bag and grabs a few tins of fish from behind the shop counter. They are gone as quickly as they came.

Shaafi gets up and locks the door behind the men. His hands are shaking but he keeps himself composed and standing straight. The Somali shop owner left him in charge

of the shop today because he had important business to attend to. They have been robbed before and Shaafi is determined not to let his employer down. He needs this job.

Prays five times

A few minutes later, a woman



Shaafi keeps his only possessions in a small suitcase. He opens the suitcase five times a day to take out his Koran and to pray to Allah. His prayers are for his family and his own future.

Unaccompanied children

Children like Shaafi who cross over borders by themselves are called 'unaccompanied children' or 'unaccompanied minors'. Some of them do this because they are running away from something bad that is happening in their own country such as war or famine. Others move because they live in countries where most people are poor and they are hoping to find better opportunities in another country – such as education or, if they are over 15 years, work. Still others might be searching for family members that they have become separated from. When children travel alone it can be dangerous, because strangers might try to abuse them. Once they get to the new country, they may find it difficult to find a place to live or a school to attend, because they do not have papers to show that they are allowed to be in the country. Lawyers can help them to get papers and prevent them from being 'deported', which means being sent back to their own countries. If a child can never go back to the country he or she came from because the situation there continues to be dangerous, they can become 'refugees' in the new country and eventually be allowed to stay there permanently. In South Africa there are many unaccompanied children from other African countries such as Zimbabwe, Mozambique, D.R. Congo and Somalia.

comes to buy bread. In his broken English, Shaafi tells her that there is no change today.

"How many eggs can I have for the change from the bread?" she asks.

Shaafi does a quick mental calculation. "Three," he replies and carefully wraps the eggs in old newspaper.

Shaafi sleeps underneath

the small shop's counter, where his mattress and blankets are tucked in during the day. At sunset, he locks the door behind him and at sunrise, he unlocks it. In between these hours, Shaafi is too scared to go to the toilet, which he is allowed to use in the neighbour's yard.

Next to his bed, on a shelf with the tinned food, is his



only possession, his suitcase. Neatly folded inside are his few pieces of clothes next to his Koran, which he uses five times a day when he prays to Allah. His prayers are for his family in Somalia, their safety, his own future in South Africa and most especially, to be able to go to school.



Shaafi Daahir Abdulahi, 17

LOVES: Reading the Koran and praying for peace in life.

HATES: War.

THE WORST THING: When my house was bombed, my father died and mother disappeared.

THE BEST THING: When Ann Skelton helped me to be legal in South Africa so I could not get arrested anymore.

LOOKS UP TO: Allah.

WANTS TO BE: Successful in life. Have a family of my own and be able to look after them.

DREAM: To find my mother.

Home bombed

How did Shaafi end up working and living in a corner shop in the dangerous Mamelodi suburb of Tshwane in South Africa?

In September 2010, Shaafi's home in the Somali capital Mogadishu was bombed. His father was killed and his mother and brothers fled in different directions in the panic that followed.

Countless houses were shelled that day and soldiers from the militia groups shot many people. Shaafi joined a group of survivors who fled for their lives. He left his hometown with only the clothes he stood up in, not knowing if his mother was dead or alive.

For weeks, Shaafi and the refugee families travelled on foot and by car, making their way to South Africa, hoping for a life in that country. They travelled through Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and finally Zimbabwe. It was a dangerous journey. They were robbed of money in Zambia and had to spend several nights in the bush before

finally reaching the border between South Africa and Zimbabwe. Here, they declared to the border officials that they were seeking asylum and asked for a permit to apply for refugee status. They were given a transit permit allowing them 14 days to make their way to the nearest refugee office.

Worried and arrested

"The adults in my group paid for my transport to

Johannesburg and in return, I carried their luggage," says Shaafi. "But when we arrived and went to the refugee office to apply for my asylum seeking permit, the people there refused me because they said I was a child. They told me to go to the South African government's Department of Social Development. I did not know what this was or where to find it. By now, I was getting worried because my 14-day permit was about to expire. I had to find a place to live and work to buy food.

"This is when I started to work for the Somali shop owner. I started to learn English from my customers. I looked around for a school and was offered a place in a Muslim school, but I could not enrol because I did not have papers to prove who I

am, nor could I afford the school fees.

"The police raided the shop in December 2010 and asked to see my permit. Because I could not speak English, the shop owner explained that I could not get a permit because I was a child. The policeman arrested me and said that I was an illegal and if I was really a child, I should not be working. The shop owner gave him 30 rand and then he let me go."

'Ann's laws' protect

"A few weeks later, a policeman raided the shop again but luckily he did not take me to jail. But my luck ran out when again a policeman demanded to see my permit while I was walking along the street. I was arrested and harassed in the police van for



Between sunset and sunrise Shaafi is too scared to leave the locked shop, even to go to the toilet, which he is allowed to use in the neighbour's yard.





When there are no customers Shaafi plays with some young children outside the shop.

- Declare that all refugee children without parents must be given the same permit.
- Order the Department of Social Development to make a list of all the refugee children without parents and write a plan for them to claim their rights.

Shaafi is 'legal'

Shaafi is now a 'legal' person with rights, but his permit cannot protect him from the xenophobia of those people who do not like him just because he is from another country and religion. But this permit can allow Ann to help him plan his future.

Shaafi has an asylum seeker's permit now. But this is not enough. On a cold winter

Development to come to court. Now all the people who had refused to help him would have to listen to Shaafi's story. This is what Ann and Shaafi asked the High Court:

- Immediately give Shaafi his asylum seeker permit that says who he is and allows him his legal rights.

➔ about an hour. I was released when a friend came to the police station and paid 50 rand for me. I lived in fear and had no way to get my life together or even think about school.

"Other Somalis then advised me to go to Lawyers for Human Rights to ask for help to get my permit. The lawyer was kind to me and explained that the South African government had a law that protects refugee children like me. Then they took me to the Department of Social Development. The adults at this place refused to help me and said that there

was no law to force them to help foreign, refugee children."

The government did not know its own country's laws. South Africa has signed the International Convention on the Rights of the Child that protects refugee children's rights to asylum processes. Ann Skelton decided to help Shaafi. She knew that South Africa had new laws to protect children, because she had been at the head of writing these laws. She knew that Shaafi had the right to go to school, get treatment at a hospital when he needed it and be protected from harassment by police and other adults.

In the High Court

Together, Shaafi and Ann went to the High Court. The judge ordered the Department of Social



This is Shaafi's view from the small shop where he stays nearly 24 hours a day.



Hard to live far from home

"I was 8 years old when the Mai Mai community soldiers took me from my school. Before that I lived with my mother in Bukavu, which is in the Eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. There were many other boys taken at the same time as me, to another place and taught how to use guns.

After some time I managed to run away, together with four of my friends. We travelled through different countries, staying in various places. I know the African map well! Eventually I ended up in South Africa. I have been given help, I have a place to live and my school fees and transport to school are paid

for. Some South Africans do not like foreigners, and sometimes foreigners are attacked because of xenophobia. At these times I have been scared to go out, and at one stage I did not attend school for a whole month because I was afraid to catch the train. However, I have shared my story with the children at my

school because I want other children to understand that it can be hard for children separated from their families, far from home. I have one more year at school after this one. When I complete it, I hope to study international politics."

Joshua Masudi, 17



Ann Skelton asks Shaafi what he wants to do now that his rights in South Africa have been recognised.



"I don't want to go to a children's home because they would not respect my religion and the other children would make fun of me", says Shaafi.

afternoon, Ann Skelton drives to the Mamelodi suburb where Shaafi works. She risks being robbed and even risks her life by sitting with him next to the corner shop, to find out what Shaafi wants for his future. She wants to help him build his life and realise his dreams.

"There is something I want to tell you," he says, "I recently met another boy who fled from my hometown in Somalia where the war is still continuing. He told me that my younger brother was alive. The soldiers had taken him to become a soldier like them in their war. He said that no one had seen or heard from my mother."

Respect my religion

"Shaafi, now that your rights in South Africa have been recognised, do you want me

to find you a safe children's home and school to go to?" Ann asks.

Shaafi does not have to think about his answer. "I want to go to school, but not to a children's home."

"Why do you not want to go to a safe home?" Ann wants to know.

"They would not let me pray five times a day and respect my religion. My culture is different and the other children would bully or make fun of me, like they do here."

Ann nods, she understands. Many adults would have told him that he is ungrateful and should go where they tell him to. But Ann listens. She knows that freedom of religion and freedom from bullying is a basic human right and that children are human beings. Now she has a new mission. She is thinking

about how to create a special children's home for refugees, where children like Shaafi would feel free to remember their family's culture without discrimination or fear.

Xenophobia and racism make people treat fellow human beings badly

'Xeno' means foreigner and 'phobia' means fear, so the word xenophobia literally means 'fear of foreigners'. Why would people be afraid of foreigners, who are fellow human beings? In some countries, especially where many people are poor, they are afraid that foreigners

coming to live in the country will get jobs and other opportunities, such as education, instead of them. Sometimes these people who fear foreigners use violent ways of trying to force the foreigners to leave - threatening them, hurting them or damaging their property, and in

some cases even killing them. This makes the foreigners, including foreign children, very scared. They often cannot return to their own countries because of wars or other life-threatening things happening there. Xenophobia can also develop into racism.

Tell your views on xenophobia and racism

Have you experienced xenophobia or racism? Tell your story and thoughts about treating 'other' people badly to the World's Children's Prize.

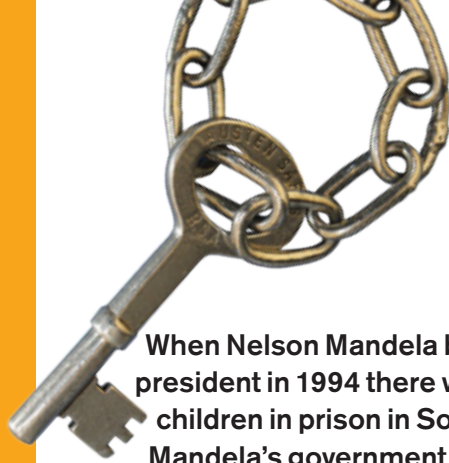
Badly treated

Ann's case changed law for all South Africa's children

South Africa's Constitutional Court is a very important court, because it can decide whether a law is in keeping with the rights in South Africa's Constitution. The Constitution is the most important law in the land, and other laws or actions by people cannot go against it. Anyone whose rights are affected can take a case to court, even children, as long as someone assists them.

One of the cases that Ann took to the Constitutional Court on behalf of all children in South Africa was about a law that allowed children to go to prison for a very long time, including life imprisonment. The Constitution says that detaining children in prison must be a measure of last resort, and that a court must always try to find another kind of sentence, and for the shortest possible period of time.

The Constitutional Court found that the law allowing long sentences and life imprisonment was against the children's rights in the Constitution, and ordered that it must be taken off the law books. Children can no longer be sentenced to life imprisonment. This important case changed the law for all children in South Africa, because all the judges in all the courts in the land have to follow what is said by the Constitutional Court.



When Nelson Mandela became president in 1994 there were many children in prison in South Africa. Mandela's government asked Ann Skelton to develop a new justice system for children. In 2010 The Child Justice Act was put in place, developed by a committee led by Ann. The law emphasises the need for care and rehabilitation of child offenders rather than punishment. Most of the children who get into trouble with the law in South Africa are now released to their parents. If detained, most children go to child care centres where they receive special therapy, and there are classrooms for learning, art, carpentry, welding and plumbing, as well as upholstery workshops and sport.

Four boys at the Horizon BOSASA centre in Cape Town tell how they got into trouble, and what their dreams for their futures are.



Locked up



The happy face is Dominique's greeting to his mother.

Best mother I could have

"I had a good childhood with the best mother a boy could have. When I was two months old, my mother divorced my father because he was doing drugs. I did not see my father until I was 5 years old. I had a good life until I was 15 years old when a friend introduced me to drugs. I was quickly addicted and started stealing. My mother saw that things were going missing and that I was getting thin and wasn't eating much. So one night she asked, 'Dominique, are you doing drugs?' I said, 'Are you crazy?' Eventually my Mom put me in a home for boys who are addicted to drugs. I stayed there for about one week. I then stole a laptop and ended up in custody. This is why I am in BOSASA. I am on a program to help me with my addiction. The adults here are kind to us, but I do want to go home, every day.

"I want to stop being a drug addict and become a nature conservationist one day. That is how I can say sorry to my mother for hurting her."

Dominique

Michael



children



The boys are writing their life stories.

I made wrong choices

"When I was 3 years old, my mother and father started drinking and began to beat me. A social worker took me to a children's home. When I was 7 years old they sent me to foster parents whom I did not know. I stayed for one year and then ran away because they were making fun of me. When I was 9 years old, they took me to another foster home. I fought a lot because when they asked me if I had real parents, they laughed. That was why I got angry and started fighting.

"When I was 12 years old, I started asking where my real parents were. I got very aggressive. That was why they sent me to another place very far away. One day I asked my foster parents for some money and they swore at me. I ran away and started breaking into houses and stealing people's stuff. They found me and sentenced me to six months in prison. After that I stole again and in 2010 they gave me a 2 year sentence. I am not proud of what I am doing. I made wrong choices in life. That's why I want someone to help me stop breaking into houses."

Michael



I am sorry mother

"My mom and dad were divorced a long time ago. Dad got married again and has five children with his wife. He does not care for me, and my mom works alone for me and my sister. I went to school until I was in grade nine, but then I started doing drugs with my friends. This messed my whole life up. We started stealing to pay for our drugs. I was arrested for burglary and theft. At court, they sent me to Pollsmoor Prison for four weeks, but when I appeared in court again, they sent me to BOSASA. I hope that next time I appear in court, they will send me home. If I am sentenced, they will send me to Pollsmoor Prison again because I will be over 18 years of age and no longer a child.

"I want to say I am sorry to my mother who worked so hard for my school fees. If I am lucky enough not to get a sentence, I want to finish school and work to become a motorcar engineer."

Kevin

My family means the world

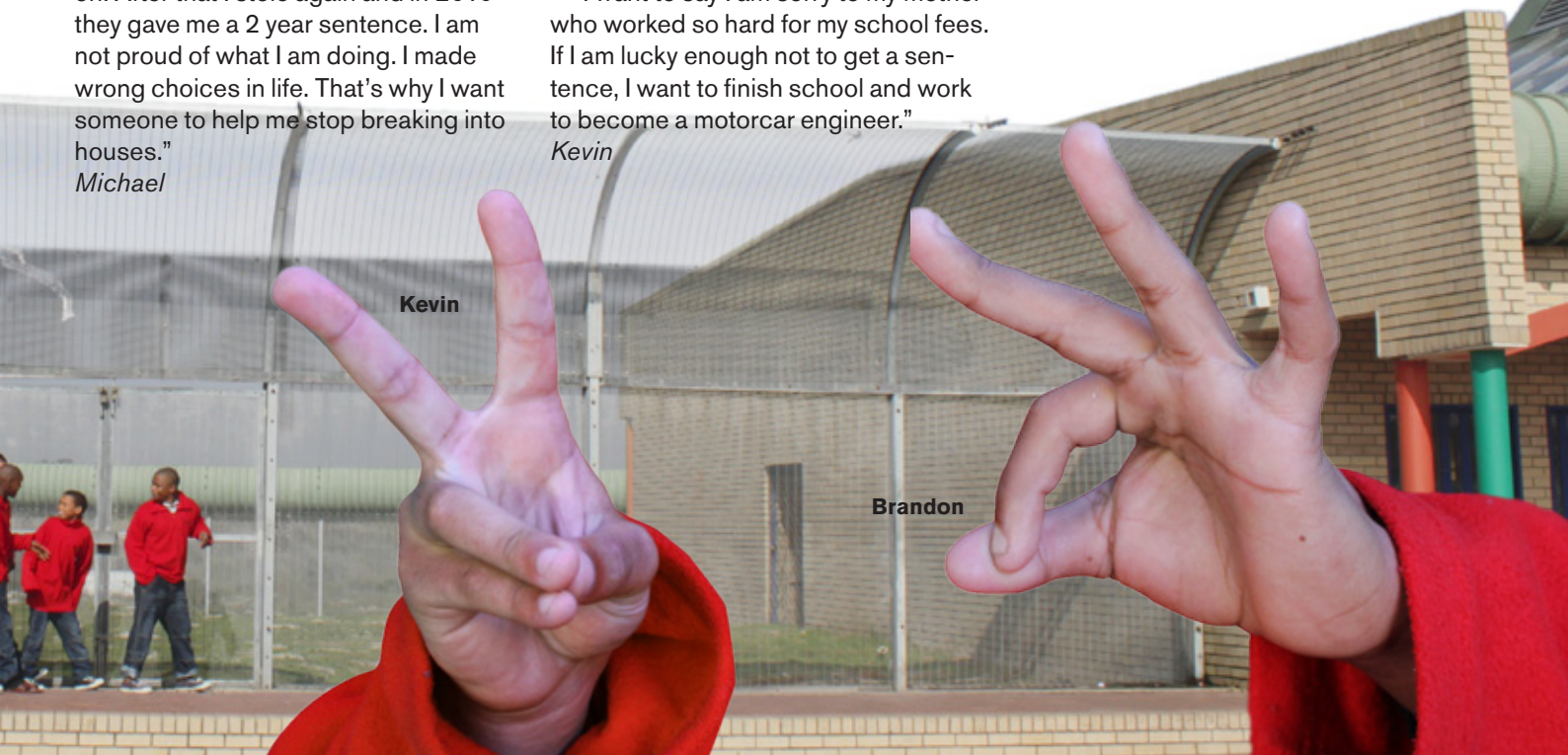
"My father died when I was seven years old in a motorbike accident. My mother was also on the motorbike and because of that accident, she cannot work. So we struggled at home with our needs. My family means the world to me.

"I hung out with the wrong friends and ended up on the streets looking for money for my drug problem. I stopped going to school. I got arrested because I was angry with my Mom and messed up because of drugs. I hit her on her shoulder and she got hurt. She made a case at the police station against me because she said that I had to learn how wrong that was. My Mom said she would drop the case if I co-operated. The court sent me to BOSASA where I am now on an anger management program that helps me with my cravings for drugs. My dream is to finish school and be a welder on an oil rig one day and own a nice house and a car."

Brandon



TEXT: MARLENE WINBERG PHOTOS: SATSIRI WINBERG





Ann's case changed law for all South Africa's children

The 'mud schools' case started with seven primary schools in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa that lack the most basic needs of a school. The buildings are made of mud, there is no running water and the children do not have enough desks and chairs.

Zinathi's school, Tembani Junior Primary, is one of the schools. It has 220 students sharing 53 desks, and in some classes there is not a single chair. In another school, Nomandla Senior Primary, the children are forced to use their classmates' backs as writing surfaces as there are no desks. The parents and children of these schools decided to go to court (helped by their lawyers from the Legal Resources Centre) to demand that their schools be fixed, that they get running water, and that they get enough desks and chairs.

Ann wrote an affidavit (a promise that you are telling the truth) for the court. In it she said that her organisation, the Centre for Child Law, supported what the parents and children in the seven schools wanted, but also that this problem was much bigger. She pointed out that there were many schools in the whole of South Africa that were also made of mud and did not have enough desks and chairs. The importance of the Centre for Child Law joining in the case is that they represented children all over South Africa in the same situation to those in the seven schools. This meant that the government could not solve the problems of only the seven schools.

The result of this case was that South Africa's government promised in writing that over the next three years, they will fix all the mud schools in the country and make sure that they all have running water and enough desks and chairs. They have promised to spend 84 million rand (USD 11.5 million) on the seven schools, and a total of 8.2 billion rand (USD 1.2 billion) replacing all the mud schools in South Africa.

No school for

Zinathi is a student at Tembani Junior Primary, one of South Africa's many 'mud schools'. In wet weather, Zinathi and her classmates can't get into their classroom unless they use planks as a bridge.

"As my dream to change our lives depends on going to school, it upsets me when we can't do that," says Zinathi. She hopes that things will get better now, as her school is one of the mud schools that the South African government has promised to replace.



7 a.m.

Zinathi gets up from her reed mat and washes from a bowl of water.



Zinathi in rain

Zinathi is sitting close to the fire that warms her family's traditional house in the small village of Ngqeleni. She watches as the sparks shoot up from the flames and mingle with the smoke as it rises up towards the small smoke hole in the grass roof of her home.

It is pouring with rain outside. Zinathi and her friends cannot go to school today

because the road is full of mud and besides, it is a four kilometre walk to school. They would all be soaking wet by the time they got there.

Clear the water

"When we get to school after it has rained like this, we have to clear the water from the class room before we can learn. We take some of the



Apartheid destroyed forests

The forests around the village where Zinathi lives are endangered. This area was known as a 'homeland' called the Transkei until Apartheid was abolished in 1994. Thousands of people were crowded onto a small area of land and it therefore became overgrazed by cattle and farming. The people here are very poor and have to rely on the few small forests that are left for firewood, water and grazing for their animals. But elsewhere in the Eastern Cape Province, the government has established wilderness protection programs and game parks to protect the natural resources.

7.30 a.m.

Zinathi walks to school with her friend, Amanda Puzi. It is a long, eight kilometre walk to school and back. "It keeps us fit!", says Zinathi.



8 a.m.

Zinathi and Amanda line up with the other children at school and march into their mud classroom where they learn until 2 pm.





3 p.m.

Zinathi comes home and eats a little porridge from the pot on the fire. Today she has sugar and lemon to add – a treat!



4 p.m.

Zinathi collects water and wood from the forest. When she gets to the stream, she washes her clothes in a bowl.



planks we use for desks to make a little bridge through the door of the classroom. Our school is made of mud and has no windows or doors and rain drips on our books. It is difficult to learn in our classroom, even when there is no rain.”

Zinathi is frustrated about not being able to go to school, but she has plenty of work to catch up with around her homestead. It is her job to help keep up the family’s supply of maize flour or ‘mealie-meal’, a task that takes time to do.

Wants a change

The rain has cleared up enough for Zinathi to make an outside fire for cooking. When the water in the black pot boils, she adds a few cups of her freshly ground mealie-meal to the hot water,

stirs and then leaves it to cook for an hour or so. Her mother received some sugar from a friend today. With an added squeeze of lemon juice, the porridge will have a good, sweet-sour taste today.

While waiting, Zinathi works on weaving the mat she has been making from the reeds she collects at the river. She sleeps on a reed mat on the earth floor in her family’s sleeping room.

But Zinathi is tired of eating mealies everyday and sleeping on a reed mat on the floor. She wants to change her family’s poverty.

“I want to go to school, so that I can earn good results and become a police officer. I know that going to school will one day help me to do away with the kind of life we have. I do not want to eat mealies every night. I also want to sleep on a bed with a soft pillow, like I have seen other children in the village do.”

With my first salary from being a police officer, I will buy a fridge like my neighbour has and put meat and vegetables into it.”

Theft and abuse

Providing for her family is not the only reason why Zinathi wants to become a police officer when she finishes school one day.

“There are many people in

this village who do not work and steal from others,” she says.

“I want to change this. My dream is to become a police officer when I am older, so that I can look after my family and my neighbourhood.”

Only a short while ago, Zinathi’s friend was assaulted



Zinathi Ngxokagi, 12

LOVES: To have enough food with meat for me and my family.

HATES: Crime.

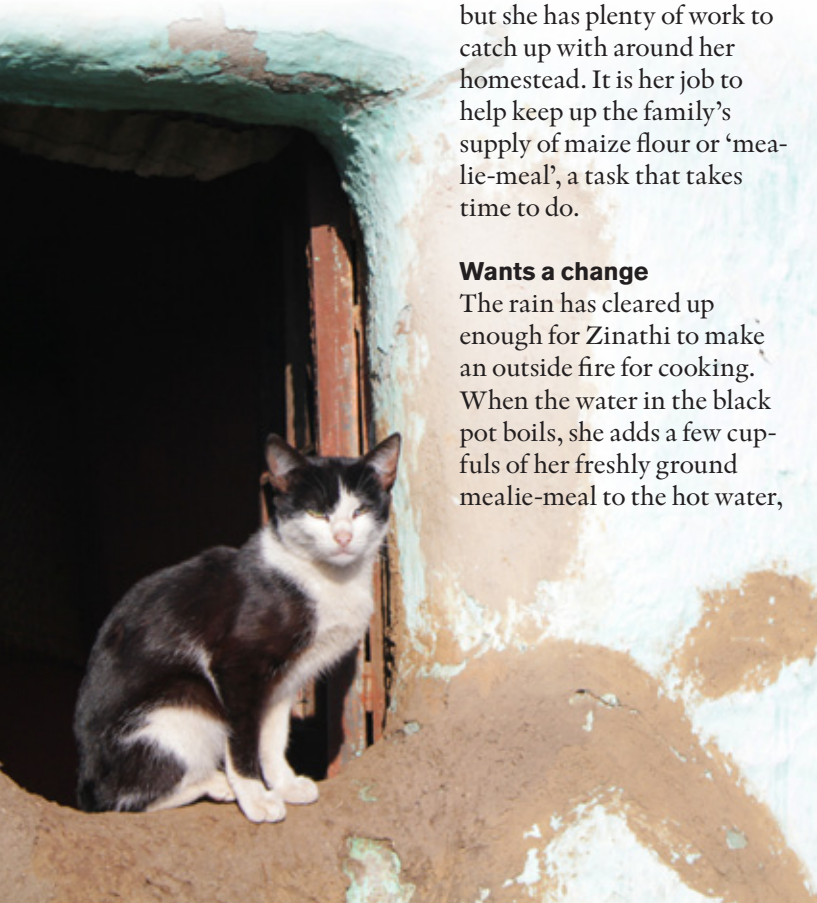
THE WORST THING: When my friend was abused in our neighbourhood because now no-one is safe anymore.

THE BEST THING: When we get a new classroom with windows, a roof and many chairs.

LOOKS UP TO: Nelson Mandela.

WANTS TO BE: A police woman so that I can stop the criminals.

DREAM: To be safe in my neighbourhood. To have a new green dress.





Zinathi is weaving her new sleeping mat and a basket. She knows this weaving pattern so well that she could do it with her eyes closed. It is a traditional craft she has been learning since she was a little girl.

5 p.m.

It is time to do more household chores. Zinathi grinds mealies into flour for the porridge. She scoops up several handfuls of dry mealie pips and puts them into her grandmother's old grinding stone.



Clean school uniform

In wet weather, Zinathi's school uniform easily gets dirty on the long walk to school. Zinathi has washed it clean.



9 p.m.

Zinathi sleeps on the floor, on her reed mat.



Zinathi's friends



"I like to watch TV. I dislike the poverty and crime in my neighbourhood. I want to study and become a nurse one day."
Amanda Puzi, 12



"I like to play soccer. I don't like the bullies at school. I want to be rich one day so that I can afford good food for my family, and a house and a car."
Magwenqana Masithebe, 12



"I enjoy playing games. I don't like crime because it hurts people. I want to be a TV star."
Emihle Sawulisi, 12



"I like to play soccer. I don't like school. I want to live in a house made of bricks with windows and drive a car."
John Asiphe, 13

"I like to drive in a car. I hate the violence in my village and want to become a teacher one day so that I can help people to become something in life."
Nelisa Sonyaka, 11



The new school!

Soon the new school is ready to open. Zinathi sweeps up outside.





A rap for Wonder's angel

When Wonder Machethe was 10 years old, he started to run away from home. When he was twelve he was locked up in a children's home, where the boys should have received love, education and a good life. Instead Wonder lived in fear and when it rained his bed got wet.

When Ann Skelton came into Wonder's life, she did exactly what she has done for years: helping many children by taking one case to court. She took the children's home to the High Court and won. The judge said: "We betray these children," and ordered the children's home to change and become a good place for the children. Since then, this decision has to be followed by children's homes all over the country.



Wonder with his two sisters Ashley, 12, and Robin, 10. Ashley says: "I admire my brother because he looks out for me, he talks to me. He has gone to a good school, so he helps me with my homework and tells me that school work is the best thing I can do for my life."

The violence at my place was too painful for me. We shared a house with several families, many of whom were very poor, like us. There was always somebody who was shouting, drunk or drugged, fighting with his wife or neighbour or child. I was often afraid and one day, I just opened the door and ran. I did not know where I was going, but ended up hitching a ride out of town. I knew that my uncle lived in the Limpopo province in a small village and decided to try and find his place. It took days, but eventually I did. When I arrived at his home, he was kind, but told me I had to go home to my parents. He put me on a bus.

"Back in Johannesburg, I stayed at first, but again, I got so sick of the bullying at school and violence at home that I took off again. I roamed around a lot and one night I ended up sleeping in the Johannesburg train station toilets. Early the next morning, a security guard found me there. He handed me to the police because he said I was not allowed to sleep there."

Felt threatened

Wonder's time on the run had come to an end. He was 12 years old when he was locked up in a children's home called Luckhoff School.

"It was a terrible place. The

rain leaked in and soaked our beds and I always felt threatened by the housemaster and his wife. They did not care about children and punished us badly. When one child stabbed another with a knife, he was put in a cell for three weeks, but he just came out worse than before.

"This was a place where the police and state put children whose parents could not look after them. They called it a school of industry because we were supposed to learn some industry, like welding or carpentry or motorcar mechanics. But we did not learn anything like that.

"I was good at school and really enjoyed my sport. I played football and got onto the team. This really boosted

my confidence and I felt very good when the sports teacher invited me to his house one Saturday afternoon. He came to fetch me. I told him how I felt and that I really wanted a chance in life to work hard and play sport. I told him I felt in danger of getting hooked on the drugs the children smuggled in and out of that place. He listened to me and made me feel understood by an adult for the first time in my life."

Ann takes action

Ann Skelton found Wonder at this school when he was 12 years old. He calls her an angel. Ann remembers the day she met Wonder well. It was five years ago and she visited the Luckhoff School of Industry to inspect the place after she received a phone call from an anonymous person who told her about the children's plight at the school. Ann and Wonder think it was Wonder's sports teacher who called her, shortly after Wonder confided in him.

"I went to do an inspection at the school and found it in a

dreadful condition. The children's beds were bad, the roof leaked and when it rained, they got wet. Their blankets were thin and worn. Windows were broken and there was no security around the building."

Ann wasted no time and took Luckhoff School to the High Court. The adults from this state school tried to defend themselves in court by saying that they had no money for blankets. Yet, they had money to pay for the court case!

"We betray them"

The judge declared that the Luckhoff School violates the rights of the child and the country laws. He ordered them to immediately supply each child with a sleeping bag and build a safe fence around the school. He also told them to write up a plan for every child to receive good care from trained adults and to report back to him within a few weeks on their progress. He said:

"What message do we send to children when we tell them



Ann Skelton found Wonder at the children's home when he was 12 years old.

➔ they are to be removed from their parents because they deserve better care, and then wholly neglect to provide them that care? We betray them, and we teach them that neither the law nor the state institutions can be trusted to protect them.”

Ann says that it is not enough to make good laws to protect children.

“We also have to teach those laws to adults, like we did at the Luckhoff School. Many adults do not know how to protect and support children. They have to be taught a new way to treat children – with kindness. This case made a difference not only to the children at the Luckhoff School, but to all similar schools across the country.”

“My life changed”

Ann understood that Wonder’s ability to work hard at school and his talent for playing football had to be nurtured. She invited a benefactor to sponsor Wonder at a private High School in Pretoria for five years.

“This changed my life,” says Wonder, “For the first time, people treated me with respect and I learnt how to trust a group of brothers. I lived in the school hostel and here, children were not punished with violence, but with words and counselling. I became excellent at rugby and made the best team in the school. I finished school last year and passed my exams!”

“My mother has moved to a better place now and I live at home where I share a room with her and my sisters. My experience has also helped my younger sisters, Ashley and Robin, because I can help them with their homework. I talk to them so that they can work hard to get a better life in the future.” 🌐



A rap for Ann

When Wonder heard that Ann had been nominated for The World’s Children’s Prize, he wrote her a rap song. Rap, he says, is like poetry with a beat, it has a message and can express your passion and your pain.

“When I was 12 years old, I got taken from hell to heaven.

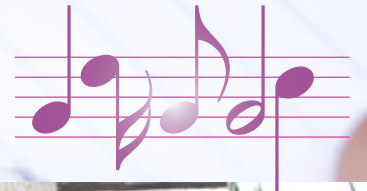
Been raised up in the ‘hood, but now my life’s been raised from bad to good.

Six years later, you’re being nominated for The World’s Children’s Prize.

What you’ve done for me is hard to describe, you gave me love from a different angle!

I swear when I saw you for the first time, you looked like an angel.

You picked me up when I was down, I guess it’s my turn to turn things ‘round, coz you found me as a sinner – whatever happens on that day, to me you will always be a winner!



When Ann took the children’s home where Wonder was staying to the High Court, she did this to help Wonder and the other boys there, but also to help all children at all children’s homes in South Africa. Here Wonder is writing a rap for Ann, who he calls an angel.

My voice must be heard

When Sarisa was twelve years old, she found herself in the middle of a court case between her divorced parents. They did not agree on how to share the custody of her and her sister. Sarisa was unhappy that her views were not being heard and wrote a letter to the judge.

I am 12 years old and I am involved in a court case in the Higher Court concerning my human rights as a person and a child.

The first time I heard about children's rights was in a school when I was 10 years old. I learnt that children's rights are part of the constitution called the Bill of Rights, but children aren't always considered to be included in having rights.

Every child has the right to be helped by a lawyer. A lawyer is a person who is trained to understand the law and help you. Sometimes a court case would turn out to be unfair for a child if a lawyer did not help.

Every child has the right to be protected from being treated in a way that makes them feel bad about themselves and also from being hurt by someone.

The Centre for Child Law helped me to get a court order to have my own lawyer appointed of my own choice, who now represents me in court so that my rights as a child can also be protected and my voice can also be heard about matters affecting my life.

Sarisa



'Kids get say in custody battles' states the Pretoria News after the judge agreed to listen to Sarisa van Niekerk when she was twelve years old (she is 19 today). Her parents could not agree on how to share her custody. Ann Skelton was Sarisa's lawyer and it was the first time that a child in South Africa had her own lawyer helping her in a custody battle.

Ann Skelton, who was Sarisa's lawyer, told the judge that when parents get a divorce, children should be consulted about decisions that affect their lives, such as how much time they should spend with one parent.

This made a difference for Sarisa, because the judge listened to her and because of that, adults did too. But it also made a difference for

many other children, because it began a process of children's voices being heard in their parents' divorce cases. Sarisa's case was the first in South Africa where a child in a custody battle had her own, separate lawyer to help her. Sarisa's case set a precedent for other cases. Now it is no longer uncommon for children to have legal representation in court.



WHAT IS THE WORLD'S CHILDREN'S PR

Twice a year you and your school friends can organise your World's Children's Press Conference. When the nominees are announced, and when the result of the Global Vote is revealed. Only children are allowed to speak! No-one over the age of 18 is allowed to be on the stage. Here's what to do:

- Hold your press conference at your school, or in the most important building in your city, to show how important children, and their views, are.
- Invite media representatives, and give plenty of notice. Send an invitation, but remember to also visit or phone their offices. Remind all editorial staff the day before the press conference!
- If possible, begin and end your press conference with music, singing or dancing.
- Start by telling the journalists some child rights facts for your country, and explain the improvements you want to see in terms of the rights of the child. You can also ask your politicians questions about the rights of the child, and present the results at the press conference.
- If possible show the video, which you can order.
- Reveal the three final candidates, or the result of the Global Vote.
- End by handing out the latest press release from the World's Children's Prize. You can also give the journalists a child rights factsheet for your country.
- Send any newspaper cuttings and details of coverage on radio or TV stations to the World's Children's Prize in Sweden. Every year, World's Children's Press Conferences are held in some 50 towns in Sweden and in India, which in Sweden on a record day resulted in 270 features in newspapers, on the radio, TV and online news websites.

Yolanda Torres Faús, Carlos Alberto Sánchez Tovar, María Diez de Sollano González Cosío, Helena Tatei González Villa, Andrés de la Peña Subacius, Romina Lazo Beltrán, Kevin Alan Martínez Virgen and Bruno Araujo Garnica hosted a World's Children's Press Conference in Jalisco, Mexico.



At www.worldschildrensprize.org you can find:

Templates for invitations, questions for politicians, child rights factsheets, script hints, and the opportunity to order the video. There are also photos on the website, which the journalists can download.

If there are several Global Friend schools reaching out to the same media contacts, you should work together and hold a joint press conference. In that case, you could have one representative from every school on stage.

Refugee children from Burma, Mae Sot, Thailand.



Bukavu, D. R. Congo



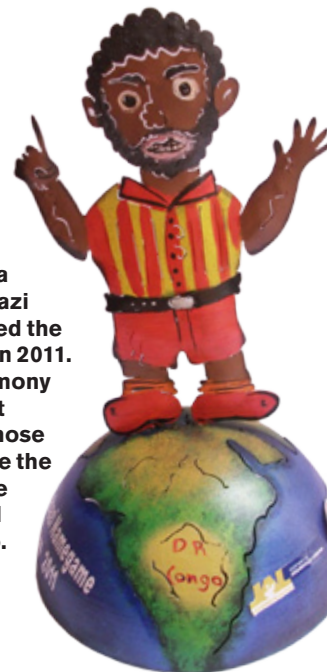
Cusco, Peru

ESS CONFERENCE?



Murhabazi statues as a thank-you

A craftsman made Murhabazi statuettes based on a painting by a Jalisco child of Murhabazi Namegabe, who received the voting children's prize in 2011. At the concluding ceremony the children handed out Murhabazi statues to those who had helped to make the World's Children's Prize program with its Global Vote possible in Jalisco.



Press conference and ceremony in Mexico

"Children's rights are very important. They must be respected and taken very seriously. It's not like they're a game and they don't matter," says María de Sollano Gonzalez Cosio, 12, one of the children who hosted a World's Children's Press Conference in Jalisco in Mexico.

The children who hosted the press conference also led the ceremony to mark the end of the World's Children's Prize program in Jalisco. They spoke about the rights of the child, handed out Murhabazi statuettes and painted their faces to look like the flags of different countries.

The children who led the World's Children's Press Conference in Jalisco came from different schools and had been elected by their school friends. They got to

find out what it was like to be a journalist, wrote their own scripts for the press conference and practiced in front of their families. Hosting the press conference was a bit nerve-racking, but they are all proud that they did it. Andrés de la Peña Subacius, 12, says that one man called children's rights into question during the press conference.

"One of us replied: 'It doesn't matter what the situation is, children have rights. They don't need to be earned; they are always there, from the moment you are born!' The man did not listen and then all the principals of our schools backed us up to show their support."

Children's rights in Mexico

"The most common violations of children's rights here are children not being allowed to go to school,

get healthcare or have their births registered, and children being subjected to violence. There are millions of adult Mexicans who have no knowledge of children's rights and who do not respect them. Many of these adults are in positions of power," says Romina Beltrán Lazo, 12.

"Knowing about children's rights is the first step towards respecting them. The rights of the child are respected in our school. Our teachers treat us as intelligent people. When we do something wrong, they treat us with dignity. They teach us about our rights and encourage us to fight for them. We can always say what we think and discuss our opinions. We must grow into a society where we care for each other, that teaches children about their rights and makes laws that

ensure they are respected," continues Romina.

Wonderful experience

"My aunts, who live in Mexico City and Oaxaca, really liked our Global Vote and I'm going to try to spread the World's Children's Prize to their areas. It's a fantastic program that has been a wonderful experience for me," says María.

Dance with flag faces.



Mural painting on the theme of the Global Vote.



During the Award Ceremony, legendary democracy champion and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi from Burma became an Honorary Adult Friend and patron of the World's Children's Prize. She has been under house arrest for 15 of the past 21 years, and her latest detention term came to an end in November 2010.



Democracy champion Aung San Suu Kyi new patron

Although she has been released from house arrest, Aung San Suu Kyi still cannot leave her country. So Queen Silvia made a symbolic gesture to show that she has become an Honorary Adult Friend, by presenting a crystal globe to a Burmese child. Aung San Suu Kyi was present at the ceremony through a large photograph and video greeting.

Many poor children

Once upon a time Burma was the richest country in South East Asia, with huge natural resources. But while the ruling generals, who took control of Burma in a military coup, have become richer, the majority of Burma's population now live in extreme poverty. Over the years, many Burmese people who have protested against their oppressors have been killed or imprisoned.

"As an Honorary Adult Friend, I didn't know what I should say to you on behalf of the children here, so I asked them. Many children in Burma are so poor that their most vital right is the right to life," said Aung San Suu Kyi in a video message to the Award Ceremony.

Joining in with the World's Children's Prize

Several thousand school children in Burma have been participating in the World's Children's Prize for a number of years, carrying out their democratic Global Vote. Copies of The Globe in English are smuggled into the country along with translations to Karen and Burmese, and the children use these to learn about the rights of the child, and about the prize candidates' work for children.

From acceptance letter to the World's Children's Prize from Aung San Suu Kyi:

"Of course I would be most honoured and happy to become an Honorary Adult Friend of the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to promote the valuable work that you have been doing for children all over the world.

Now that I am no longer in detention I hope I shall be able to participate in the activities of your foundation. As you well know Burmese children suffer insufficient health care and inadequate education. Anything that can be done to improve their situation, to equip them with the capacity and will to face the challenges of the future would be an immense gift to my country.

I look forward to a close and fruitful cooperation with your foundation."

With best regards

Aung San Suu Kyi



Jury members Brianna Audinett, Mofat Maninga, Hamoodi Mohamad and Gabatshwane Gumede listen to the message from Aung San Suu Kyi at the Award Ceremony.



Children in Burma who participate in the World's Children's Prize.

▶ FINALE WITH AWARD CEREMONY

“Welcome to Gripsholm Castle in Mariefred, Sweden, and the Award Ceremony for the World’s Children’s Prize,” says jury member Lisa Bonongwe from Zimbabwe. Behind her on the stage are the other jury members.

All schools that have participated in the World’s Children’s Prize program can hold their own closing ceremony for the rights of the child with performances, and invite parents, politicians and other adults. Later in the year, a video of the Award Ceremony at Gripsholm Castle is available for order, and can be shown at a ceremony in your school.

Lisa Bonongwe



The Children’s Jazz Band from Delft, a suburb of Capetown in South Africa where many children have a difficult childhood, whose performance at the ceremony was a great success.



World’s Children’s Prize for the Rights of the Child **Murhabazi Namegabe**

Queen Silvia of Sweden applauds Murhabazi Namegabe from D.R. Congo, selected as the 2011 recipient of the World’s Children’s Prize for the Rights of the Child by the children who participated in the Global Vote. Murhabazi, who was honoured for his dangerous struggle to liberate children forced to be soldiers and sex slaves, receives constant death threats because of his work. Faida Kasilemba is one of the children set free by Murhabazi.



Jury members Nuzhat Tabassum Promi, Bangladesh, Maria Elena Achahui, Peru and Poonam Thapa, Nepal, helped Queen Silvia to present the bouquets and glass trophies during the ceremony.





Celine Antonels of the Children's Jazz Band on saxophone.

World's Children's Honorary Award **Monira Rahman**

Sweetie Nusrat Jahan, left, a victim of a petrol attack, and Bubly Mehia Akter, a victim of an acid attack, were honoured together with Monira Rahman from Bangladesh, who received the World's Children's Honorary Award from Queen Silvia. Monira was praised for her fearless struggle for all those – mostly girls – who have been attacked with acid or petrol in order to destroy their appearances.



A band from Bagunçaco, a cultural organisation for vulnerable children in Salvador, Brazil, performed during the ceremony.

The Lilla Akademien String Quartet.



Thanks! Tack! Merci ! ¡Gracias! Obrigado!
धन्यवाद நன்றி سپاس! شكراً! ขอบคุณ CẢM ƠN

IN BANGLADESH: ASF – Acid Survivors Foundation, SASUS, Redwan-E-Jannat **BENIN:** Juriste Echos Consult, Jeacques Bonou **BRAZIL:** Grupo Positivo (Portal Positivo, Portal Educacional and Portal Aprende Brasil), SEMED-Santarém (PA), 5a Unidade Regional de Educação/SEDUC-PA, Projeto Rádio pela Educação/ Rádio Rural de Santarém, SME-São José dos Campos (SP),

SME-Araraquara, ONG Circo de Todo Mundo, Samuel Lago, Christiane Sampaio **BURKINA FASO:** Art Consult et Développement, Malachie Dakuyo **BURMA:** BMWEC, Community Schools Program, Eh Thwa Bor **BURUNDI:** Maison Shalom, Maggy Barankitse **CAMEROON:** SOS Villages d'Enfants Cameroun **CZECH REPUBLIC:** Vzajemne Souziti

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO: FORDESK, Tuzza Alonda, APEC, Damien Kwabene, APROJEDE, Amisi Musebengi **GAMBIA:** Child Protection Alliance (CPA), Bakary Badjie **GHANA:** Ministry of Education, ATWWAR, Ekua Ansah Eshon, Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child, Unicef, VRA Schools **GUINEA CONAKRY:** Ministère de l'Education, CAMUE

Guinée, Oumar Kourouma, Unicef, Parlement des Enfants de Guinée **GUINEA BISSAU:** Ministério da Educação, AMIC, Laudolino Medina, Fernando Cá **INDIA:** City Montessori School Lucknow, Shishir Srivastava, Times of India's Newspaper in Education, Barefoot College, Tibetan Children's Villages, CREATE **KENYA:** Ministry of Education, Provincial Director of



World's Children's Honorary Award Cecilia Flores-Oebanda

Cecilia Flores-Oebanda from the Philippines was joined on stage by Samraida Esmail, one of the girls she has rescued, when she received the World's Children's Honorary Award from Queen Silvia. Cecilia, who was a child labourer herself, was honoured for her tireless struggle against child labour and trafficking, despite constant death threats, and her support for girls who have been sex slaves.



Jury member
Gabatshwane
Gumede from
South Africa sang.

The Spektrum Teens choir, the jury children and all the children who performed sang the closing song together – 'A world of friends'.



ကျေးဇူး တင်ကြား! مهرباني! شكرية!

Education for both Western and Nyanza Provinces, CSO Network for Western and Nyanza Province, Betty Okero **MAURITANIA:** Association des Enfants et Jeunes Travailleurs de la Mauritanie, Amadou Diallo **MEXICO:** Secretaria de Desarrollo Humano Gobierno de Jalisco, Gloria Lazcano **MOZAMBIQUE:** Ministério da Educação e Cultura, SANTAC (Southern African Network

Against Trafficking and Abuse of Children), Margarida Guitunga, FDC (Fundação para o Desenvolvimento da Comunidade), Graça Machel **NEPAL:** Maiti Nepal, Janeit Gurung **NIGERIA:** Federal Ministry of Education, The Ministries of Education in Kogi State, Lagos State, Ogun State, and Oyo State, Unicef, Royaltimi Talents Network, Rotimi Samuel Aladetu, CHRINET, Children's

Rights Network, Moses Adedeji **PAKISTAN:** BLLFS, Mir Sarfraz, BRIC, PCDP **PERU:** Centro Yanapakasun **PHILIPPINES:** Visayan Forum, Lowel Bisenio **REPUBLIC OF CONGO:** ASUDH/Gothia Cup **RWANDA:** AOCM **SENEGAL:** Ministère de l'Éducation, Ministère de la Femme, de la Famille et du Développement Social, EDEN, Save the Children **SOUTH AFRICA:** Ministry of Education,

National Department of Education, Department of Women, Children and Vulnerable People in the President's Office, Bojanala Platinum District Municipality and Department of Education, Independent Electoral Commission, Marlene Winberg, Nadia Kamies, Vusi Setuke, Maki Boshomane **UGANDA:** Uganda Local Governments Association, Gertrude Rose Gamwera, Wakiso District, BODCO, Nason Ndaireho, GUSCO **UNITED KINGDOM:** The Children's Rights Director for England, Roger Morgan **ZIMBABWE:** Girl Child Network

