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WORLD'S CHILDREN'S PRIZE MAGAZINE #56/57 2013

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

Hi!

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

World's Children's



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

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

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مہربانی! : اے جگت! شکر ہے!

teachers at Global Friend schools, all Honorary Adult Friends and patrons, Adult Friends, focal points and partners (see pages 114–115), the board of directors and advisory board of the World's Children's Prize Foundation, and the boards of directors of Children's World and the World's Children's Prize USA.

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I demand respect for the rights of the child!



Age limit for the World's Children's Prize

The World's Children's Prize is for all children aged between 10 and 18. The upper age limit is because the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child says that you are a child until your 18th birthday. There are several reasons for the lower age limit: to be able to vote in the Global Vote, first you need to learn all about the prize candidates and the children they fight for. The children have often experienced severe violations of their rights. Sometimes their stories are harrowing, and can be scary for younger children. Unfortunately, we do not yet have the capacity to produce material for children under ten. Children over ten can also find it distressing to read these difficult life stories. That's why it's important to have an adult available to talk to after reading.

What is the World's Children's Prize?

The World's Children's Prize is an education program for you and all other children! our goal is a more humane world, where children's rights are respected by all. So far 58,091 schools with 27 million students in 108 countries have registered as Global Friend Schools that support the World's Children's Prize. Your school is one of them!

Every year, three Child Rights Heroes are selected by the WCP Child Jury to be candidates for the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child. By the time the awards are presented, millions of children have learned about the rights of the child and democracy.

The WCP program ends with children all over the world voting for their Child Rights Hero in a Global Vote. Up to 7.1 million children have voted in previous years. Do you want to join them? *Here's what to do:*

1. The 2013 World's Children's Prize is launched *(Read page 110)*

The program kicks off on 24 January, when children all over the world present this year's Child Rights Heroes – the nominees for the prize – as well as talking about whether the rights of the child are respected where they live, and in their country as a whole. Why not invite local media representatives to a World's Children's Press Conference? Or you could hold an opening ceremony at your school on a day of your choice.

Remember, only children should lead the press conferences and ceremonies. Adults are there to listen!

2. The rights of the child in your life *(Read pages 12–13)*

Are the rights of the child respected in your life and the lives of your friends? At home, at school and in your country? Read the fact sheet about the rights of the child in your country, which comes with *The Globe* magazine. You can also download it at worldschildrensprize.org. Discuss how things should be and prepare a presentation for parents, teachers, politicians, other adults and the media. How about starting a WCP Child Rights Club at your school?

3. The rights of the child in the world *(Read pages 5–11, 14–39, 50–109)*

The rights of the child apply to all children, everywhere. Learn more through meeting the Child Jury, the Child Rights Heroes and the children they fight for. Learn about girls' rights in particular on pages 16–39. Find out how life is for the world's children.

4. Prepare your Global Vote

(Read pages 40–49)

Set a date for your Global Vote and prepare everything you need for a democratic election, with inspiration from other children who have voted. Invite the media, parents, politicians – anyone who wants to experience your Global Vote and celebrations!

5. Global Vote Day

Vote first and then celebrate with a party and some performances! Report the result of your vote via the ballot box at worldschildrensprize.org.

6. The big announcement!

On the same day all over the world, together we reveal who has been chosen through the Global Vote to receive the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child. Invite the media in your area to a World's Children's Press Conference, or gather your whole school to announce the results. You can also talk about improvements in respect for the rights of the child that you would like to see.

7. The grand finale! *(Read pages 113–115)*

The program concludes with an Award Ceremony led by the Child Jury at Gripsholm Castle in Mariefred, Sweden. All three Child Rights Heroes are honoured and receive prize money towards their work with children. H.M. Queen Silvia of Sweden helps the children of the Jury to present the awards. Many schools organise their own closing ceremony, where they celebrate the Child Rights Heroes and the rights of the child. Some of them also invite parents, politicians and the media to a World's Children's Prize evening event for the rights of the child, and show the video from the Award Ceremony.

Watch, listen and talk!

Find more interviews, images and films at youtube.com/worldschildrensprize and facebook.com/worldschildrensprizefoundation. You can tell others via Facebook about the rights of the child in your country, and about how you do the WCP program at your school!



The 2013 Child Jury, gathered in Mariefred, Sweden.



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

- The Jury members share their life stories and what violations of the rights of the child they have experienced themselves or they fight against. In this way, they teach millions of children around the world about the rights of the child.
- Every year, the Child Jury selects the three final candidates for the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child from all those who have been nominated.
- The Jury members are ambassadors for the World's Children's Prize in their home countries and throughout the world.
- The Child Jury leads the annual grand finale of the World's Children's Prize program, the Award Ceremony.
- During the week of the Award Ceremony, the members of the Jury visit Sweden and visit schools to talk about their lives and about the rights of the child.

Meet the Jury members. You can find longer stories about several of them at www.worldschildrensprize.org.



Meet the Child Jury

GABATSHWANE GUMEDE, 16, South Africa

Represents children who have been orphaned by AIDS and children who fight for the rights of vulnerable children.

Gabatshwane's parents died of AIDS when she was little. Despite the fact that Gaba was 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."

HANNAH TAYLOR, 17, Canada

Represents children who fight for the rights of the child, especially for homeless children's rights.

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 US\$1 million for projects for the homeless, and she has start-





ed 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.’”



**HAMOODI MOHAMAD
ELSAMAMEEN, 15, Palestine**

Represents children in conflict areas and children living under occupation.

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

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

When he was five and heard 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.



**BRIANNA AUDINETT,
16, USA**

Represents children who are homeless.

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.

**MAE SEGOVIA, 13,
Philippines**

Represents children who have been exploited by the child sex trade and children who fight for the rights of the child.

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.

LIV KJELLBERG, 14, Sweden

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

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

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

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

Liv got involved and raised money so that an organisation called 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.”



MOFAT MANINGA, 16, Kenya

Represents children who are HIV positive and children who live on the street.

“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.”



Lisa Bonongwe at the lectern during the 2012 Award Ceremony at Gripsholm Castle in Mariefred, Sweden. The Jury children lead the ceremony.



The Jury children lead the World's Children's Press Conference at the Eric Ericson Hall in Stockholm, Sweden.



POONAM THAPA, 18, Nepal
Represents and fights for girls who have been subjected to trafficking, slavery and abuse.

“When I was 14 I was a poor orphan. An older boy from my village said that he loved me, and said we should get married and have a good, safe life together in the Indian city of Mumbai. I was alone and I was desperate to belong to a family, so I decided to go with him. But he tricked me. Instead of taking care of me he sold me to a brothel. When I refused to let the men at the brothel exploit me, they held me down, whipped me with electrical cables and burned me with cigarettes until I was too exhausted to stand up to them any more.”

Poonam was exploited by up to fifteen men every day for almost a year. But eventually she was rescued and gained protection from an organisation called Maiti Nepal.

DAVID PULLIN, 18, 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.

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 similar backgrounds.

“I lived with my mum and dad when I was young. They often left me alone in our flat when they went out drinking. Because I was locked in, I couldn’t go anywhere. There was never enough to eat, only things like crisps, biscuits and



LISA BONONGWE, 18, Zimbabwe

Represents children who fight for girls’ rights.

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 Lisa was seven, her mother threw her father out and she joined a 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.”



NUZHAT TABASSUM PROMI, 18, Bangladesh

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

“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 megacyclone, 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 are very severe storms that 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 megacyclone.”

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.

MARIA ELENA MORALES ACHAHUI, 18, Peru

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

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.





maybe a little bit of bread. I had no friends and often put myself to bed at night. That was hard, because I was afraid of the dark. 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. But as soon as I got there, I felt safe. It wasn’t long before they felt like my own family. And I started to make friends at school. My dream is for all children in care to have good lives, and to have their rights respected just like all other children.”

**NDALE NYENGELA, 15,
D.R. Congo**

Represents child soldiers and children in armed conflict.

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

“We walked for three days without eating or sleeping. When we walked too slowly they kicked us and shouted at us. Once we knew how to handle our weapons, they said now it was time to learn to kill people. One day we hid in the

forest, near a road. Someone began to shoot. People were falling down dead beside me. I was totally overwhelmed by terror. When I tried to hide, the other soldiers shoved me forward and said: ‘If your friend dies, it doesn’t matter. Just step over him! It’s your duty!’”

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

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



**EMELDA ZAMAMBO, 14,
Mozambique**

Represents orphans and children who fight for the rights of the child.

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.

**Jury friends Maria Elena, Peru,
and Mae Segovia, Philippines.**

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

Today Emelda 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.

“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.”



**NETTA ALEXANDRI, 13,
Israel**

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

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

Netta thinks that dialogue is a good way to get peace.

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

Kewal, his mother and six younger siblings – and his father, when he comes home from his work far away once a month – live in the three houses on the left in the picture.



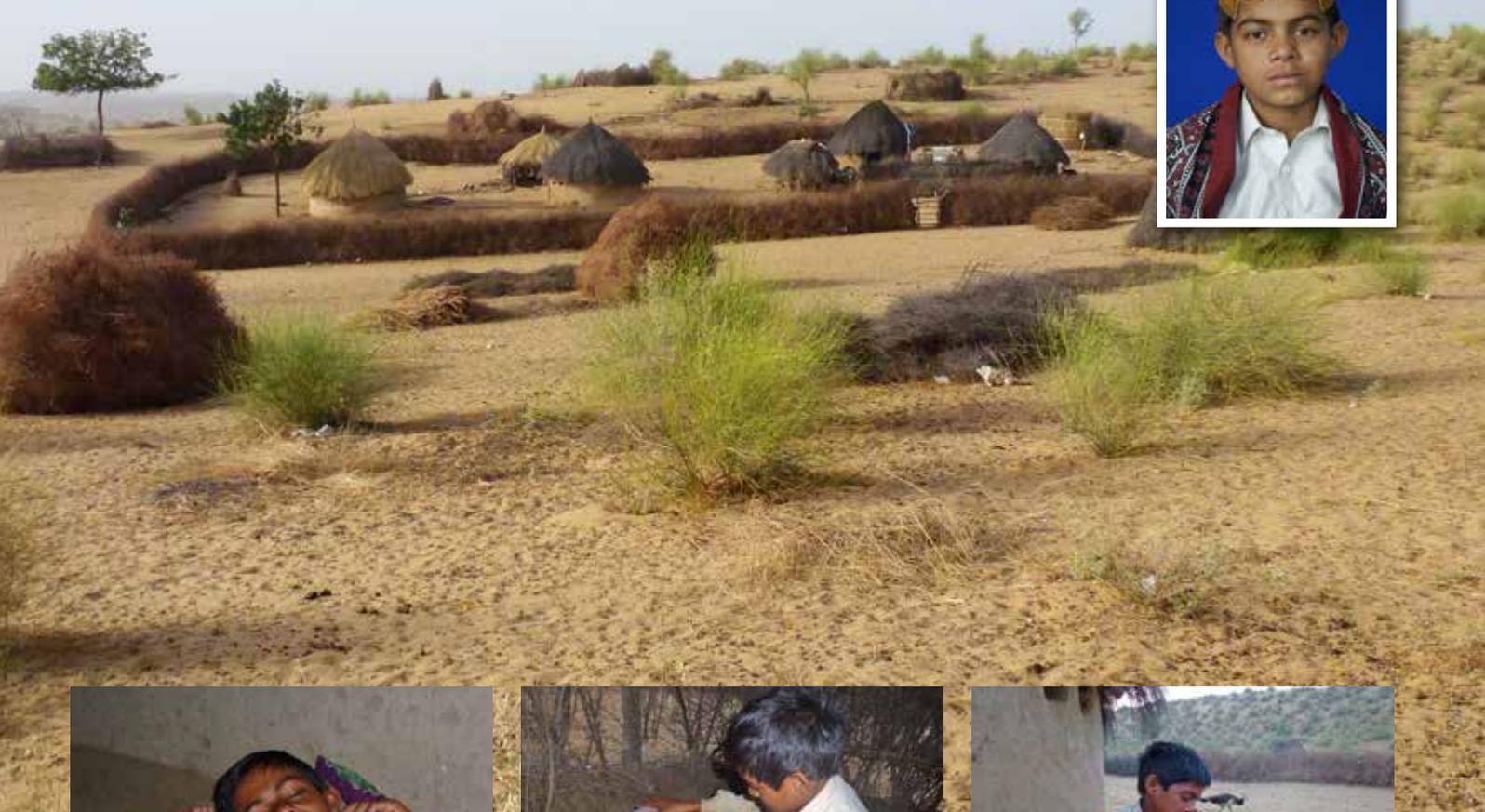
For several years Kewal Ram, 15, from the Thar Desert in Pakistan, has spent every day of the week weaving carpets. But in the mornings he has been able to go to school, except when the school was destroyed in the terrible floods the other year. This is a picture story about how Kewal’s life used to be. But now everything has changed. He has become a member of the World’s Children’s Prize Jury and accompanied the Queen of Sweden to the Award Ceremony at Gripsholm Castle in Mariefred, Sweden. School has been the most exciting thing in Kewal’s life. He got excellent grades after middle school and now he is starting at a new school, eight hours’ journey from here.

PHOTOS: KIM NAYLOR



From debt slave to Jury member In the desert with Kewal

Kewal represents slave children and other child labourers.



At five thirty in the morning, when the first light of dawn enters the small clay house in the village of Ragho Mengwar in the Thar Desert, Kewal's mother wakes him. There is no room for charpoy beds in the little house so everyone sleeps on the floor.



There is not enough water in the desert, and Kewal uses a metal mug to measure his ration of water. His six siblings will wake up soon and there must be enough water in the pitcher for them too.



A peacock passes while Kewal is brushing his teeth with a toothbrush cut from the neem tree, which grows in the yard. The fibres in neem branches are great for brushing teeth.



Camels are Kewal's favourite animals, and he often draws them. This is his teacher's camel. Camels are useful for transporting goods in the desert, where there are no roads and cars have to drive on the sand.



Kewal's younger brother Talok peeks out through a hole in the wall, where Kewal has left his toothbrush. The neem tree also provides ingredients for medicine and soap.



Carpet knife



Kewal the debt slave

WHEN THE SCHOOL day ends, many of the desert school children rush home to a free afternoon, although they do help out at home. But for some of them, this is the beginning of a long shift at work. For several years, Kewal has been weaving carpets every day after school.

“It’s a tough job. I get so tired. My back aches, and my whole body too after a while. It’s hard to spend so many hours sitting still, every day, but I have had to do it,” explains Kewal.

He has been working at least 40 hours a week, sitting at the carpet weaving loom every day after school until darkness falls and he can’t see enough to work, and all day on Sundays.

When Kewal was eight, his mother fell seriously ill. She needed expensive medicine. To pay for it, Kewal’s father borrowed money from a man who owned weaving looms. To begin with, Kewal’s father and his brother had to work every day making carpets. When his father got a job far away, Kewal, the oldest of the children, had to learn to weave carpets so that the family could continue to pay off the debt to the man they had borrowed money from.

Kewal’s pay was 1500 rupees a month (US\$7), but he never saw any of that money. Half of his pay went to the man who owns the loom, and the other half to pay off a debt to the shopkeeper in the neighbouring village. Now that Kewal is moving away, his uncle will take over the responsibility of weaving carpets to pay the debt off.

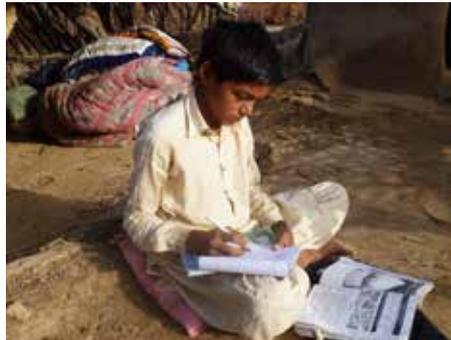
Carpet weaving comb



Every day after school and all day on Sundays, at least 40 hours a week, Kewal has had to weave carpets to pay off his family’s debt to the owner of the loom.



Weaving carpets is hard work for the eyes and the body. Kewal’s back hurts every day.



The morning is homework time for Kewal. He sits on a cushion outside the house with his books and enjoys having time to read and write before he has to leave for school. English is his favourite.



The school day begins with assembly in the schoolyard. Here, Kewal is leading the exercises they do every morning. Then everyone sings the national anthem and a school song before the school day begins.



Kewal’s only time to play is during the lunch break, so he really enjoys the chance to play cricket.



Kewal is responsible for feeding the goats. When a big flood destroyed the clay houses in the village, the family’s goat house collapsed and three of their goats died. At first everyone was glad when the rain came. But it didn’t stop. The houses were destroyed, and the following year nobody could grow any crops for the families to eat.





Kewal's brother Permanind, 10, works at the well every morning. He drives the donkeys that pull up buckets of water. He walks back and forth with the donkeys for 4-5 hours, until all the families have water.



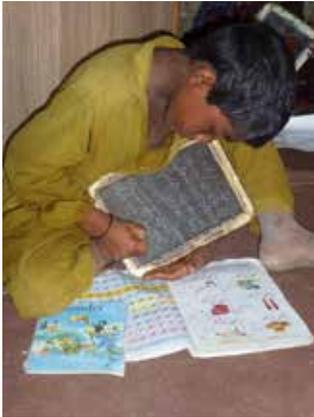
All the water the family needs has to be carried home.

Kewal's mother puts this ring on her head to help her balance the water jar.



Everyone sits with their class so that they can help one another with their tasks. The children at the desert school participate in the WCP program every year.

"I like everything in The Globe," says Kewal. "I dream about having electricity, so I could read it in the evenings. We learn about heroes who work to help others. We are going to do that too. The Global Vote is a special day for us."



Kewal's brother Permanind always arrives last, after working at the well. The children speak Datki at home but Sindhi is the first language they learn to read and write. In their first year at school they start learning English. In their third year they learn another alphabet, Urdu, which is the national language of Pakistan.



When Kewal has finished his heavy carpet weaving work for the day, he eats dinner quickly with his brothers. In the desert, the men and boys always eat before the women and girls. After dinner, Kewal pops over to see his teacher, Hernath, a few houses away. The students who want to learn more gather in his house in the evenings.



Kewal helping to collect wood.



Shoes lined up outside the school.





Celebrate the child

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

Basic principles of the Convention:

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

What is a convention?

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

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

the rights of

Article 1

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

Article 2

All children are equal.

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

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

Article 3

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

Article 6

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

Article 7

You have the right to a name and a nationality.

Article 9

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

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

Articles 12–15

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

Article 18

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

Article 19

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

Articles 20–21

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

Article 22

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

Article 23

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

Article 24

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

Articles 28–29

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

Article 30

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

Article 31

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

Article 32

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

Article 34

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

Article 35

No one is allowed to kidnap or sell you.

Article 37

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

Article 38

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

Article 42

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





How are the world

2.2 BILLION CHILDREN UNDER 18 IN THE WORLD

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

Name and nationality

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

Every year, 135 million children are born. 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 550 million children have less than US\$1.25 (£0.80) a day to live on.

Survive and grow

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

1 in 20 children (1 in 9 in the poorest countries) dies before reaching the age of five, usually due to causes that could have been prevented.

Health and health care

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

Every day 19,000 children under the age of 5 die (6.9 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 4 in 10 children in the poorest malarial countries sleep under a mosquito net.

Children with disabilities

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

Children with disabilities are among the most vulnerable in the world. In many countries they are not allowed to go to school. Many are treated like inferior beings and are kept hidden away. There are 200 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 victims of the child sex trade. Every year, 1.2 million children are 'trafficked' in the modern day slave trade.

Crime and punishment

Children may only be imprisoned as a last resort and for the shortest possible time. No child may be subjected to torture or other cruel treatment. Children who have committed crimes should be given care and help. Children may not be sentenced to life imprisonment or receive the death penalty. *At least 1 million children 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, Aboriginal Australians and the Sami people of Northern Europe. *The rights of indigenous and minority children are often violated. Their languages are not respected and they are bullied or discriminated against. Many children do not have access to medical care.*

Protection in war and flight

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

Over the last 10 years at least 2 million children have been killed in war. 6 million have suffered serious physical injuries. 10 million have suffered serious psychological harm. 1 million have lost or become separated from their parents. 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 9 out of 10 children in the world go to school, but there are still 67 million children who get no education whatsoever. More than 5 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. 33 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 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!

Fight for girls!

Join in the struggle for girls' rights

I demand respects for girls' rights!

“Boys and girls should have the same rights! It is unfair that we can't go to school and have to do all the housework, while boys are allowed to study and play,” says Sanjukta, 12, from India. She is one of millions of children all over the world who are less valued just because they are girls.

The rights of the child apply to all children, girls and boys alike. But girls are often treated worse than boys. Half of the world's children are girls, but many more boys than girls go to school. Girls are poorer, hungrier, and more likely to fall ill than boys. They work harder, are likely to be victims of violence, and are forced to marry when they are still children themselves. It is also harder for girls everywhere to make their voices heard and be able to make decisions over their own lives.

Girls for sale

One of the worst violations of the rights of the child is the child sex trade. Children all over the world are exploited as sex slaves and in pornography. Most victims are girls. But now girls all over the world are fighting back with the help of the World's Children's Prize! And lots of boys are helping too!

Fighting together

From this year on, hundreds of girls are training to be World's Children's Prize Child Rights Ambassadors. Many of them have themselves experienced violence, abuse and extreme injustice. They learn about their rights and about how life is for girls in their country and all over the world. Then they help children to start their own World's Children's Prize Child Rights Clubs. In a Child Rights Club, children work together to:

- Raise awareness of the rights of the child
 - Tell people what life is like for girls
 - Make their voices heard
 - Demand respect for the rights of the child, for boys and girls alike!
- And much more!

On pages 17–39 you can read about girls' rights and about the child sex trade.

The Swedish Postcode Lottery has made it possible for the World's Children's Prize to collaborate with ECPAT Sweden to defend girls' rights and combat the child sex trade.



Child Rights Ambassador

for girls' rights

When Alisha was eleven years old, she was wandering the streets of Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, alone and in despair. Today she is 15 years old and travels around the mountain villages of Nepal to educate and inspire children to fight for girls' rights and against the child sex trade.

"I know that I was lucky not to be kidnapped and taken to India as a sex slave," says Alisha. "Now I live at a home for vulnerable girls run by Maiti Nepal. As a Child Rights Ambassador for the World's Children's Prize, I have a golden opportunity to fight for girls' rights and to prevent Nepalese girls from being exploited through the child sex trade."





Alisha, 15

Lives: At Maiti Nepal's home in Kathmandu for girls who have been victims of, or who are at risk from trafficking.

Loves: Basketball!

Hates: When poor children are treated badly.

Best thing that's happened: That I was able to come to live at Maiti Nepal, and it became my new family.

Worst thing that's happened: When my mother disappeared.

Wants to be: A flight attendant, and see the world.

Dream: To become a good person who helps others.



Terrible story

It's painful for Poonam to remember and tell the story of all the terrible things that happened when she was a slave at a brothel in India. But she does it anyway, to warn other girls so that it doesn't happen to them. Her friend Alisha knows that Poonam's story could just as easily have been hers. Poonam is a member of the World's Children's Prize international child jury. She represents and fights for girls who have been subjected to the child sex trade, slavery and abuse.

➔ **A**lisha and her friend Poonam are standing at the chalkboard in a small classroom in the mountain village of Chhap. They have travelled for many hours to get here, along with nine girl friends. At dawn they packed their backpacks full of magazines and homemade posters on girls' rights and

the World's Children's Prize. The first part of the journey was by jeep on dusty mountain roads. Next came several hours of hiking. Nothing can stop them. The girls are World's Children's Prize Child Rights Ambassadors, and they are here to talk about the most important thing they know: the rights

of the child. Above all, they want to talk about how girls' rights can be strengthened here in Nepal.

A terrible story

When Poonam begins telling her life story, the classrooms always fall totally silent.

"When I was 14 I was a poor orphan. An older boy



All the things I didn't get

"Here at Maiti we are like one big family. The girls who live here are like sisters, and we take care of one another. Rabina, who is five years old, lives in my room. I usually wash her clothes, comb her hair and help her to get ready for preschool in the morning. I like it. I try to give Rabina all the things I didn't get from my own mother," says Alisha.

Well prepared

Before their mission in the mountains, the Child Rights Ambassadors learn even more about the rights of the child. They discuss, plan and make their own posters, and get to know children and child rights heroes from all over the world through The Globe magazine.



from my village said that he loved me, and said we should get married and have a good, safe life together in the Indian city of Mumbai. I was alone and I was desperate to belong to a family, so I decided to go with him. But he tricked me. Instead of taking care of me he sold me to a brothel. When I refused to let the men at the brothel exploit me, they held me down, whipped me with electrical cables and burned me with cigarettes until I was too exhausted to stand up to them any more."



Winding mountain roads

The child rights ambassadors travel on narrow, winding mountain roads in a jeep loaded with posters and copies of *The Globe* magazine.



Poonam was used by up to fifteen men every day for almost a year. But eventually she was rescued and gained protection from the organisation Maiti Nepal.

“Now I am a member of the World’s Children’s Prize international child jury. I represent and fight for girls who have been subjected to the child sex trade, slavery and abuse,” says Poonam. She holds up a copy of *The Globe* magazine and shows the students pictures of herself and the other children on the jury.

Was beaten

Every time Alisha hears Poonam’s story, it pains her. They are like sisters.

“I know that it could easily have been me. That it’s really just luck that I didn’t end up in the same situation,” says Alisha. She grew up in an extremely poor family in Kathmandu. Her parents took temporary jobs on different building sites, but never earned enough for Alisha

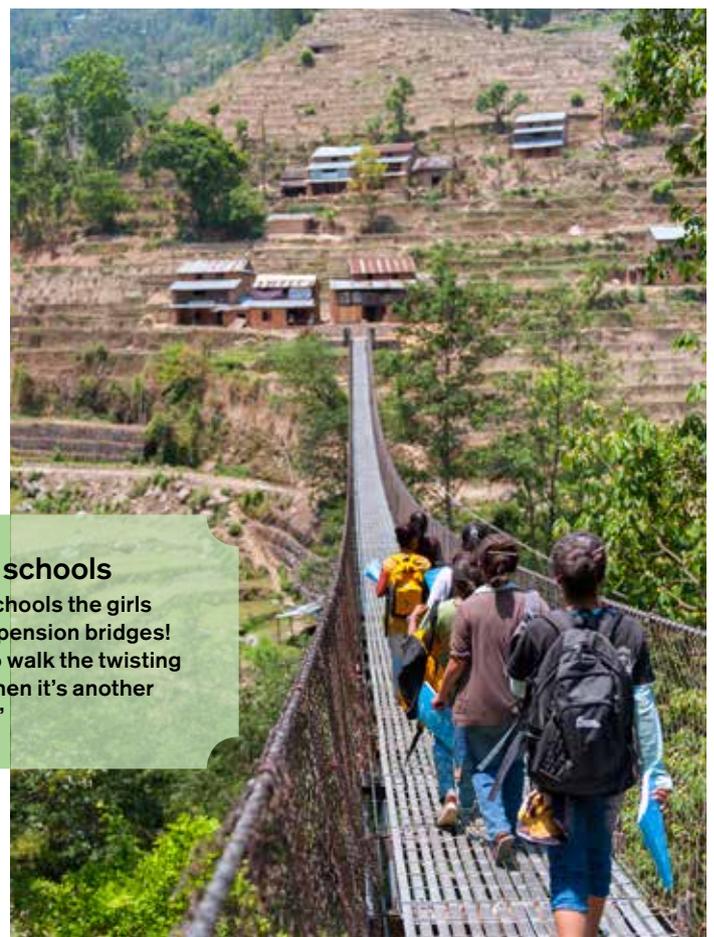
and her little sister to go to school or eat their fill.

“Also my mother and father had drinking problems. Money that should have gone into education for my sister and me went to feed their habit instead. They often came home drunk, and that almost always ended in fighting. My father would beat my mother, and when I screamed at him to stop and tried to get in between them, he would beat me too.”

Instead of going to school like other children in her neighbourhood, Alisha was forced to take care of the household and her little sister all day long. She cooked the food (if there was any), and did the laundry and cleaning. ➔

Suspension bridges to schools

To reach some of the village schools the girls have to walk over swaying suspension bridges! “It takes around three hours to walk the twisting paths to the village schools. Then it’s another three hours to get back again!”



Child rights education

At the small school in the mountain village of Chhap, Shree Borlang Bhumi Secondary School, the girls from Maiti are talking about the rights of the child and girls' rights in particular, trafficking and the World's Children's Prize program. The children are curious and are asking questions.



“I became a ‘mother’ even though I was just a child of six. When no-one was watching I cried.”

Mother disappeared

When Alisha was ten years old, everything got worse.

“One evening my mother didn’t come home from work. For two weeks, my father, sister and I searched for her, but we didn’t find her. I was worried and couldn’t understand

what had happened. Was she dead? Or had she just abandoned us? Before I fell asleep at night I would lie and look at a picture of her, and I felt both angry and sad.”

After her mother’s disappearance, Alisha’s father drank so much that he was no longer able to take care of his daughters.

“I had to start working as a maid for the man who owned our house, so that my sister and I could survive. I worked from six in the morning until late at night, washing clothes, doing dishes, cleaning and cooking. If I made the slightest mistake, like dropping a plate, the man would fly into a rage. He would shout at me, saying my father was a drunkard and I was such a bad person that even my mother had abandoned me. One day I couldn’t face it any more, and I ran away.”

Alone on the streets

For a long time, Alisha wandered the streets of

Kathmandu, alone and in despair, trying to find a better life for her and her sister. Eventually, when she had almost given up, someone showed her the way to Maiti Nepal and their home for girls.

“It was fantastic to come to Maiti! My sister and I got a home, friends, food and safe-

ty, and we could finally start school. And I quickly realised that Maiti had actually saved my life. Many of my new friends had been sold as slaves to brothels in India. They had been just like me, alone and abandoned, and they were easy targets for the traffickers. It could just as easily have been me,” says Alisha.



Finally, a rest!

The girls take a well-earned rest and cool down by the river Shivalaya. They have brought noodles, chapati bread and some sweets to give them energy for the tough hikes. Alisha’s bag says ‘Stop Human Trafficking’.



Child Rights Clubs working hard!

The Child Rights Ambassadors help the children in the villages to form their own Child Rights Clubs. That way they can continue their work for the rights of the child once the girls from Maiti have gone home. The clubs organise the World's Children's Prize program in their schools, learn more about girls' rights and trafficking, and raise awareness among other children. The Child Rights Clubs also keep their eyes open and raise the alarm if anything happens to any of the girls in the village.

can earn money on and exploit than as human beings. If we girls were seen as human beings, things like this would not be possible."

Now Alisha has lived at Maiti's home for girls for four years. She and the other girls get to learn a lot about the rights of the child, girls' rights, and trafficking. This knowledge empowers them to help other children. They use the World's Children's Prize program and The Globe magazine in their work.

Happy Child Rights Ambassador

"I have always wanted to share all that I have learned with other children, but I didn't know how. So when I was asked to be a World's Children's Prize Child Rights Ambassador I was delighted!" says Alisha.

The girls from Maiti have prepared well. They have learned more about the rights of the child and about the work of various child rights heroes. Together they have decided to focus most on girls' rights when they are out visiting schools.

"Life is harder for girls than

boys in Nepal, particularly in the villages," explains Alisha. "While sons are allowed to go to school, daughters often have to work instead. Many are married off very young. People seem to think that girls are made for tough physical work and not for education. If a family is poor, it is always the girls who have to work and help out. So if people come to the village offering work to girls, for example at restaurants in the city, so that they can send money home, it is very easy for parents to agree to it. Since the mothers and fathers often don't know about girls' rights

or trafficking, they don't know that they are being tricked. Their daughters will never earn any money for the family. Instead they will be sold as slaves to brothels in places like India and Dubai.

"I also believe that people's view of girls makes it easier for them to sell us as slaves to brothels. We are seen more as workhorses or 'things' you

Child rights adventure

Today's visit to the village of Chhap is one of many trips Alisha and her friends are making in the poor region of Nuwakot. The trafficking of young girls is very common here.

"We are incredibly excited! On our first trip we were up in the mountains for a week, visiting five different schools. Each hike from the Maiti cen-

Time for the Global Vote!

The Child Rights Ambassadors are there when the school in Chhap holds its own Global Vote day – a party for the rights of the child.





Free as a bird

Alisha shoots some hoops with Sabina, who is also a Child Rights Ambassador:

“I love playing basketball! It’s fun to be with my friends, and I feel free when I play. I had no time to play at all when I was little, so maybe that’s why I enjoy it so much now. But in the future I’d like to be a flight attendant. Imagine being able to fly high in the sky and see the world from up there!”

The girls’ basketball jerseys say Teresa Academy, which is the name of Maiti’s school.



→ tre in the area to one of the schools took around three hours. Then it was another three-hour walk back in the afternoon. Since we were carrying such heavy loads it was really tough. Some of us developed a fever because of the strain but we kept going anyway. Our mission was far too important to cancel because of a little bit of fever. A day cancelled is a day lost in the fight for girls’ rights!”

In each school, Alisha, Poonam and their ambassador friends talk about girls’ rights. They explain how easy it is for poor girls to be tricked and sold as slaves to brothels. They share their own life stories, as well as other children’s stories from The Globe magazine. They also explain how children can participate in the World’s Children’s Prize program to strengthen their voices and their rights.

“It’s a wonderful feeling when the students understand what we’re trying to say

and find out important things that they didn’t know before. Hiking in the mountains as a Child Rights Ambassador is a fantastic adventure.”

Important mission

Alisha and Poonam end their child rights lesson at the village school in Chhap by encouraging everyone to keep learning more about their rights with the help of The Globe magazine. Soon the school children here and in many other villages will organise their own Global Vote days. The children vote for the child rights hero they feel most drawn to, and then they celebrate the rights of the child with singing and dancing! Many of the girls who have met Alisha and Poonam look happy and full of expectation. Kalpana, 14 years old, is one of them:

“Before the Child Rights Ambassadors came here, I had no idea that girls and boys have the same rights.

Now I know, and that makes me happy!”

Alisha is happy too.

“I have always felt incredibly grateful that Maiti gave me a new life, and that I didn’t end up living as a slave at a brothel in India. And I have always wanted to show my gratitude in some way. As a Child Rights Ambassador, I can finally do just that. It’s a golden opportunity to do something important for

others. I strengthen girls’ rights and try to save other girls from trafficking, just as I was saved, by raising awareness!”



We are World's Children's Prize Child Rights Ambassadors!



Sukumaya, 18
Bhojpuri clothes

The proud girls who are Child Rights Ambassadors live at a home run by an organisation called Maiti Nepal, in Kathmandu. It exists for girls who have been victims of trafficking, or who are at risk of being trafficked if they are not protected. At the Global Vote day in the village of Chhap, the children wear some of Nepal's most beautiful traditional costumes. But not only because they are beautiful ...

"In Nepal and all over the world there are many different people groups who all have different traditional clothes," says Sabitri, 17, who is wearing the traditional clothes of the Tamang people group today.

"But regardless of which country you come from, which ethnic group you belong to or which religion you follow, we must all fight together for the most important thing we have: the rights of the child! That's why we are wearing some of Nepal's many traditional costumes today. We want to show that we are all different, yet all the same. That we are 'one'. What's more, the clothes are colourful and beautiful and perfect for a Global Vote day – after all, it's a party for the rights of the child!"



Poonam, 16
Maruni clothes



Alisha, 15
Newari clothes

Nishu, 16
Nepali clothes



Dilmaya, 17
Gurung clothes



Maya, 18
Rai clothes

Sabina, 16
Sherpa clothes



Sabitri, 17
Tamang clothes



Laxmi, 17
school uniform



Samjhana, 18
school uniform



Priya, 17
school uniform



Kalpana talks with Alisha about how she and her friends can start a Child Rights Club at school, while they read *The Globe* magazine, which the club will use.

Alisha's advice to Kalpana

The day after the World's Children's Prize ambassadors' visit to the school in the village of Chhap, Alisha is drinking tea in the home of one of the students. Kalpana, 14, wants to know what she can do to strengthen girls' rights here in the village.

As well as raising awareness of the rights of the child among the children in the mountain village schools, the ambassadors have another important mission. They help the girls in the villages to form their own clubs for the rights of the child.

"You and other girls at your school can join together and continue to learn more about girls' rights and about the trafficking of children," explains Alisha to Kalpana. "Then you can share what you have learned with other girls when you are out together herding goats or working in the fields. For example, you can tell them about the different ways in which poor girls are tricked into being trafficked and how they end up as slaves at brothels in other countries."

Alisha and Kalpana agree that girls in the village of Chhap should create their own Child Rights Club. They can support one another and organise the World's Children's Prize program.

"You can also keep an eye on things, and if anything happens to a girl in the village you can report it to Maiti," explains Alisha, who promises to help the Chhap girls to get started with their club.



Kalpana

06.00 am

I take the goats to the field to graze. Sometimes I bring my schoolbooks and do my homework at the same time. At the moment I'm taking *The Globe* magazine with me to prepare for the Global Vote day.



10.00 am

I love school, and my favourite subject is Nepali!

is a brand new girls' rights champion!

“In Nepal, girls are treated worse than boys. I actually don't know why it's like that, but I think it's wrong. That's why it's important for me to try to make life better for us girls who live here,” says Kalpana.

I think that a son and a daughter should be valued equally. That they should both help out, and be treated the same. But that's not how things are here. Daughters have to work themselves into the ground. My little brother who is eleven, and boys my

own age, don't work nearly as much as we girls do. It's not right, and I don't know why it's like this.

“Maybe parents think that girls are going to be married off to a different family but boys will remain in the family, so it's more important to take care of them.

“That's why it's a good thing that Alisha and the other ambassadors came here and told us about girls' rights and the World's Children's Prize program. I have learned lots of new things and I understand more now.

“Before, I didn't know that boys and girls actually have the same rights. That we are worth the same as boys, and have a right to a good life. We

have a right to be registered when we are born, and a right to learn to read. That's why girls shouldn't be married off young, or sold. We should be allowed to go to school, just like the boys!

Wants to fight for girls

“Here in the village, almost all the girls go to school, but it's not like that in other parts of Nepal.

“I know that I am one of the lucky ones, and I love school! Without education it's hard to get a job and I'm really focused on my studies. I want to become a social worker so that I can fight trafficking, which is so common here. This is a poor area and life is hard for girls. That's why

many girls are easily tempted by the people who come here and offer jobs in the city - jobs that are not nearly as tough and exhausting as the work we have to do in the villages. Poor families get money when young girls are taken away. The parents think their daughters are going to earn money and help their family to a better life. But the better life doesn't happen, and the pay doesn't happen. The girls become slaves. Once I've finished my education, I want to fight against that. By starting a Child Rights Club I can start fighting for a better life for us girls right now!”

More about Kalpana



6.30 pm
My mother and I make dinner.



4.30 pm
I go back to the fields and cut grass for the livestock.



7.45 pm
First I wash the plates and other dinner dishes. If there is any time left over I do my homework before going to bed.





Kalpana, 14

Lives: With my family in the village of Chhap, Nuwakot.

Loves: Going to school.

Hates: Fighting.

Best thing that's happened:

Participating in the World's Children's Prize program and voting in the Global Vote!

Wants to be: A social worker.

Dream: A happy life.

Maiti Nepal



In 2002, Maiti Nepal and its founder, Anuradha Koirala, received the World's Children's Prize for their work to prevent girls being trafficked from Nepal and sold as slaves to brothels in India. Maiti prevents poor girls from being tricked and sold to brothels by raising awareness and offering protection. The organisation gives care and support to girls who have been child sex slaves, and has a special home for girls who are HIV positive. Some of the girls become Maiti border guards, who stop traffickers when they try to trick girls and smuggle them across the border to India. Maiti cooperates with organisations in India whose staff risk their lives to free girls held captive in brothels. Around 200,000 girls are taken to India every year, many of them under 16. Maiti Nepal is working with the World's Children's Prize and ECPAT Sweden on a new initiative to strengthen girls' rights, which is set to reach at least one million girls by 2014!

Read more about Maiti and trafficking at www.worldschildrensprize.org

Kalpana's school friend believes that girls and boys should be treated equally. Every day he helps his sister to tend the family's livestock.

"It seems obvious," says Pasang, who is working today as a steward at the Global Vote day.

It was my job to keep the voting queues in order, and it actually went very well. That's a relief, because this is an important day. We got the chance to pay tribute to people who fight for a good life for children, and we showed the whole village that the rights of the child are important. Both adults and children need a constant reminder that children have rights."

When the Child Rights Ambassadors came to his school they handed out copies of *The Globe* magazine. Pasang took one home and read it every day after school.

"My parents were curious, but they can't read, so I read it out loud. In this way, even my parents learned a lot about the rights of the child. I think many of my school friends did the same thing."

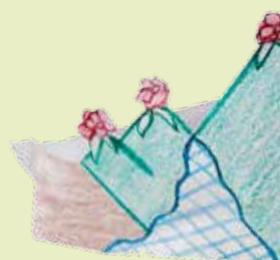
Pasang thinks that the Global Vote day is good because it's visible and it attracts lots of attention.

"There were lots of curious parents and other



Global Vote – the best day!

"It's a fantastic thing to be part of! The whole day was about how we children have rights, and that's why it was so important. Perhaps most important of all for us girls. It seems like the World's Children's Prize program supports us girls, and that's a wonderful feeling. We girls need to learn about our rights so that we know what we are defending!" says Kalpana.



“The World’s Children’s Prize can stop girls from being enslaved!”

adults here today, and they learned a lot about the rights of the child!”

Girls’ rights

“The most important thing is that everyone has learned that girls have rights too. As I see it, there is no difference between boys and girls. We are worth the same, and we have the same rights. But here in the villages of Nepal, that’s not how things are. Here the girls work much harder than us boys. Even if the girls are allowed to go to school, they still have to do dishes, wash clothes, cook, work in the paddy fields, take the animals out to graze, and much more. Boys have more free time, and more time to play and take it easy. That’s not fair.

“I always help my sister to tend the animals before we go to school, and I work with her out in the fields. It seems obvious. It wouldn’t be right for her to do all of that by herself. If boys helped out more, life would be much better for girls.

“Another big problem is that girls are married off to

grown men much too early, sometimes when they’re only 14 years old. The men don’t usually allow the girls to continue going to school. Instead they are forced to work, and the men are in charge of everything. If girls were allowed to finish school they would be better educated. Then it wouldn’t be so easy for the men to tell them what to do.”

Girls kidnapped

“The worst thing of all is that many girls in Nepal are kidnapped and sold as slaves. Girls are also human beings, just like me. I don’t understand how anyone can do that to another human being. It makes me really sad. Since trafficking is so common here, I think it’s extremely important that both children and adults learn more about girls’ rights. If all schools in Nepal joined in with the World’s Children’s Prize program every year, I really believe we could stop girls from being sold as slaves in our country!” 🌐



“I don’t understand how anyone can sell girls as slaves and do that to another human being,” says Pasang. Here he is keeping the voting queue in order at the Global Vote.



Adelia and Bomkazi from South Africa at the 2012 World's Children's Prize Award Ceremony.



Girls' rights

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child decrees that all children are equal and should be given the same chances in life. Still, girls are often treated worse than boys. They are discriminated against for two reasons: because they are children and because they are girls!

Survive and develop

All children have the right to a safe home and enough food. But girls' lives and development are hit hard by poverty. They are often hungrier and more likely to be ill than boys. Of the 1.4 billion people in the world who live on less than US\$1.25 a day, 70 percent are women and girls. Girls are even discriminated against before they are born. The UN estimates that up to 100 million girls are missing from the world as a result of abortion of female foetuses and murder of newborn girls, because sons are thought to be more valuable than daughters.



Janice, 10, USA

.....
Janice, 10, is one of 1.6 million homeless children in the USA. She has been homeless most of her life, together with her mother and big sister.

"We line up every night to get in to a shelter where they have family rooms. Otherwise we have to sleep in the big dormitory, with all the homeless adults, who often take drugs. It's dangerous to live on the streets, especially for girls."

Right to education

Investing in girls' education is one of the best ways to tackle poverty. A girl who is allowed to go to school gets married later in life, and gives birth to fewer and healthier children. When she learns to read and write she is more able to demand respect for her rights. For every school year she completes, a girl's future

salary increases by up to 20 percent! But many parents don't believe it's worth letting their daughters go to school, because they will marry into another family. Of the 125 million children in the world who don't go to school, 75 million of them are girls.

.....
Nouria, 14, lives in Afghanistan, the world's most dangerous country for girls and women. When she was 11, the Taliban banned education for girls. Nouria had to go to a secret school.

"We would gather in someone's kitchen or living room. To get there without being noticed, we hid our schoolbooks under our burkas. We left one at a time, not in a group. We didn't trust everyone in the village – some neighbours also thought girls shouldn't go to school. Girls don't have the same opportunities as boys in Afghanistan. But there shouldn't be any difference. We are equal."



Nouria, 14, Afghanistan

.....
Doris, an orphan from Ghana, was 15 when she started her own school for teenage mothers.

“They will never have a good life without an education. Many adults don’t think it’s important for girls to go to school, but it’s our right. Without an education you are nobody. Education is the key to success. When you have an education you can even become a member of parliament, and talk to the President!”

Health and health care

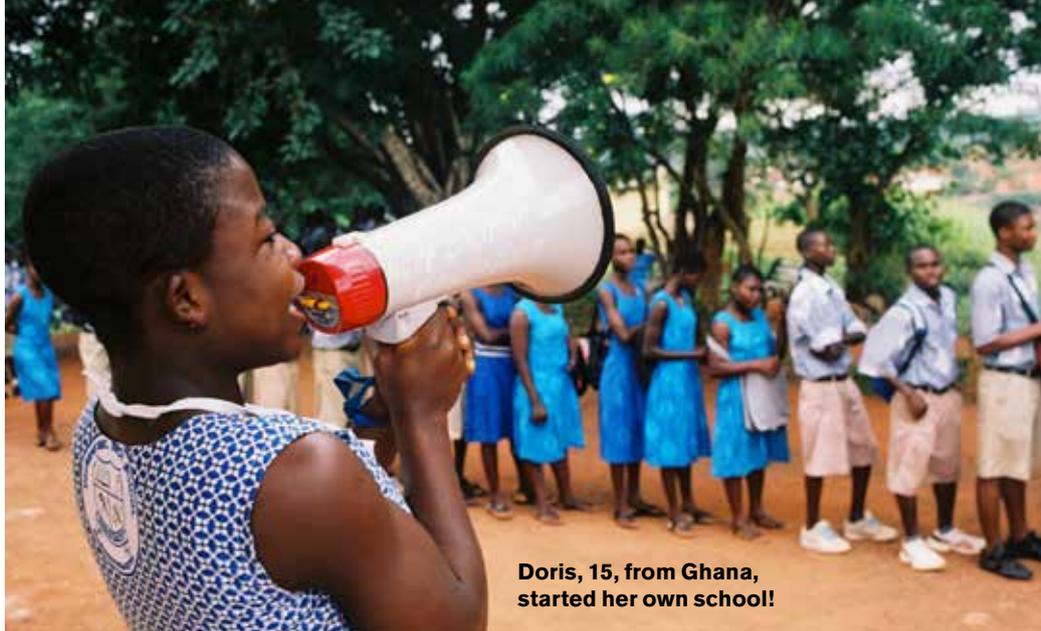
Girls have less opportunity than boys to see a doctor, and to make decisions over their own bodies. Many girls have children when they are too young, and injuries caused by childbirth are the most common cause of death in poor girls aged between 15 and 19. Discriminatory traditions such as female genital mutilation also cause great damage. In the developed world, girls are subjected to sexual violence and are affected more often than boys by mental health issues and eating disorders.

Violence and abuse

Girls are often subjected to violence at home and in school – the places where they should be safest. The victims of almost half of all sexual violence in the world are girls under 15. Girls who are forced to marry before the age of 18 become victims of domestic violence more often than girls who marry as adults. In war and conflict situations, girls are particularly vulnerable. Many are kidnapped and exploited as child soldiers and sex slaves.

.....
Gloria, 11, from D.R. Congo says:

“When I was seven the soldiers told me to take all my clothes off. Five soldiers raped me



Doris, 15, from Ghana, started her own school!

then left me alone in the forest. I get bullied at school because the soldiers abused me. People say, ‘You’re not a girl any more, you’re a woman, but although you’re a woman, no man will ever want to marry you!’ That hurts, in my stomach and in my heart.”

.....
Felicia, 15, from Kenya, is an orphan.

“I’m in year six and live in a home for orphans. Our foster father makes girls come to his room at night. I’m so afraid that it’ll be my turn soon. If I refuse to sleep with him he’ll tell everyone that I am shameless and a bad girl. He’ll send me away. I don’t know what to do. But talking about the rights of the child and about other girls who have been through the same thing makes me stronger. It helps me to ask for help.”

.....
Neela in Bangladesh was 15 when she was forced to marry a man 20 years her senior. When she refused to sleep with him he was furious.

“I had no idea what he was planning. He walked over to the bed and threw acid right in

my face. The pain was extreme. I remember hearing a voice shouting, ‘This is your punishment’. Today, I have the courage to show my face without shame. I talk to groups and lead demonstrations. I make demands on decision makers and visit schools, so that none of the students will ever throw acid or petrol.”

Harmful child labour

Millions of girls have to work instead of going to school. They work in the home and elsewhere. Approximately 88 million of the child labourers in the world are girls. Many of them have the lowest paid and most dangerous jobs, in factories and on farms and construction sites. Millions are domestic workers in people’s homes and are particularly vulnerable to violence and abuse. Others are debt slaves. Girls are also exploited in the child sex trade.

.....
Reyna, 11, works as a maid in Peru.

“I have to sit in the kitchen and eat leftovers like a dog. Sometimes I don’t get any food



Neela, Bangladesh



Reyna, 11, Peru



Nandini, 13, India





Ly, 13, from Cambodia, wants to play as the boys do.



Jetu, 14, from India working at day and studying at night.

at all. Once I was so hungry that I searched the bins behind the house for something to eat. It made me think it would have been better if I'd never been born."

.....
Nandini, 13, from India says:

"I had to quit school when I was 12, and work polishing gemstones to pay off my father's debt to a businessman. The owner beat me with a stick and only gave me one bowl of rice per day. He took everything I earned as payment on the loan, but the debt still kept growing because I had to pay for the rice. Finally my mother got well and managed to work and save money to free me. Us children get no help, neither from the government nor the police. Therefore we must help ourselves."

Play and spare time

Since girls often have to help out at home, they have less time to play and see friends. Sometimes girls are not allowed to cycle, run or dance because of old traditions. Girls everywhere get less time than boys at places like sports centres.

.....
Ly, 13, from Cambodia says: "Here in Cambodia, girls have to do much more housework than boys. From as young as 5 years old, we have to start washing dishes, cooking, cleaning, working on paddy fields and taking care of our younger siblings. If a family is poor and the parents have to decide between sending their son or their daughter to school, they almost always choose the son. Boys should help girls. If we helped each other, our tasks would be finished quicker and then us girls would also have more free time. After all, we like to play too!"

Power and influence

It is harder for girls to make their voices heard and make decisions over their own lives. Their views and ideas are often treated with less respect, both by their peers and by adults such as teachers, parents and politicians. Many also feel under pressure from old-fashioned ideas on how girls should look and behave. These images are reinforced through the media and advertising, and give girls low self-esteem.

.....
Jetu Devi, 14, lives in a poor village in Rajasthan in India.

"Us girls work at least nine hours a day, every day. My two brothers never come. Girls don't get the same opportunities in life. Here, it's the boys who get to go to school, because parents hope that their sons will get a good job in the future and be able to provide for the family. They don't think about us girls like that at all, since we're just going to be married off into another family. In my dream world, it would be just as natural for girls to go to school as it is for boys. And men and women would help each other with all the housework, becau-

se that would make life easier for us girls. I know we have a long way to go, but I believe that slowly, slowly, there will be more equality between boys and girls here."

Jetu goes to evening school and has been elected Prime Minister of the Children's Parliament!

"I was delighted when I was elected to be Prime Minister, because I want to fight for our rights!"

Read more about the Children's Parliament in Rajasthan at worldschildrensprize.org

.....
When Lisa from Zimbabwe was twelve years old she loved her doll, Jennifer. But she felt girls should be allowed to play with cars too.

"I think that girls are given dolls because people want to prepare us for becoming mothers and taking care of children. Boys get their toys so that they can practice for doing difficult technical jobs. I don't understand that at all. It's so crazy! It is my dream for girls all over the world to be able to train for the jobs that are almost always done by boys at the moment. I think we should become doctors, pilots, engineers and even presidents."

Today, Lisa is a member of the World's Children's Prize Child Jury!

Celebrate girls' day!

The UN has established a special day for girls: 'The International Day of the Girl Child'. It is celebrated on 11 October every year, to remind the world that girls' rights must be respected! The media tell stories of girls' lives. Adults and children organise parties and demonstrations for girls' rights. What does your school do?

The child sex trade

Modern day slavery!

“I was kidnapped and sold to foreign men. It felt like a living death,” says Mary from the Philippines, who was 13 when she was subjected to one of the worst forms of child rights violation. The child sex trade affects at least 1.8 million children every year. Most of them are girls.

What is the child sex trade?

The child sex trade is whenever a child is exploited sexually by a perpetrator, usually an adult, who pays for it in money, gifts or services. Examples of gifts are food and clothing. A service could be a promise of protection or better grades. The child sex trade is different from other sexual abuse of children, because there is some form of payment involved. It is also called ‘commercial sexual exploitation of children’.

Where does the child sex trade happen?

The child sex trade exists all over the world. Children are exploited on the streets and in brothels, but also in people’s

homes and at schools and children’s homes. Examples of the child sex trade are:

- when people travel within their country or abroad to have sex with children (child sex tourism)
- when children are bought and sold so that perpetrators can have sex with them (child trafficking for sexual purposes)
- when perpetrators take pictures of or film sexual abuse of children (child pornography).

Child trafficking

Every year hundreds of thousands of children are taken from one place to another, in their own countries or abroad, in order for perpetrators to be able to exploit them sexually. Trafficking is now the third most profitable illegal trade in the world, after illegal drugs and weapons. The advantage of trading in children instead of, for example, drugs, is that children can be sold over and over again.

Child sex tourism

People who travel within their own country or abroad to commit sexual abuse of children are called child sex tourists. Some are on holiday, others on business trips. The child sex trade is illegal all over the world, but in some countries there is less of a risk of being punished, and children’s bodies are sold cheaper. But according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, all states must stop their own citizens from exploiting children sexually, even if the crime is committed in another country.

Child pornography

When sexual abuse of children is filmed or photographed, this is called child pornography. Perpetrators buy, sell and swap pictures or films via the internet, on websites, through file sharing programs and by email. Child pornography is also disseminated by mobile phone and in books, magazines and DVDs. For the exploited children, the pictures and films are constant reminders of the abuse. Every time they are distributed, the rights of the child are violated.

Child marriage

Every day, around 25,000 girls under 18 are married. One third of these are aged between 10 and 15. Many parents arrange marriages for their children, usually with older men, in order to get something in exchange, such as land, money or livestock. In war-torn areas, girls are

forced to marry soldiers in order for the rest of their family to be protected. This is also part of the child sex trade, since the girls are often forced to have sexual intercourse.

Why does the child sex trade exist?

One reason why children are drawn into the child sex trade is poverty. Poor girls and parents can be more easily tricked or forced into the slave trade. But the *fundamental problem* is that there *are* people who want to buy sex with children. Their demand means that people who want to make money are always looking for more children to sell. The more buyers there are, the more young people will be exploited. Without the buyers’ money, it wouldn’t be possible to make a profit. Then the traffickers would trade in something more profitable instead.

The children have no choice

When a child is exploited sexually for some kind of payment, some people think the child has agreed to sell sexual favours. But a child never chooses to be sold and sexually exploited. It is always perpetrators who trick, pressurise, threaten or force children, and sometimes their parents, into doing what they want them to do.

Damaged for life

Children who are exploited in the child sex trade are seriously damaged, both physically and mentally. The abuse affects their health and development for their whole lives. Children are exposed to threats and violence, and risk contracting diseases like HIV and AIDS. They suffer from low self-esteem, nightmares, depression, feelings of guilt, insomnia and suicidal thoughts. Those who manage to escape are often rejected by their families and have nowhere to go. ☹



Sold many times

Katja had just finished school in Moldavia when she saw an advert about domestic work in Germany. She phoned what she thought was an employment agency.

"Back then I didn't know anything about trafficking. Nobody talked openly about it. Nobody warned me."

One week later, Katja and four other teenage girls were smuggled into a neighbouring country. They were locked into a motel room. In the evening, four men came in and told them to take their clothes off.

"I refused, but they hit me. I started to cry, but in the end I didn't dare not to."

The next day, different men came to get Katja. They travelled in a car for several hours, until they arrived at a village that was full of bars.

"We went in and I saw girls stripping. The bar owner gave the men money and they said, 'this is where you're going to work'."

There were guards watching all the exits. If a customer wanted to buy sex, Katja had to take him to her room. The customer paid the bar owner. The girls didn't get anything.

"The bar owner said I owed him money, because he paid for me."

Two months later Katja was sold on and taken to another town. She was bought and sold several more times. It was three years before she managed to escape and get herself back home, broken inside. Nobody in Moldavia knows what she's been through, not even her mother and father.

Sold by her mother

Sreyapao from Cambodia was seven years old when an unknown couple visited her family. They said they needed a maid, and they paid Sreyapao's mother to let them take her. But instead, they took her to a brothel.

"They threw me into a small room and locked the door. After a week, a man came and told me to 'take care of a client'. I said I didn't know what that meant."

The man was furious. He sent in four men who beat Sreyapao with belts and electrical cables.

"Then they did something terrible to me. I didn't know what it was then. Now I know that they raped me."

It was four years before Sreyapao managed to escape. Now she wants to fight for girls' rights.

"If we are to put a stop to all this, boys have to change and start to see girls differently. They have to understand that we are equal, and girls must be treated with respect!"

Forced to marry

Esther in Zimbabwe was eleven when she was forced to marry an old man. It was the tradition in her church to marry off young girls with older men. One Sunday it was Esther's turn.

"I panicked and tried to run away, but the adults grabbed me. I screamed and cried, but nobody cared. They threw me in a car and drove away. After a while we arrived at a house. They said that my husband lived there and dropped me off. I didn't dare do anything but stay. He had sex with me and I was afraid I would become pregnant. How could I take care of a baby when I was only eleven years old?"

Finally, Esther got help to escape.

"No girl should have to experience that! I could imagine getting married when I'm about 28. But by then I'll have finished school, and started work helping girls."

Stop the child sex trade!



Many brave people, both women and men, fight to stop the child sex trade and to protect vulnerable children. In 2002 the UN passed a unique supplementary protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, about the child sex trade. It places strict demands on countries to protect the children who are affected, and to ensure laws are obeyed. You can meet many people who fight against the child sex trade in The Globe magazine and at worldschildrensprize.org.

The Swedish Postcode Lottery has sponsored the production of *Rights and democracy for one million girls*, which is a collaboration between the World's Children's Prize Foundation and ECPAT Sweden to strengthen girls' rights and combat the child sex trade.



MOT BARNSEXHANDEL



www.ecpat.se www.postkodlotteriet.se www.worldschildrensprize.org



The WCP Child Rights Ambassadors include several girls who have been kidnapped by different armed groups. Now they are preparing to support girls' rights in D. R. Congo.

From slave to Child Rights Ambassador

When Bora was five years old, her father abandoned her because she was a girl. At 13 she was captured by one of D.R. Congo's many armed groups and exploited as a sex slave.

"Today I am a World's Children's Prize Child Rights Ambassador and I fight for girls' rights," says Bora.

In a small classroom on a hill in Bukavu, eastern D. R. Congo, ten girls are sitting reading *The Globe* magazine and talking about girls' rights. They are Child Rights Ambassadors, preparing to visit schools.

"Explain why you want to talk about girls' rights. What are your thoughts?" asks Bora, 16, who is a leader of

the Child Rights Ambassadors. Her friend Olive raises her hand and says:

"Because life is much harder for girls than for boys in D. R. Congo. If a family has one boy and one girl, the son is the first one to get an education. The daughter is meant to take care of the house. That's so wrong! We have a right to exactly the same

chances in life as boys!"

Amunazo agrees:

"Exactly, that's how it is! And it's us girls who are worst affected by the war that's going on. Different armed groups use girls as sex slaves. The girls in this country are abused all the time!"

Bora is taking notes with a serious expression on her face. She knows that her friends' words are true. For almost all of her life, she has had a difficult time because she was born a girl and not a boy.

"I grew up in a family with three sisters. When our father realised he might never have a son he was furious. He used to beat our mother and us



Bora, 16

Lives: At the BVES home for vulnerable girls.

Loves: The fact that I'm safe now.

Hates: War and violence.

The best thing: When I was rescued from sex slavery.

The worst thing: Being exploited by adults.

Wants to be: A child rights champion.

Dream: A better life for all children who are suffering.





New family

“I haven’t seen my mother and sisters since the soldiers took them away. We are still looking for my family, and I really hope that we’ll manage to track them down. But living here at the BVES home is the closest I’ve come to having a real family since I lost my mother. We older children help the younger ones. We wash dishes, clean, do the laundry, cook and so on. Just like a real family. And we play a lot together,” says Bora, who is skipping with Awa and Aime here.

children. He always threatened to leave us to be with a woman who could give him a son. And when I was five years old he abandoned us,” explains Bora.

“Dad took all of our land. Our mother begged for food from neighbours and worked in other people’s fields so that we could survive. But in reality things weren’t much better when Dad was living with us.

He certainly didn’t lavish food or money on his daughters. And school wasn’t an option for us,” says Bora.

School, finally!

“I had to work hard to be able to go to school. Every day after school and at the weekends I had to work with my mother in the fields to earn money for my education. Since we had so little food I was often tired, both at school and in the fields. But I loved school and I knew that without an education I would never have a good life - I would be just as poor and hungry for the rest of my life.”

Bora struggled on, dreaming of a better life. But one night when she was thirteen years old, her dream was shattered.

“I woke to the sound of gunfire. We sat close together, holding one another, but we had nowhere to go when

the soldiers came. They forced us out of our house, tore our clothes off and tied my mother’s hands behind her back. We were forced to walk into the forest. I thought we were going to die out there in the dark.”

Bora, who was walking at the back, tripped and fell.

“Nobody noticed that I had fallen, so I crawled into some bushes as quietly as I could, and hid there. It was so terrible that my mother and sisters were still with the soldiers, but there was nothing I could do.”

Ate earth

When the soldiers had disappeared, Bora crept out of her hiding place and ran in the opposite direction, terrified. It was dark and she got lost in the rainforest. At night she slept under trees and bushes. After three days she was so hungry she began to eat earth.

Early one morning Bora woke up to find herself surrounded by a group of men who were out hunting. She was naked and dirty, lying curled up under a bush.

“At first the hunters thought I was an animal, but when I started to cry and they saw my face they realised I was a person.”

Bora went with the men to their village, where she was given food and clothes. One of the men said Bora could live with his family. He also promised to find out what had happened to her mother and sisters. Bora helped in the family’s fields, just as she had done at home. But going to school wasn’t possible. Life was hard, but Bora had nowhere else to go.

Became a slave

One year later, in the middle of the night, a group of soldiers kicked down the door of the house.



Chance to make our voices heard

The Child Rights Ambassadors split into pairs, like Faida and Lidia here, when they visit the classes at the BVES school for girls.

“Here in D. R. Congo no-one listens to us girls. Not at school, nor in the family, nor in society. What we think or say makes no difference at all. Being a Child Rights Ambassador is totally different and that’s why it’s so fantastic! Now we’re standing here talking about important things like the rights of the child. We’re even doing this in front of boys, and they are actually listening! Doing this boosts my confidence so much. The World’s Children’s Prize gives us girls a chance to make our voices heard!” says Bora.

“The village was swarming with soldiers, fighting and stealing food, cows and goats. The soldiers received orders to take all the girls in the village with them. When I cried and told them I was only a

child, one of the soldiers got so angry he took his knife and slashed me across the ribs and blood started to gush out.”

The soldiers forced Bora and the other girls to walk into the forest. If any of them

Empowered by The Globe

“I have learned loads about the rights of the child through the stories in The Globe. It makes me feel happy and strong,” says Bora.



screamed or cried, they were beaten. For Bora it felt like being back in the nightmare when she was taken into the forest with her family. After several hours they reached the soldiers’ base camp, deep in the forest. A big crowd of soldiers was waiting for the girls.

“They surrounded us straight away. The soldiers tore our clothes off and threw us on the ground. There was always someone standing over us with a gun. Then it started. Many soldiers took turns in abusing us. I was their slave, and I was so afraid I wanted to die.”



School, finally!

“Since I arrived here in the middle of the term I got to start the BVES sewing course and train as a seamstress. But I’m looking forward to being able to start normal school again next term,” says Bora.





Welcome to our Global Vote in D. R. Congo!

Bora and the other ambassadors have visited all the children at the BVES school for vulnerable girls. They have talked about girls' rights and the World's Children's Prize program. Now it's time for the Global Vote.

➔ Rescued

Four days later, Bora woke up in hospital. It turned out that another armed group had attacked the soldiers who had kidnapped her, and they made sure that all the injured girls were taken to hospital.

"I don't know whether the soldiers continued abusing me after I lost consciousness, but I think they did because I was so badly hurt. I couldn't stand or walk, and the doctors kept me in hospital for over three months. To begin with I just wanted to die, but then I decided that I actually wanted to live."

After a while, Bora came to

an organisation called BVES for help. They take care of children who have been victims of the war.

"It felt wonderful to come here! Like coming home. There are lots of girls here who share the same experiences, and we support one another. Finally I can go to school again! We also learn a lot about the rights of the child here, mostly through working with the World's Children's Prize program."

Child Rights Ambassador

Bora and nine other girls have trained as Child Rights Ambassadors so that they can visit schools to talk about the rights of the child - especially girls' rights - and the World's Children's Prize.

"The other girls elected me as their chairperson. That



"Since I'm the WCP chairperson and I'm responsible for this, it's particularly great that it's all working! It's such a great feeling that our schoolmates have actually understood what we've tried to teach them. It's also so rewarding to vote and show my support for people who fight for us children. I believe that our support can help give them the strength to carry on with their important work," says Bora.

made me so happy, because I believe this is so important! Through The Globe I have learned that when my father refused to take care of me just because I was a girl, and when the soldiers exploited me, those were violations of my rights. My own experiences have made me want to fight for girls' rights. As a WCP ambassador I can really do that.

"Through talking to people at schools, we hope that other girls will be able to avoid the things that many of us ambassadors have experi-

enced. It's also important that we tell both girls and boys about girls' rights. If boys learn about girls' rights now, there is less of a risk that they will treat their daughters or other girls the way my father and the soldiers treated me. On our school visits we also meet boys who have been child soldiers, but I am not afraid to tell my story. The World's Children's Prize has given me courage, and this work is far too important to go around being afraid!" 🌐



Stamp pad to stop cheating

All voters have to show the little finger on their right hand. The ink from the stamp pad makes it impossible to vote twice.

A vote for the rights of the child, with The Globe providing shade from the sun and the WCP emblem painted on her stomach.



I didn't know this before!

Bora's list of new things she has learned through the stories in *The Globe* and her work as a Child Rights Ambassador:

All equal

That all children, regardless of whether you are a boy or a girl, black or white, Christian or Muslim, have a disability or not, are equal.

Right to school

That all children, regardless of whether they are boys or girls, have a right to go to school.

Right to express yourself

That all children, regardless of whether they are boys or girls, have a right to say what they think, and a right to be listened to.

No abuse

That no child should be subjected to sexual abuse or forced to be a soldier.

Play

That all children have a right to play.

Safety

That all children have a right to feel safe.

One of the worst wars in history

- The war in the Democratic Republic of Congo has been ongoing since 1998. There was a peace agreement in 2003, but armed conflict is still ongoing in eastern parts of the country, where the children you meet in *The Globe* live.
- Over five million people have been killed in the conflict, or died of starvation or disease as a direct consequence.
- At its peak, there were over 30,000 child soldiers in the country. There are still thousands of child soldiers who have not yet been reunited with their families. Many are still involved with various armed groups.
- Since the war began, 200,000 women and girls have reported rape, but it is thought that many more have been abused. In 2009, half of the victims were children.
- It is estimated that over 1.5 million people have had to flee their homes.
- Over five million children in D. R. Congo don't go to school.

Rescuing child soldiers

Murhabazi Namegabe received the 2011 World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child for his over 20-year long and dangerous struggle for children in war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo. Since 1989, through his organisation BVES, Murhabazi has rescued thousands of child soldiers, unaccompanied refugee children, and girls who have been sexually abused by armed groups.

Read more at www.worldschildrensprize.org



We are ambassadors

Child rights make D. R. Congo better



"THE THING I REALLY want to put an end to in D. R. Congo is girls being raped. It is really common. Here at BVES there are a lot of girls who have experienced this. It is boys and men from different armed groups who are fighting one another who do bad things to girls. I believe it's extremely important that boys learn about the rights of the child. That they find out that what they do is a violation of girls' rights. If the boys knew that they would hopefully behave better towards girls and women than grown men do at the moment. That's why the World's Children's Prize program is such a good and important thing here! As ambassadors we travel round to schools and tell people about the rights of the child. I am really looking forward to telling boys about girls' rights. If I manage to explain that boys and girls are equal and that we should be treated equally, D. R. Congo will be a much better country in the future!"

Riziki, 14



Future president

"IF YOU KNOW that everyone has rights I think that makes it harder to hurt other people. Then life gets better for everyone. That's also why it has been so rewarding to join in with the World's Children's Prize and be an ambassador, teaching other children about the rights of the child. In the future I want to be president and fight for the rights of the child in D. R. Congo. I want to fight for all children to have a good life."

Furaha, 15

Father killed in the war

"BEING A CHILD RIGHTS AMBASSADOR has taught me so much that I didn't know before. I learned from The Globe magazine that we children should not be forced into hard work, and that all children have the right to grow up in a family. Things aren't like that here. The war has made many children orphans and there is no-one to take care of them. My father was killed in the war, so I only have my mother left. I really want to help orphaned children here in D. R. Congo. They need a place to live, and to go to school, have clothes, be cared for and learn about their rights. Maybe I could work for some organisation that helps children when I get older. Most of all I'd like to be a full-time WCP ambassador! I get to teach people very important things. I feel really proud!"

Amunazo, 17



Global Vote is a graduation party!

"HERE IN D. R. CONGO all of the rights a child should have are violated. Lots of children are not allowed to go to school and have to work or fight in the war instead. Girls are subjected to sexual violence all the time. Through the stories in The Globe we learn about our rights and that means that we know what to fight for. That makes it easier to know what sort of life every child has a right to. As Child Rights Ambassadors, we learn while teaching other children about our rights! The Global Vote is like a graduation party at the end of our child rights training!"

Noela, 17



for girls' rights!

Couldn't go to school

"MY BROTHERS WERE allowed to go to school, but not me. So I thought that maybe it was only boys who had a right to go to school. Thanks to The Globe magazine I know now that my rights were being violated, because girls have just as much of a right to go to school as boys. When I found this school at BVES, my mother agreed to let me attend because it's free. If it had cost money we would never have been able to afford it.

"Through the World's Children's Prize I have learned that all children have a

right to survival, security, safety and love. I also know that black and white children are equal. As a Child Rights Ambassador I look forward to visiting different schools and teaching others about the important things I have learned. I was so happy today, when we held our Global Vote here at BVES. It was a huge party for our rights. I could hardly stop dancing! There should be lots more parties for the rights of the child here in D. R. Congo, and in the rest of the world!"

Olive, 15



Girls' rights violated

"WORLD'S CHILDREN'S PRIZE is so good because it explains what rights we children have. I have learned how the rights of the child are violated in many different parts of the world, but also that there are other places where they are respected. It's a great thing that as a World's Children's Prize Child Rights Ambassador I can teach other children about that important fact. Here in D. R. Congo we need that knowledge, because children's rights are badly violated here. Life is hardest for girls. I plan to fight to ensure that girls get an education too! In the future I want to work as a computer programmer."

Bahati, 16

Wants to be a brave prize candidate



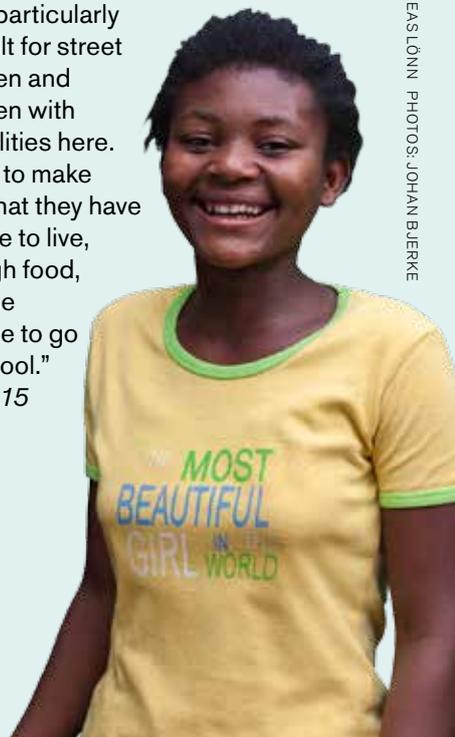
"THE VERY BEST THING about being a WCP ambassador is learning about child rights heroes and everything they do for children in difficult situations. My dream is to finish school and then become a person like them. Someone brave, who fights for the rights of the child. The prize candidates are my idols! I live here at Murhabazi Namegabe's home for girls in Bukavu. He takes care of me and fights for us children here in D. R. Congo. In 2011 Murhabazi received the World's Children's Prize, and I am really proud of him!"

Awa, 16

Heroes who inspire!

"THE WORST THING IN D. R. CONGO is all the violence against children, and the fact that girls can't go to school as easily as boys. That is a violation of our rights, which are in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. I didn't actually know that until I joined in with the World's Children's Prize program. I have learned so much about my rights. The stories in The Globe about different child rights heroes have really inspired me! In the future I want to fight for children to have a good life. Since we are at war, life is particularly difficult for street children and children with disabilities here. I want to make sure that they have a place to live, enough food, and the chance to go to school."

Lidia, 15



Time for the Global Vote

If you are a student at a Global Friend school, you have the right to vote in the Global Vote until you reach the age of 18. Through the Global Vote, you decide who will receive the 2013 World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child. You can visit Global Vote Day in different countries on pages 40–48.

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

Invite the media

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

Secret ballot

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

▪ Electoral register

Everyone who has the right to vote should be included in a

list of names. The names should be carefully marked off when each person receives their ballot paper, or when they cast their vote in the ballot box.

▪ Ballot papers

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

▪ Voting booths

It's great if you can make your own voting booths. Or you could borrow voting booths from adult elections. You enter the booth one at a time, so that nobody can see who you're voting for.

▪ Ballot box

You will see various kinds of ballot boxes in *The Globe*. They could be made out of cardboard boxes, for example, or a large tin can, or woven palm leaves. If you can, send a photo of your ballot box to the World's Children's Prize.

▪ Ink to prevent cheating

Ink on one thumb, a painted nail, a mark on the hand or face – there are lots of ways to mark everyone who has already voted.

▪ Appoint presiding officers, election supervisors and vote counters

The presiding officers mark off the names on the electoral register and give out ballot papers. The election supervi-



Watch Global Vote videos at worldschildrensprize.org

A globe-shaped ballot box in Nepal.



World's Children's Prize cake.

sors make sure that the voting, ink marking and vote counting is done correctly. The vote counters count the votes. Don't forget to send in your results for all three candidates!

Celebration time!

When the voting is over, many schools celebrate the rights of the child and their Global Vote Day with performances, tea, biscuits and cake, or in other ways. Others organise a demonstration for the rights of the child.

Global Vote = world peace

DURING THE GLOBAL VOTE in the capital of Nepal, Kathmandu, Buddha sat and watched over the ballot box. But this particular Buddha is called Sumi, and she's six years old...

"I've always lived here at Maiti Nepal. I'm going to Maiti's nursery now and I really like maths. But I've got lots of time to play too!" says Sumi.

Sumi played an important role during the Global Vote. Janeit Gurung from Maiti Nepal explains why.

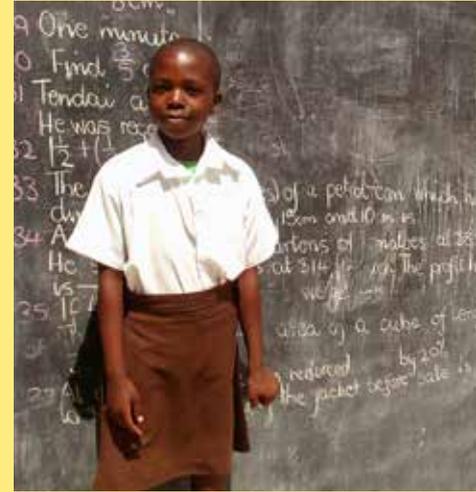
"In Nepal, Buddha represents peace for everyone, including those who are not Buddhists. By the ballot box we also had a dove of peace, which is of course the international symbol for peace. The ballot box itself was made to look like a

Police in Zimbabwe protected the Global Vote

When the local police heard about the Global Vote Day at Hopley Farm in Zimbabwe, they wanted to find out more about what kind of vote it was. And whether it had anything to do with politicians in Zimbabwe.

THE POLICE FOUND out more about the World's Children's Prize, and someone gave them a copy of *The Globe* to read. As a result, the police promised to make sure that nothing would stand in the way of the Global Vote. Hellen, 12, who is in Year 7 at Hopley Tariro Primary School, explains:

"I am so glad we have the chance to vote for Child Rights Heroes here in Zimbabwe. It helps us move towards being a country where one day, the rights of the child will be respected. I was sad when the police misunderstood our Global Vote and thought it was a political election. But I'm glad that we then managed to hold our Vote with help from the police. The rights of the child are still not well respected here in Zimbabwe. From what I have learned in *The Globe* about the rights of the child, I have realised that we have a long way to go here."



"The World's Children's Prize enables us to fight for children's rights!"

"WE VOTED TOGETHER with other schools. We gave thanks for our beautiful voting booths and we wore our best clothes to show how important it is for us children to be able to vote for our rights. Through the World's Children's Prize, we were able to educate our school friends on the rights of the child. On the day we voted, we celebrated by having fun. We painted, danced and

sang. The most important thing is that the World's Children's Prize enables us to fight for children's rights!"

*Mame Diarra, 14, wearing a red top
Pikena East School in Senegal*

"IT WAS THE FIRST time I had participated in the World's Children's Prize and I will never forget it. I learned about the difficulties children all over the world experience. To be able to combat those difficulties, we must support the candidates and continue their work. I want to thank and congratulate the World's Children's Prize and all those who support children and try to find solutions to the problems children face."

*Saliou, 13, wearing a green top
Pikena East School in Senegal*



"I will always remember this"

"I AM DELIGHTED to be able to participate in the World's Children's Prize. It is fantastic to see so many people fighting for children to be protected. I will always remember this moment. Thank you to all the candidates for your work for children!"

*Amy Ndèye, 16
Pikena East School in Senegal*



globe. All the children here at Maiti Nepal want peace for all the children of the world. And we believe that being part of the World's Children's Prize is an excellent way of bringing about peace on earth!"



Several schools took part in Kathmandu, including Teresa Academy, Shree Satya Sai, Pyramid International, Sharada and Pathfinder.



Global Vote in Austria

EVERYONE'S CURIOUS when the ballot box at Volksschule Unter-Aspang in Austria is emptied.





We are not alone! At Nghezimani School, Malelmulele, in Limpopo, South Africa, the children know that they are united with children from all over the world in fighting for the rights of the child. And they know that they have to teach adults about their rights.

We are united for our rights

“We learnt that children all over the world take a stand for children’s rights and so we are united in taking a stand for our rights. We children need rights to protect us from being abused. Many children have been raped. Please respect their rights. As children we must fight not to be abused by family and community.”

Rebotile, 10 years old

Adults don’t know our rights

“I liked that The Globe magazine monitors all the rights of children, not only in South Africa. I liked that it teaches us about people with disabilities. We were able to read and know our rights better. We learnt that we are all the same in other parts of the world, with the same rights, even though adults do not know this.”

Tisetso, 10 years old



Global Vote und

1,500 children who are detained at Bosasa’s thirteen Youth Development Centres in South Africa participated in this year’s World’s Children’s Prize Program. They are awaiting trial, or have already been sentenced. One of the detained boys, Abongile, tells what the rights of the child – that the World’s Children’s Prize Program taught him – mean to him:

The rights of the child mean the safety of the child because children have to defend themselves from being bullied and hurt. If we do not know our rights, we do not know that it is wrong when we are neglected. When bad things happen to you, you can end up doing bad things to other people. It is more possible to respect other people’s rights if you know your own rights. Adults must try to understand the rights of the

child by reading The Globe magazine. I like The Globe magazine because the stories tell me there are many children in the world going through the same problems. In each country the children stand up for themselves and tell their life story. This made me tell my own.

The Global Vote Day was special to me. We were all happy to vote for the first time. I knew my rights that day!”

A vote for the rights of

THE STUDENTS at Brandwacht Primary School in Worcester, South Africa, cast their votes for the rights of the child in a doll’s mouth. They made their unusual ballot box themselves. South Africa’s Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) helped out at the vote. The IEC, which oversees elections in South Africa every four years, thinks that the World’s Children’s Prize Program is a great way of teaching about the rights of the child and how democratic elections work. That’s why the IEC trains teachers to use the program.



Free elections in Burma

Children from several village schools in Burma gathered at the Yo Za Li River for their Global Vote Day. They use The Globe in English, and they have a folder with all the articles from the magazine translated into their language, Karen.

“Thanks to The Globe I can learn more about the rights of the child and talk about them with my schoolmates and my parents. When I participate in the Global Vote I learn about free elections, where I can make my own decision,” says one of the girls.

er lock and key



Singer for child rights

Young singer Adelia Douw, who has performed at the Award Ceremony in Sweden, is a World's Children's Prize Child Rights Ambassador to schools in Cape Town, South Africa:

"I tell them that those of us who have homes and families must be grateful, even though we live in a very poor area. We are the ones who should tell children about their rights so that they can understand that life is not supposed to be so hard. When I do these talks at schools, I feel confident because I know I am sharing my experience of the World's Children's Prize with other children. I am encouraging them to take responsibility for educating themselves. One way of doing that is to talk to each other about your rights and how to protect yourself."



A vote for my rights!

O/B2
POLLING STATION



T/B1
GLOBAL VOTE 2012
World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child (UNICEF)
BOSASA BOSASA



At the Global Vote behind bars, the boys had different tasks. One of them was to mark everyone who voted, so that nobody could vote twice.



the child – by mouth!

Voting booth to preserve secrecy! Nobody should be able to see who Jolecia is voting for.

Every child's vote counts. Devonay is an Election Supervisor. She supervises while Jolecia casts her vote in the ballot box, which in this case is a doll's head with an open mouth for the ballot papers!



PHOTO: HEDRINE SCHROEDERS/ANDBARD



Ballot boxes for the children's democratic election in Burma.

We made ID books to be able to vote!

"All the children in our school made identity books so that we could prove our identity during the Global Vote Day."

Karabo, Soshanguwe Primary School, Tshwane North, Afrique du Sud





Preparation of the schoolyard for Global Vote day begins with signs, voting booths and the ballot box.



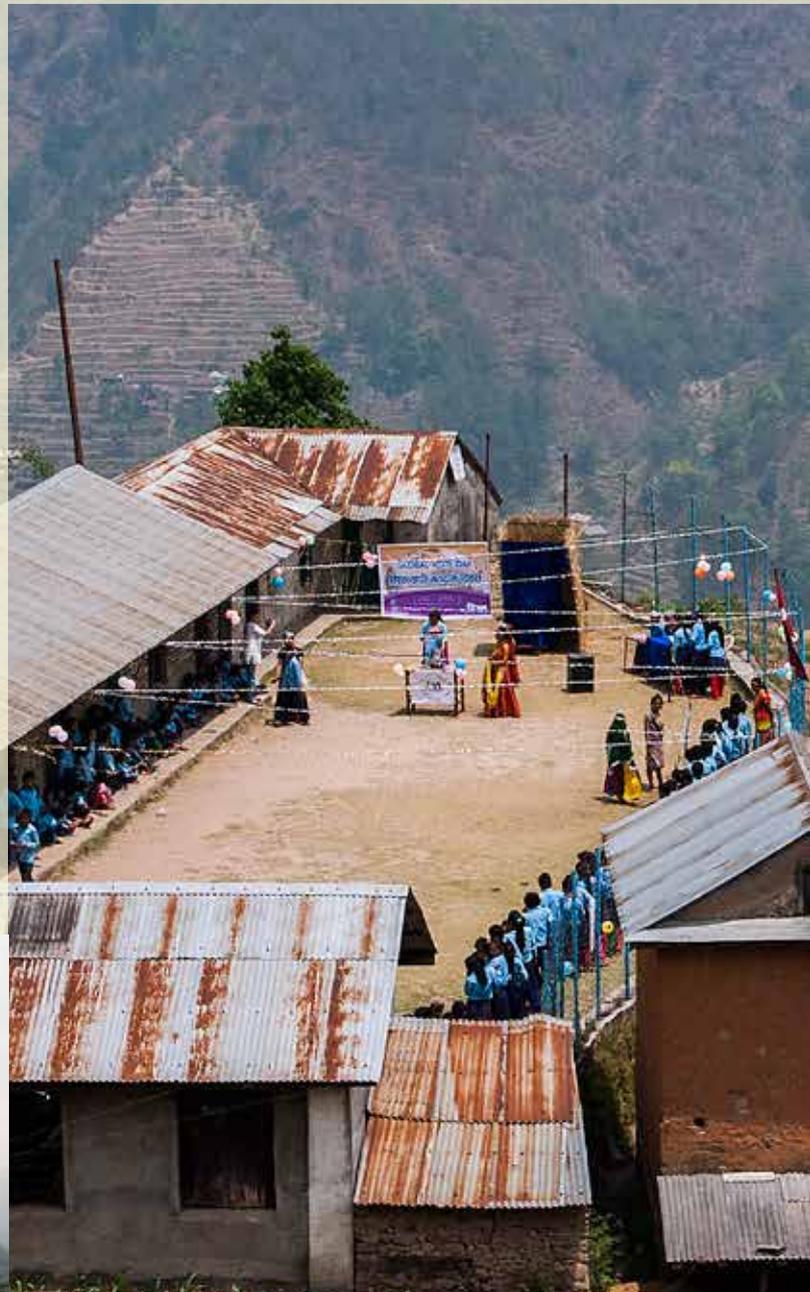
The girls in the WCP Child Rights Club wear paper crowns bearing the WCP emblem and the flag of Nepal. They check that the children in the voting queue are on the voting register before they give them a ballot paper.

Global Vote in the mountains

Once the children at the small school in the mountain village of Chhap in Nepal have had two visits from World's Children's Prize Child Rights Ambassadors, studied *The Globe* magazine and discussed the rights of the child, it is time for their Global Vote day. The ambassadors help the girls (and a couple of boys) in the school's World's Children's Prize Child Rights Club to organise the day.

Curious parents and other adults start to turn up when they hear about the children's special day. The children explain that they are celebrating the rights of the child and that those rights must be respected. Before the WCP Ambassadors came to the village, the children didn't even know that they had rights of their own, but now everyone knows.

The day is rounded off with a dance performance from the Child Rights Ambassadors, with music from a scratchy-sounding speaker that echoes around the mountains.



We took part up in the mountains!

Students at Shree Borlang Bhumi Secondary School, Shree Bhumidevi Secondary School, Shivalaya Primary School and Shree Thulo Thakani Secondary School took part in the World's Children's Prize program. The picture shows Shree Bhumidevi Secondary School.





Then they are stamped on the arm with a Nepali flag, to make it impossible to cheat by voting twice.



Striding towards the voting booth.

PHOTO: JOHAN BJERKE



In a voting booth no-one can see who I am voting for or influence my vote. Voting secrecy is respected at the children's democratic Global Vote.



Finally! A vote for the rights of the child, while the voting supervisors from the school WCP Child Rights Club and the WCP Child Rights Ambassadors check that everything is going to plan.



WCP made me stop caning students

"Since I came in contact with The Globe magazine and the World's Children's Prize program in my school, I have learnt that bullying and caning children is a crime. I have stopped caning children both at home and at school, although our tradition permits caning children as a way of correcting child misconduct."

Teacher Gabriel Eben-Mosi Ajala, Govt. Science Secondary School

Role model for adults

"How I wish that we adults could follow the good example of WCP Club members when they organise a democratic election. I love The Globe magazine because it has taught me that children's rights are as important as adults' rights. I will continue supporting this cause and the WCP programme in my school wherever I find myself. Kudos to the founder of this initiative."

Teacher Adeyinka George Sanni, GRAMP Schools

Helps to unite us children

"As for me I can best describe the World's Children's Prize activities as a great annual children's festival that brings enlightenment to children in our societies. In my school when voting we also include cultural displays from different ethnic nationalities. That brings us together to forget our differences and see ourselves as one Nigeria. The WCP program unites us children of different backgrounds."

Alaba, 13 UBE School



The Globe taught me my rights

"The impact of The Globe magazine and my participation in the World's Children's Prize activities on my life has been immeasurable. I have known my rights from the day that I came into contact with The Globe and it has given me the privilege of meeting with dignitaries, because I am an executive member of the World's Children's Club in my school."

Elyon Omowumi, 16 Govt. Science School

Now I teach adults about child rights

"I love reading the Globe magazine. It has taught me a great lesson, particularly about my rights. Before I didn't know that as a child I have rights that adults must respect and follow. Knowing all this I have started teaching adults in my community about children's rights. They appreciate it so much, welcome me and give listening ears to my campaigns."

Amazing Grace, 17

CCH School



Pass a law on WCP for everyone!

"We must ask our law-makers, particularly the Senate and House of Representatives, to pass a law that will formally make the World's Children's Prize program a national program. It teaches us about free and fair democracy, devoid of vote rigging, violence and bribery."

Teacher Ann Oyiza Faith Academy School

Join us on a



During the Award Ceremony at Gripsholm Castle in Sweden, Maria, 12, talked about how children at Vänge School in Sweden go on a simulated global trip every year with the World's Children's Prize program. Their journey lasts two months. Every day when it's time to pretend to fly home, many of the children don't want to leave the country they've been visiting.

"EVERY YEAR, on the day of the first World's Children's Prize Press Conference, I start working with the World's Children's Prize and The Globe magazine along with everybody in my school.

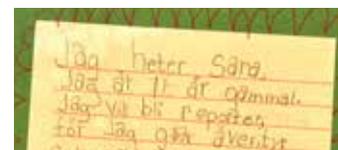
"We are so curious to read the new magazine, about the nominees and the children taking part all over the world. We talk about what we have read, and write texts like diary entries, articles or factual texts based on what we have learned.

"We work with the World's Children's Prize theme for two months, and then we have our Global Vote!

"We travel on simulated trips to the prize candidates' countries and use the WCP program in all subjects. We just love those trips and we often feel sad when we have to take the plane home again! Come fly with us!"

The students find out which vaccinations they will need before the journey.

VACCINATIONS			
Date	Name of country	Time	Notes
	Guatemala		



The students apply to become reporters: "My name is Sara. I'm 11 years old. I want to be a reporter..."



Sara proudly shows her press pass. The students are divided into groups, and their press passes show their instructions and give information on the advance they have been paid for travel expenses, which is deposited into a bank account.



The reporters prepare for their journey by reading everything in The Globe and finding out more about the Child Rights Heroes' countries using sources like the internet, atlases and newspapers.

global trip

The children make a note of their expenses in the cashbook, so that they can show how they have used the advance in their bank accounts. They pay with their Global Friend bank cards. The flight tickets are ready too.



Can't travel without a passport! The children get real passport application forms, fill them in and then make their own passports. They also fill in visa applications for the countries they are going to visit.



Time to book flights! In maths lessons they find out what the tickets will cost, and compare different airline prices.



The Global Friend Bank provides cashbooks and bank cards for the journey.



Don't forget the case! The students pack copies of The Globe magazine, maps, tickets, passports, cashbooks, bank cards, press passes, diaries and notebooks.



The excitement is rising! Everyone has checked in and gone through passport and baggage control. Finally, the announcement comes: "Gate 29 is now open for boarding for passengers travelling to..."



On board the plane, the cabin crew serve snacks and...
...malaria tablets.



The plane has landed and passport control is open.



The travellers show their passports and visas.



On the way to the hotel, the reporters begin to plan their work. They need to book interviews with the Child Rights Heroes and the children they help. But they also need time for sightseeing.



The reporters have to write up their travel diaries, articles and poems and present their projects.



Once they are back in Sweden, work begins on creating newspaper placards and election posters.



Finally time for Global Vote Day at Vänge School!

Angelina, 12, has written 'I demand respect for the rights of the child.'

"Working on the World's Children's Prize has changed me as a person. The world is so big, but if we work together we can make a big difference. When I grow up I want to make a difference. I want my voice and all children's voices to be heard," says Angelina.



We celebrate the rights of the child and our Global Vote Day with World's Children's Prize cake.



Wants to be a Child Rights Hero



"Here in D.R. Congo, children's rights are violated. Many children have been abandoned by their parents and wander the streets during the day looking for food. They spend their nights on the streets too. Other children, especially girls from the villages, are subjected to sexual abuse. It is difficult to restore girls' lives after this. One day I want to be a champion of children's rights and create a centre for children who are suffering. I love The Globe magazine so much because it helps us to demand respect for our rights. The World's Children's Prize teaches me about how children all over the world suffer. And through the WCP I was able to organise a press conference, a radio broadcast and a Vote for the children's prize."
Lwesso Kyambo, 16, Club Byàene Bukavu, D.R. Congo

Global Vote Day despite malaria

Every Saturday, the girls in a group called The Stars in the village of Lunga Lunga in Kenya meet up. They learn about their rights and lots more. For two months they worked on the WCP program, read The Globe and prepared their Global Vote Day. When the big day came, several of the 38 girls were ill with malaria. But they couldn't bear to miss the day that they had been looking forward to, so they came anyway.

"This really is a good day," says Salma, 17, who the girls elected to be in charge of the voting officials. "The World's Children's Prize is good for us. It helps us to understand more about the rights of the child and that we should help those who are extremely poor. It is good that children take responsibility for the Global Vote. It feels good to lead this work and help girls to have the courage to express themselves."



Salma and other voting officials during the Global Vote in Lunga Lunga.

"Voting for someone who fights for the rights of the child feels good," says Mwanasha while voting.



TEXT & PHOTOS: LOUISE FELDIN



Global Vote at training

When the children of Gothia Brazzaville in the Republic of the Congo go to football training, they also learn about the rights of the child through the World's Children's Prize program. They hold voting for the Global Vote at all three of Gothia's training pitches.



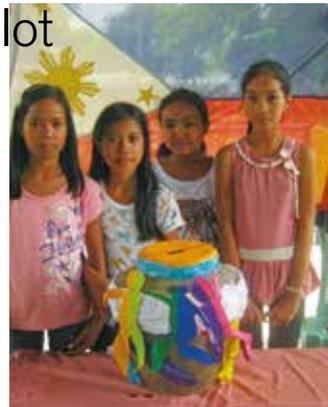
Global Vote at Barefoot College

In 2001, Barefoot College in Rajasthan, India, was one of the World's Children's Prize laureates. Since then, the 3,500 children in the organisation's over 100 evening schools have been participating in the World's Children's Prize program every year.



Cool ballot box!

Proud girls at Hibago Elementary School in the Philippines show off their handmade ballot box.



First time

4,045 students at 32 schools in Burundi took part in the World's Children's Prize program for the first time. The organisations DAJBU and DYF want all children in this country, who have experienced so many terrible things, to be able to join in and learn about the rights of the child and democracy.



Child Rights Heroes 2013



Every year, the World's Children's Prize Child Jury selects three Child Rights Heroes from all those nominated. These three become the candidates for the *World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child*. In order to be able to vote fairly in the Global Vote, it's important that you know equal amounts about all three candidates. If you read all about each of them in this magazine, then you will. The two candidates who do not receive the voting children's prize receive the World's Children's Honorary Award. All three Child Rights Heroes receive prize money towards their work with children.



Candidate 1

JAMES KOFI ANNAN

Ghana

Pages 50–69



Candidate 2

SOMPOP JANTRAKA

Thailand

Pages 70–89



Candidate 3

KIMMIE WEEKS

Liberia

Pages 90–109



JAMES KOFI ANNAN

CHILD RIGHTS HERO NOMINEE PAGES 50–69

WHY HAS JAMES BEEN NOMINATED?

James Kofi Annan has been nominated for the 2013 World's Children's Prize for his work to stop child slavery.

JAMES himself was a fishing slave as a child, for seven years. He managed to escape, get an education and become a bank manager. Six years ago he left the bank to work solely to stop child slavery. At that time he had already started an organisation called Challenging Heights, in 2003, which had liberated over 500 children from slavery. James believes that poverty causes slavery, and education combats poverty. Liberated slave children come first to Challenging Heights' safe home for 65 children. The children have had difficult experiences, and are given rehabilitation and security. When they are strong enough, they can return home to their parents and attend an ordinary school. It can take a year before they are ready.

Challenging Heights also runs a school for 700 pupils of different ages. They offer training and loans to poor mothers so that they can support their families and not have to sell their children into slavery. Through 21 Child Rights Clubs, Challenging Heights teaches 630 vulnerable children about the rights of the child and campaigns against slavery. Through his work and Challenging Heights, James has supported over 10,000 children who have been slaves or at risk of slavery.



As dawn breaks, James is leaving his home along with four other boys from his village. They have been collected by some finely dressed men. James is six years old and he doesn't know where he's going or how long he'll be gone. If he knew that now, he would probably try to escape straight away.

A few months earlier, three men had arrived in the village. They had a couple of boys with them, and everyone in the village had stopped and stared at them. They were dressed like kings, even the boys. With clothes made from shiny fabrics with matching colours, and elegant new shoes on their feet. The men smiled and were friendly to everyone they met. They had walked round the village talking to the adults.

Rumours began to spread among the children. If they were lucky enough to be allowed to go with the men

next time they came, they too would get beautiful clothes. And they'd be able to go to school and eat their fill. They might even be able to learn English. That's what James wanted. Imagine being able to speak English! His mother admired people who could do that. But his family was poor, and it was hard to feed twelve children. It was impossible for them to go to school. There wasn't enough money for notebooks, schoolbags or uniforms.

The boys disappear

After the finely-dressed men's visit, boys started to

disappear from the village. One by one.

"It might be your turn next," said James's friends to him. They had seen the men sitting talking to James's father.

And now he's on his way. Nobody has told him what's going to happen, not even his mother, so he's a bit nervous.

After a few hours of walking, they reach a small bus that takes them to a crossroads where a larger bus, rusty and dented, is waiting for them.

The bus is full of children, mostly boys. There are two or three squeezed onto every



seat, and even the aisle is full of children. There are a few older men sitting here and there. But there's something strange about it all.

Why is it so quiet? A boy near the front of the bus mumbles something to the boy beside him. Then one of the men jumps up and slaps him hard in the face.

"No talking!" he shouts.

James is hit by a wave of terror. Tears well up, but he swallows them.

Day turns to evening, and the rickety old bus bumps along red sand roads and paths. It stops now and again.

Every time, James thinks they've arrived, but the engine always starts again and the bus jolts on. It's a long night. In the darkness, James tries to fight back his fear. Are they going to kill us? Morning comes, then afternoon and then another night. When they need to pee, a guard always goes with them.

Tens of thousands of slave children

On the third day they arrive at a large market. Now they are in the village of Yeti, at the north end of Lake Volta. Tens of

Trees in the lake

LAKE VOLTA IN GHANA is the world's largest man-made lake. It was created when a dam was built to create electricity, more than forty years ago. The dam caused forests to flood, so now the bed of the lake is full of huge dead forests. Some trees stick up above the surface, but many are not visible. It's common for boats to sail into them and be pulled under. But the trees also mean that the fishing is very good in Lake Volta. The fish enjoy playing among the branches, which also protect their young.

And the trees provide lots of nutrients.

Many children drown

ALL THE BRANCHES in the water mean that fishing nets often get caught, and children have to dive down to disentangle them. Many child slaves die every year. Usually because they get tangled up in the nets and can't get out.

"One in five children dies out there," says James Kofi Annan, who came close to drowning himself. Now there is a company that has started felling the trees, for valuable timber. Many fishermen are worried that the trees that could save them in a storm are disappearing.

'The boys who went to Yeti'

THERE IS NO WORD for trafficking or child slavery in Ghana. The fishing slaves get called 'the boys who went to Yeti'. That's the village where most child slaves in the fishing industry are taken. From there they are sent out to different slave owners around the lake. Child slavery is very common in Ghana. Children are sold by their parents or relatives. Often by single mothers with many children, who can't afford food for everyone. It's also common for poor people to borrow money from slave traders for a funeral when someone dies. When they find themselves unable to pay it back, the slave

trader takes their children instead. Children cost US\$15-35 and are supposed to work for at least two years. Often they have to work for much longer.

It is thought that there are almost 250,000 child slaves in Ghana, and 1.3 million child labourers. Children from Ghana are also sent as slaves to neighbouring countries. Child slavery was outlawed in Ghana seven years ago, but still goes on nonetheless. Since it is now against the law, Challenging Heights can get help from the police to set children free.



▶ thousands of children are brought here every year to work as slaves for fishermen all round the huge lake. The children are sold for US\$15-35, and have to work hard for at least two years. The parents who get the money have often been tricked into thinking the children will go to school and learn a trade.

There are canoes waiting on the beach, and the children are divided up between them. After a six-hour boat trip, James arrives at the fishing village where he is going to live until he is a teenager. The slave owner, who is a fisherman, puts him to work straight away. He has to bail out the canoe and prepare the nets. It's actually not that difficult. He feels calm for the first time in a few days. Things are going to be ok.

But the fear comes back. The very next morning.

That night he sleeps on the floor at the back of a hut, in a row with all the other children that the fisherman has bought.

Wants young slaves

Around three in the morning, while it's still dark, James is woken by a load of water

being thrown in his face. The slave owner wants the children to get up and start work quickly. And a bucket of water certainly gets you on your feet fast.

They head out in the canoes. James takes care of the nets that he prepared yesterday. But today it's not as easy, and the net gets tangled up. When the fisherman catches sight of it, he lifts the heavy wooden paddle and

smacks James on the head, and everything turns black.

From now on, he has to be ready for a beating at any time, and for any reason. Sometimes hard blows with the paddle, sometimes smacks and kicks. The fisherman throws him in the water, withholds his food, and insults him constantly. Says that he's no good at anything, or that he doesn't deserve any food. It might be because the

net is tangled, because he hasn't caught enough fish, or just because he's said the wrong thing.

Like the time when he tells another boy about when his mother once bought him a football at a market. He gets a slap in the face for that. The slave owner doesn't want the boys to talk about their parents. That makes them even more homesick and makes them want to escape. If the



James almost died when he got caught in the net.



It is almost impossible for slave children to flee, but James decided to succeed.

children forget about their parents, it's much easier for the slave owner to get them to do what he wants. That's why he prefers really young children as slaves. The little ones forget so easily.

Diving danger

But James doesn't forget. Especially not his mother. He thinks about her every day. And he doesn't stop longing for her, although the days

become weeks, months and years.

James becomes quieter and quieter. If you say that you're hungry or tired you get a beating. He realises that it's best not to say anything, and he stops talking.

The working days are long, and they always begin in the middle of the night. He only gets a few hours' sleep at night.

Of all the tasks he has to do, disentangling the nets is the worst. When one gets caught on plants on the bed of the lake, James has to dive through the muddy waters and try to work it loose without being able to see. He has to be careful not to pull the net so hard that it breaks.

Diving terrifies James every time. It's often deep, and you have to hold your breath and try to feel with your hands to find where the net is stuck, and work it loose when all you can see is yellowy-brown sludge. It's easy to panic, and sometimes boys drown. One day James himself has a near-death experience.

He has dived down to disentangle a net that is caught on something deep. Suddenly, he can't move in the water. His legs are caught in the net. He can't breathe

and he uses all his strength to pull himself loose.

Finally he rips the net and uses the last of his strength to swim up to the surface.

As fast as he can. But he comes up under the boat and hits his head on the hull. The next thing he remembers is waking up on the beach, covered in blood, and seeing faces gathered around him.

Growing in pride

He just has to get away! He needs to get home again, at any cost! But there are no roads. Only dense jungle full of dangerous snakes, and on the other side, the huge Lake Volta. He attempts to sneak out at night a few times, to try his luck against the dark jungle, but he has to climb over the sleeping children and they always wake up. The slave owner has taught the youngest children to shout for him if anyone tries to leave the hut. So the youngest children always lie closest to the door. After each failed attempt, James gets a real beating. But as the years go by, James's

The slave owner beat James with a paddle. This happens to many slave children.



strength grows. Eventually he can even get away with saying things like, "I'm so tired today, I'm not going out fishing". Of course, that earns him a beating. But he takes it. He grits his teeth and takes it, because protesting does him good.

When the slave owner's wife shouts at him, telling him he doesn't deserve food, he refuses to eat. Pride and self-esteem become more important than hunger and pain. So many of the boys here have just given up. They just sit there, silent and apathetic, and don't want anything any more. James doesn't want to end up like that. He will manage to escape. And he will get home!

Escape

When James is thirteen, the opportunity arises. A close relative has died, and his mother visits the fishing village. It's the first time James has seen her in seven years. She tries to persuade the slave owner to let James go to the funeral. He refuses. He thinks James would try to escape. And suddenly, James realises that that was his mother's plan all along. She wants him to escape. She pleads with the fisherman, telling him it is so important for James to be there.

Finally, James's mother manages to persuade the slave owner and promises that James will come back as soon as the funeral is over. They

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

Every time James tried to escape from the slave owner he got a thorough beating and was forced out onto the lake to work again.



➔ decide that he will take the boat, and then a bus to the village where the funeral will be held.

James never boards the bus. He finds some men in a truck, driving timber in the direction of his home village. James offers to help them in exchange for some pocket money. They agree. After unloading the timber, they plan to head back to collect another load, but James says he'll wait for them instead. He makes his way to the beach – that way it's easier to find his way home.

After seven years as a fishing slave, James has learned to navigate by the stars. They help him during the dark nights. It takes two days and two nights to get there. But for James, none of this is difficult. He finds wild mango and eats his fill of the rich, juicy fruit. The feeling of freedom carries him mile after mile, with a lightness in his step. Soon he'll be home! But finding his way is tricky – so much has changed in seven years, and there are new roads and houses everywhere. Will anyone recognise him?

Of course they recognise him! Look, here comes Annan's boy! James Kofi! My, how he's grown! People greet him happily.

James is free, and his new life is just beginning. 🌍

James after slavery

Children before

A teenage boy is sitting in the schoolyard with some Primary 1 children. They have their reading books out. It looks like the teenager is helping the little ones with their reading. But it's the opposite. The seven-year-olds are teaching James Kofi Annan to read.

When James had managed to escape and made it home again after seven years, his mother was overjoyed. But his father was not so pleased. He thought James had broken his contract with the slave owner, and he was afraid that that would cause problems for them.

“For over a year he kept telling me to go back,” says James. “But in the end he gave up.”

Small children as teachers

James wanted to learn to read and write. He was thirteen years old, and went round different schools

trying to register. But they all said no.

“They were afraid of me. They saw a cocky teenager with hatred in his eyes, and they thought I'd cause a lot of trouble.”

Eventually there was one school that agreed to accept James. He started in Primary 6.

When children arrive at James's safe home they are often in a bad way. But they soon make friends who they can play with and who share their terrible experiences.



James is out on Lake Volta to set a slave boy free.



money

“I couldn’t read or write though, and I didn’t understand anything in the lessons.”

There was only one solution. To spend breaks and lunchtimes with the little ones, asking for help. And to use their books.

“I had to swallow my pride and let the little children become my teachers.”

James quickly caught up with the students in his class. He graduated from school with top marks and went on to university. He bought an old photocopier and started

making adverts for different companies so that he could afford to study.

Bank manager

After university, James got a job at a large bank.

“Suddenly I had a manager’s job and I was earning lots of money. It was fantastic!”

He was good at his job, and was promoted to a more senior position.

“Life was going well, but every day I thought about the children who were still slaves, suffering as I had done.”

James started to use money

from his salary every month to help a few children from the village to go to school. It started with two children. One year later, 52 children had received help to go to school, and Challenging Heights was born. The bank gave him an award for his work with children, and money towards the project. And he was given an even better management job.

“But not everyone liked my work with children,” says James. “Many slave traders were furious. After all, we were persuading families to demand that their children be returned, and we were teaching children about their rights. The slave traders started spreading rumours that I was using witchcraft. They even threatened my family.”

James resigns

So that he would have time to work with Challenging Heights, James started working part-time at the bank.

“I had had a fantastic career, but suddenly my job at the bank seemed meaningless. I started thinking about dedicating all my time to Challenging Heights. But how would I support my family?”

On his birthday in 2007, James was sitting at his computer at work and started writing his letter of resignation. Just as he finished it, an email arrived.

“It was from the board of the bank. They were offering me the top job, heading up the bank. And there I was, sitting looking at my letter of resignation. I pressed ‘send’ and left the bank for good. 🌐



The children never got enough sleep when they were slaves, but at the safe home they sleep well.



The Challenging Heights boat has carried many slave children to freedom.

When he worked at the bank, James thought about slave children all the time. He founded the organisation Challenging Heights, and built a safe home for liberated slave children.



48 slave children

These 48 children, set free by James and Challenging Heights and now living at their safe home for former slave children, were slaves for between six months and twelve years. Between them, they have lived as slaves for a total of 222 years! But now they are free and dreaming of the future. The most common dreams are to be professional footballers, drivers, teachers or bank managers. James used to be a child slave and then became a bank manager!



Eriel, 14
10 years as a slave
Wants to be a professional footballer



Kwame, 15
8 years as a slave
Wants to be a driver



Kwesi David, 15
7 years as a slave
Wants to be a bank manager



Abene, 7
2 years as a slave
Wants to be a fashion designer



Mabel, 15
9 years as a slave
Wants to be a nurse



Kobena A, 13
4 years as a slave
Wants to be a professional footballer



Peter, 13
5 years as a slave
Wants to be a professional footballer



David, 10
4 years as a slave
Wants to be a taxi driver



John, 13
3 years as a slave
Wants to be a bank manager



Arhinful, 11
2 years as a slave
Wants to be a doctor



Kwamena, 11
5 years as a slave
Wants to be a driver



Daniel, 17
2 years as a slave
Wants to be a professional footballer



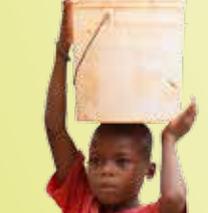
Adjoa, 13
5 years as a slave
Wants to be a bank manager



Justice, 12
1.5 years as a slave
Wants to be a carpenter



Joshua, 10
5 years as a slave
Wants to be a professional footballer



Kofi, 16
9 years as a slave
Wants to be a tailor



Bortsie, 13
4 years as a slave
Wants to be a tailor



Kobina, 15
6 years as a slave
Wants to be a bus driver



Samuel, 16
10 years as a slave
Wants to be a bank manager



Kweku, 14
10 years as a slave
Wants to be a professional footballer



Kobina, 14
8 years as a slave
Wants to be a footballer



Kwame, 15
7 years as a slave
Wants to be a professional footballer



Kojo Joe, 6
1 year as a slave
Wants to be a pilot or a carpenter



Mprem, 12
3 years as a slave
Wants to be a bank manager



's dreams of the future



Ekow, 10
6 years as a slave
Wants to be a taxi driver



Nenyi, 13
7 years as a slave
Wants to be a bus driver



Apreku, 14
10 years as a slave
Wants to be a professional footballer



Sammy, 10
2 years as a slave
Wants to be a doctor



Kow, 14
12 years as a slave
Wants to be a bus driver

Daniel, 10
2 years as a slave
Wants to be a tailor



James, 13
4 years as a slave
Wants to be a footballer



Kojo, 16
1 year as a slave
Wants to be a building contractor



Kwame, 8
1 year as a slave
Wants to be a driver



Donkor, 8
6 months as a slave
Wants to be a professional footballer



Otoo, 13
2 years as a slave
Wants to be a driver



Portia, 15
6 years as a slave
Wants to be a teacher



Kweku, 5
1 year as a slave
Wants to buy a car



Afedzi, 15
1.5 years as a slave
Wants to be a professional footballer



Nkonta, 12
9 years as a slave
Wants to be a taxi driver



Yaw, 14
10 years as a slave
Wants to be a teacher



Charles, 12
6 years as a slave
Wants to be a teacher



Junior, 6
2 years as a slave
Wants to be a professional footballer



Adam, 14
Refugee from Liberia
Wants to be an engineer



Muhammed, 15
Refugee from Liberia
Wants to be a civil engineer



Martha, 14
Several years as a slave
Wants to be a fashion designer



Richard, 14
Different background
Wants to be a bank manager



Esiama, 17
10 years as a slave
Wants to be a professional footballer



Francis, 14
Different background
Wants to be a truck driver



TEXT: EVA-PIA WORLAND PHOTOS: BO ÖHLEN



"All those who use children as slaves should be put in prison, and the whole world should be told about this!" says Kwesi.



The full moon shines brightly over the jungle. Under a bush, two little boys lie side by side. They stay as quiet as they can to avoid being found. Every sound in the night frightens them. The jungle is full of snakes. But they have finally managed to escape!

Kwesi was left to die

The two boys are fishing slaves, far from home. One of them is Kwesi from the village of Senya. He is ten years old, and is meant to be working for the fisherman for three years.

When Kwesi's father died, his mother Yaba didn't have any money for the funeral. A man she knew offered to lend her some money, and she accepted. Soon after the funeral, the man demanded the money back. But Yaba is poor, and has eight children. She tries to support the family by looking for firewood and sticks to sell. She doesn't have any money. So the man threatens to call the police and make sure she ends up in jail. What would happen to

her eight children then? Kwesi hears everything. He knows that other families in the village have received money for sending their boys to Yeti to fish. He offers to go with the man and work off his mother's debt.

"To pay off that amount, you will have to work for three years," says the man.

Almost drowned

The first morning, Kwesi has to carry six paddles down to the shore. He can hardly lift them. He tells the fisherman, who yells:

"Do you think you're here for a holiday?"

That evening, Kwesi doesn't get any food.

The slave owner has bought

lots of children to work for him. Their work begins around eleven o'clock at night. They cast the nets until six in the morning, when they gather in the nets again. Then

the fish have to be gutted, and that takes until the afternoon. There are not many hours left for Kwesi to sleep.

The slave owner gets angry with the children for the

The slave owner scared the children into believing that the people who come to take them away are dangerous, evil people. But Kwesi believes Steven and goes with him.

This picture was taken from Challenging Heights' boat when it was on its way to Kwesi's canoe.



Challenging Heights found Kwesi when he was busy pulling up nets. They realised straight away that he was not well at all.

slightest little mistake. He often uses the heavy paddle to beat them.

Kwesi often has to dive down deep in the water to disentangle nets that get caught on branches. It's dangerous work, because it's easy to get tangled up in the net. And it's impossible to see anything down there.

One day, Kwesi swallows a lot of water just as he is diving down, and he needs to get back up quickly. But one of his legs is stuck in the net. He feels dizzy, but he manages to pull his leg free.

When Kwesi comes up to the surface, the slave owner smacks him in the face with the paddle. He thinks Kwesi was too slow. His upper lip splits in two. That's why Kwesi still has a large bump on the right side of his upper lip.

Whipped with a rope

Now Kwesi is lying awake under the full moon, straining to hear every noise. He has tried to escape before, but has always been found, and beaten.

This is what Kwesi's hands looked like when he was rescued. Being in the water all the time damages your hands and nails. This is what all fishing slaves' hands look like.



Earlier in the day, the slave owner accused Kwesi and another boy of stealing fish. It doesn't matter that they deny it, and swear that they are innocent. The fisherman ties them up by their hands and feet to two trees, and whips them with a thick length of rope. The boys shriek and cry out in pain. Suddenly two strangers appear. One of them holds down the slave owner, and the other unties the boys.

"Run as fast as you can," says one of the men.

The boys run into the jungle while the men hold the fisherman back. They don't know which way to go, but they run for their lives. Sometimes it feels like they're just running round in circles. They come down to the water a few times, but it's too far to swim. They can't see land. When night falls they lie down under a bush and pull their knees up inside their big t-shirts. It's hard to sleep, and their backs are smarting from the whip wounds.

Angry community chief

When the sun rises, the boys head deeper into the jungle. They see lots of snakes, and they move very carefully. When they reach a small stream they can finally have a drink. Whatever direction the boys go in, they always reach the water. Eventually they realise something – they are on an island! There's nowhere to escape to.

They are hungry and tired. They spend another night in the light of the moon, hardly sleeping at all. The next day

they wander aimlessly, their stomachs crying out for food. The boys find a small pineapple plantation in a glade, and eat their fill of the fruit.

Suddenly a man pops up out of nowhere. The owner of the pineapples! But instead of shouting at them or beating



This picture was taken when Challenging Heights came to rescue Kwesi. He was thin and exhausted then.



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

them, he looks at the welts on their backs and calls for the community chief. The community chief is furious, and takes both the boys back to the slave owner. He shouts at him and promises to report him to the police if he ever does anything like this again.

Trees save Kwesi

From that day on, the fisherman actually does become a bit kinder. He doesn't beat Kwesi again. But the fisherman's grown-up sons are not kind at all. Sometimes Kwesi

goes out fishing with them. When they need to go to the toilet, they use the lake. One day when Kwesi is out with the slave owner's sons, one of them squats over the rail and does what he has to do. Then he orders Kwesi to dive in right there. Kwesi refuses. So he pushes Kwesi in.

"We'll say that you ran away and that we couldn't find you," they say, disappearing with the boat.

Kwesi is alone in the water, in the middle of the huge lake, several miles from land.

There are large dead forests under the surface, and here and there bare treetops reach up out of the water. Kwesi swims to the closest tree. He can hang on a branch and rest until he has the strength to carry on. Then he aims for the next one and swims on.

By swimming from tree to tree and resting in between, Kwesi finally manages to reach an island, where he collapses on the hot sand. Later the community chief finds him, and takes him in a boat to the slave owner's house.

"To be forgiven for what you have done to this boy, you must sacrifice a sheep," says the community chief. And the fisherman actually does sacrifice a whole sheep.



On his way to freedom. Kwesi with his rescuers from Challenging Heights.



Finally back home with his mum Yaba.

"I didn't know where they had taken Kwesi or how terrible life was for him. He could have died! I'm so happy that he's home again now and going to school."



Kwesi likes dancing.



Kwesi set free

Kwesi has now been a slave for one year and eight months. The time goes so slowly. He has one year and four months left.

One day, a motorboat draws up beside Kwesi's canoe. A woman and a man start to talk to him. They say that their names are Linda and Steven. They ask lots of questions. His name, where he comes from, his mother's name, and the name of the slave owner he works for. Kwesi doesn't understand what they want, but he answers all the questions.

Linda and Steven come from James's organisation, Challenging Heights, and have rescued children from

here before. They start their boat and Kwesi watches them going ashore and heading for the slave owner's house.

The slave owner has warned the children many times:

"Evil people may come in a boat and try to take you with them. Don't trust them. It is incredibly dangerous to go with them! Their boat will sink. They are evil people who want to harm you. Never trust them! Run and hide if you see them coming."

The woman and man return in their boat. They tell Kwesi that he is free. That he can go with them to a safe home where he will be taken care of and won't have to be a slave any more. Kwesi doesn't

know what to believe. He's uncertain. But then Steven mentions the name of a teacher that Kwesi really liked at school, before he became a slave. Then Kwesi realises that they must have met his mother, and he decides to go with them.

Finally home

Linda and Steven have collected more children, and there is a bus waiting. The safe home is high up on a hill with a view out over villages and jungle, and there are lots of other children there. They are playing football and volleyball. Kwesi loves playing football.

They are given food several times a day. Like all the other

children, Kwesi is too thin and needs to put on weight. He can start back at school and catch up on the things he's missed. And he feels safe. Now Kwesi can begin to play and laugh again.

Kwesi stays at the safe house for almost a year, until he is healthy and strong and his self-esteem is restored. He has lots of scars on his body and a large bump on his lip from when the slave owner split it with the paddle. But now he's back home with his mother, and in Primary 6 at an ordinary school. His favourite subject is maths and he wants to be a bank manager. ☹



"When Kwesi and I play football on the same team we're unbeatable!" says Kwesi's friend Daniel. "Kwesi usually helps me with maths. He's really good at it."



If there was a fire and Kwesi could only rescue one thing, he would take the chest full of his father's clothes.



James was a slave and became a bank manager. Kwesi wants to do the same.



The village where Esiama was held as a slave for ten years.



Mission:

Save Esiama!

The phone rings. A grandfather is worried about his two grandchildren. They have been sold to a Lake Volta fisherman. He asks for help. "Get them out of there. This is not good."

Steven and David from Challenging Heights start planning a rescue mission straight away. And they're going to look for Esiama too – a boy who has been a slave for over ten years. They've heard he's in the area.

The bus to Yeti, one of the villages by Lake Volta, takes eleven hours. Steven and David arrive late at night and check in at a basic hotel. In the morning, the Challenging Heights boat is at the shore and ready for action.

The lake is full of canoes and boats. There are young children in most of them, paddling or pulling up nets.

Steven is the rescue mission leader, and he knows how important it is to be careful. The slave owners often get very aggressive when the team appear, and there can be

threats and arguments. Half of the rescue attempts are not successful.

Fishing for information

They know the name of the fisherman who has bought the two brothers, but they don't know exactly where he lives.

After a couple of hours on the lake, the Challenging Heights boat slows down and approaches a canoe full of fishermen and children.

"Do you have any fish?" asks Steven. They do. He buys a few fish and says that they're on their way to visit the slave

owner, and wonders if they know where he lives.

They know roughly, but not exactly.

Steven thanks them and the boat moves on. They approach some more children and fishermen in another canoe.

"Do you have any fish?" Yes they do. Steven buys a couple more fish. Now he gets more detailed information on where the slave owner lives,



The slave owner's wife says she doesn't know the two brothers.



Esiama on the bus, on the way to the safe home.

talk to him first to explain why they have come to the village.

The community chief is friendly and leads the way between the huts to the fisherman's home. He has three small red clay houses, and a small patio with a roof made of rushes to provide shade.

The slave owner is out fishing, but his wife is at home.

Steven explains who they are and that they are looking for the two brothers.

"They are not here," she says. She doesn't know them.

"The children's grandfather says that you bought them."

"That's not true."

The woman gets angry and raises her voice.

"I'm going to tear strips off whoever told you that!"

We'll be back

Steven phones the chief of the village where the children's grandfather lives. Usually only the community chief has a telephone. It takes a few minutes.

"I know that the children are there!" says their grandfather. "She's lying!"

Steven explains calmly to the woman that if she is lying about the boys, they will come back with the police. Then the slave owner will have to pay lots of money to the boys' family to make up for their suffering.

The wife is angry, and she won't give in.

The slave owners almost always deny everything at first. Sometimes they also tell the children to run and hide when Steven and the team come. They say that the team are dangerous. That they will take the children to a dangerous place, that their boat will go under, or that the children will be sold for

and the boat heads in that direction.

After a mile or two, they stop at another canoe. Now Steven gives away all the fish. He only bought them to start a conversation, so he could ask for directions.

Slave owner's wife denies everything

They go ashore at an island and ask for the community chief. They always have to



➔ medical testing. Sometimes the slave owners sell the children on to someone else. “There is nothing more we can do just now,” says Steven. “We’ll have to come back again.” The boat heads back out onto the lake.

No Esiama here

The next task is to look for Esiama – a boy of 17 who has been a slave for ten years. They know the name of the slave owner and they’re fairly sure of which village he lives in. There are lots of canoes on the beach. They ask a boy about the slave owner and about Esiama.

“Of course, he’s my dad. He’s at home right now and Esiama is here too.”

Great! Now Steven knows. They have never been here before and they get a shock as they approach the huts. There are children everywhere. Several hundred of them. They can’t all be the villagers’ own children. They sit down on some benches outside the community chief’s house. After a while, three men emerge representing the village, and the play-acting begins.

Steven says the name of the slave owner they want to see.

“There is nobody of that name here,” they say.

Steven explains that he knows that the man is here and that he is at home right now. There must have been some misunderstanding. The men look at each other, bewildered.

Adults and children flock around the hut, listening with interest. Steven repeats calmly that he knows that the man is here, and he takes out some papers.

The three men ask for a few moments to discuss the matter in private. They disappear round the corner.

There’s Esiama!

A few minutes later the men return and sit down. Now one of them admits that he is the man they are looking

for. Steven explains that they have come to collect Esiama. His mother wants him home.

“I don’t have an Esiama here,” says the man.

Steven looks at his papers and says that he knows Esiama is here, and that he is being collected now.

The atmosphere grows even more tense. More and more people gather around the hut.

Steven explains that either the slave owner can let Esiama go now, or Steven will come back with the police, which will be expensive for the slave owner.

“He’s right there!” shouts someone suddenly. “There is Esiama!”

A tall boy in a blue football shirt flashes past and disappears.

One of the men stands up and throws a shoe at a group of children in the crowd.

“Get out of here!”



Trying to bluff

The men stand up, all shouting over one another. Steven stands up too, but remains calm. The slave owner gives Steven a threatening look.

“I have paid for Esiama to work for me, and the contract hasn’t expired yet,” he shouts. “I’ll do whatever I need to to keep him. How dare his mother send you to get him! If I have to hand him over I’ll make life difficult for her!”

Steven repeats that there are only two choices. Either

“They used to say mean things about my parents, and that I was stupid and no good at anything,” says Esiama.



Finally free.

The team need to get Esiama on board the Challenging Heights boat as quickly as possible. The motor is running so that they can make a speedy departure. The slave owner frightened Esiama by saying that the people collecting him were not going to take him home to his parents at all, but to somewhere very dangerous.

they take Esiama right now, or Steven returns with the police tomorrow.

The group discuss the options between themselves. Someone says that it might be best to let him go. Otherwise there could be big problems for them all.

The slave owner's wife says the team can leave and promises to bring Esiama to them tomorrow.

Steven has heard this before. He knows it's a bluff.

"No," he says, "there are only two options."

"But we'll bring him to you tomorrow!" they shout.

"No. Then I'll have to bring the police instead."

They realise that Steven isn't going to give in.

Quick exit

It only takes a few moments for Esiama to pack up his things. They fit in the bottom of a small rucksack. He looks scared, but he goes with the team.

A big crowd of people follow them down to the boat. The atmosphere is still aggressive and the slave owners are shouting. They need to make a quick getaway before something happens.

The boat driver is ready and the motor is running.

Esiama is on board.

The boat sets off onto the lake at top speed.

Tomorrow, Esiama will start Primary 1. 🌐



Esiama has never attended school before and can't read or write.

"It's good for me to start school. But it's a bit embarrassing to be in a class with such young children."



There were many new friends waiting at Challenging Heights' safe home for children who have been slaves. It took a few days for Esiama to feel safe. But soon he was in good spirits and playing football with the other boys.

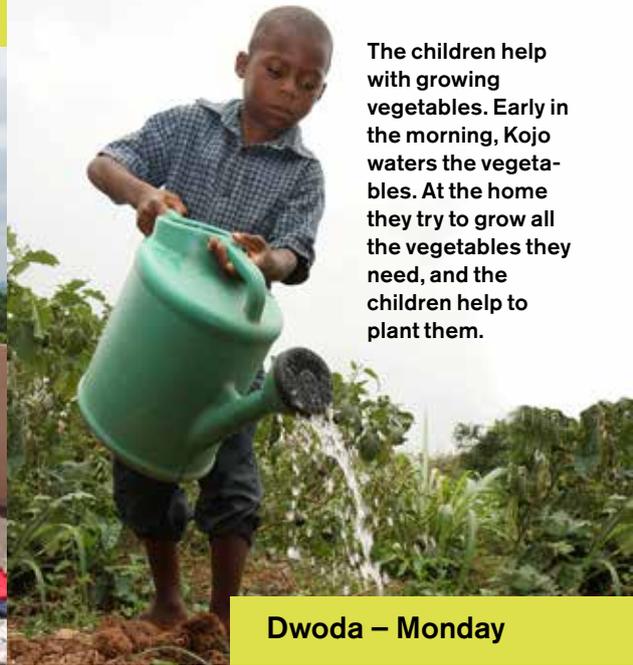
The Challenging Heights boat sets off from the shore, on a mission to rescue Esiama.



Kwesida – Sunday

The children pray for their families and for their futures.

Sunday is the big laundry day.



The children help with growing vegetables. Early in the morning, Kojo waters the vegetables. At the home they try to grow all the vegetables they need, and the children help to plant them.

Dwoda – Monday

All those who need it have their heads shaved.



A week in the life of a

Benada – Tuesday



Most of the children have never attended school. It's fun to go to school!

Today's food is a favourite for lots of people – kenkey and peanut sauce. Kenkey is a thick dough made with cornmeal.



While they were slaves, the children who now live at the safe home had to work hard and got very little sleep. Every day was the same. But at Challenging Heights, the week is filled with fun things.

Wukuda – Wednesday



Many of the children need new shoes. They draw round their feet to make sure the new shoes are the right size.

Painting is good for the children. Kojo proudly shows off his aeroplane.





Yawda – Thursday

When the children were slaves, boats were not a fun thing. But now they play with boats that they have made themselves.



Every day ends with bathing.



freed slave



Fida – Friday

Windows kept getting broken, so the school put an end to games of football in the schoolyard – games with a real ball, that is. Now the boys have made their own ball from plastic bags and string. It doesn't break any windows!



Memenda – Saturday



Today there's a goodbye party for all the children who are going home to their parents.

Kweku is sad to say goodbye to friends who are going home.



Not everyone is happy to have to leave friends behind.



Hi in Ghana

This is how friends greet each other in Ghana:

1. Shake hands

3. Grab your friend's fingers

5. Pull your hand away quickly to make a 'click' sound.

2. Grab hands again

4. Hold on tight to your friend's middle finger.

Three freed brothers

BROTHERS Kweku, 5, Kojo, 6, and Kwame, 8, were taken by a slave owner when their mother couldn't afford to pay back the money she had borrowed for their father's funeral. After one year as slaves, the brothers were freed by Challenging Heights.

"When they came to collect us, the slave owner said he was going to make us into medicine. We were terrified," says Kwame.

"I was homesick the whole time and I cried every day," says Kojo.

Kojo cried with fear at the slave owner's house.

The three liberated slave brothers Kweku, Kojo and Kwame are happy at Challenging Heights' safe home.



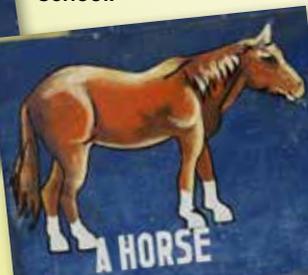
The middle brother Kojo and another slave boy are rescued with help from the police.

Here is Kojo in a life vest on Challenging Heights' boat, after being set free.

English lesson on the walls at James and Challenging Heights' school.



A BICYCLE



A HORSE



A FLAG



A PIG



A COMPUTER

Children have stopped talking



“WHEN THE CHILDREN are freed from slavery they come here to stay first, from four months up to one year. The children are often traumatised when they arrive,” explains Linda Osabutey. She is the director of the safe home.

Being ‘traumatised’ is when you have been through a terrible experience that has damaged you.

“The children are scared and insecure. They don’t want to make eye contact and they find it hard to sleep. Sometimes they have stopped talking altogether. We have had children here who haven’t started talking until they’ve been here several

months. Some of them don’t even know their own names, or their parents’ names.”

Linda explains that sometimes the children have been slaves for so long that their parents don’t recognise them any more, and the children don’t recognise their parents either.

At the safe house, the chil-



dren are given medical examinations and they receive help to get their inner strength back.

“They’ve had so many beatings and scoldings that they don’t have any self-esteem left,” says Linda. “The children get lots of help, including art therapy, where they can paint, draw and create. That helps them to get stronger.

“A simple thing like being

“When the children arrive they are often scared, and some of them have stopped talking altogether,” says Linda, the director. She is holding the two youngest children – Kweku, 5, and Junior, 6.

able to write your name gives you a real boost. And their parents are proud and understand that school is important. Many children have never felt loved. Here they get to be children. Maybe for the first time in their lives. We give them as much care and love as we can, until they are strong enough to go home,” says Linda.

For the whole of the first year after the children have moved back home, Challenging Heights staff visit them and their parents once a week. They want to make sure that the children are being treated well and going to school. After the first year, they visit once every two weeks.

Slave round the clock

MABEL IS 15 YEARS OLD. Two years ago her mother died. Her father had left the family long before that. Mabel and her siblings went to live with relatives.

To pay their way, Mabel was forced to work hard. At night she went out fishing. In the morning she collected wood and helped to cook the ‘kenkey’ maize porridge. Then she made lunch for everyone on the boats. And after that it was time to start preparing the dinner.

“I hardly slept at all,” says Mabel. “Every evening I hoped that there would be a

storm, so I wouldn’t have to go out on the lake.”

She has ugly scars on her back, from being beaten with a paddle.

Her relatives had children of their own who were allowed to go to school, but Mabel and her siblings were not. One day, Steven and Linda from Challenging Heights came to visit. They told Mabel’s relatives that the law states that children have to go to school, and that they wanted to take Mabel and her siblings with them.

“They refused to let us go. So Steven and Linda came back with the police to get us.”

Mabel is delighted to be able to live in the safe house and go to school there.

“If I was President of Ghana I would make sure people knew that if you buy slaves you can end up in jail.”



What would you be called in Ghana?

When James uses his middle name, Kofi, everyone knows that he was born on a Friday. In Ghana, children are named after the day of the week they are born. People used to think that the day of the week determined what kind of person you were. Apart from their day name, the children also have several other names. What would you be called if you had been born in Ghana?

DAY	GIRL	BOY
Monday	Adwoa, Adjoa	Kojo, Kwadwo
Tuesday	Abena, Araba	Kobena, Kwabina
Wednesday	Akua, Ekua,	Kweku, Kwaku
Thursday	Aba, Yaa	Yaw, Kwao
Friday	Afua, Efua	Kofi, Yoofi
Saturday	Ama, Awo	Kwame, Kwamena
Sunday	Akosua, Esi	Kwesi, Kwasi



A week in a row! From left to right, these friends are sitting in order of the day they were born. From the left: Jessica Adjoa (Monday), Arhinful Kwabina (Tuesday), Maagew Kwaku (Wednesday), Daniel Yaw (Thursday), Afedzie Kofi (Friday), Mabel Ama (Saturday) and Donkor Kwesi (Sunday).



SOMPOP JANTRAKA

CHILD RIGHTS HERO NOMINEE PAGES 70–89

WHY HAS SOMPOP BEEN NOMINATED?

Sompop Jantraka has been nominated for the 2013 World's Children's Prize for his almost 25-year struggle against trafficking and exploitation of children in the sex industry and other harmful forced labour.

SOMPOP grew up in poverty and started working at the age of six. His organisation DEPDC/GMS (Development Education Programme for Daughters and Communities/ Greater Mekong Sub-Region) has given thousands of poor children from throughout the Mekong Region – Thailand, Laos, Burma, Cambodia, Vietnam and China – protection and education. Many of these children belong to indigenous ethnic groups who are treated badly in their home countries and live in dire poverty. Often these children are not registered at birth, so they don't have citizenship and often cannot attend school as a result. Sompop's work has earned him many enemies, but despite death threats he has managed to build up a school and vocational training centre, two safe homes for particularly vulnerable children, a 24-hour crisis phonenumber, and a radio and TV station run by young people. Sompop saves children from being lured into the child sex trade by giving them knowledge, safety, self-esteem and faith in the future.



Sompop Jantraka grew up in a poor family in southern Thailand and had to work to survive from the age of six. He would dig ditches and wells, mine for minerals and gather rubbish and bottles on the street to make money for food and school fees. That's why it came naturally to Sompop to begin fighting for children's rights to go to school and against the human trafficking that affects tens of thousands of children in South East Asia every year.

At the age of ten, Sompop goes with his mother to work in a mine. He and his six siblings mine for minerals and sieve and wash gravel and stones. Every time the minerals in a mine run out, the family have to find a new place to work. In some of the places there are no schools. Since Sompop is the oldest son, his parents decide that he should

stay with relatives so that he can study.

Sompop misses his family, but he loves school. His relatives are poor too, so he takes every job he can get. The days are long, but sometimes he can even afford to buy an ice-cream.

When he is twelve, a graveyard in his area is to be moved. It's his job to dig up all the old bones and clothes. Sometimes he finds coins

too! Another job for skinny young boys is digging wells. They are narrow and at least fifteen metres deep. The first time Sompop digs himself down into the darkness, he trembles in fear. He knows that other children have suffocated down wells.

Abandoned by their father

Sompop's father abandons the family, and his mother has to support them on her own. Sompop sends all the money he earns home. He can no longer afford to eat or buy a school uniform. He almost decides to drop out. But then a new teacher comes to his school. Her name is Becky, and she is a volunteer teacher from another country.

Becky is an adult, but she still treats Sompop and the other children with politeness and respect. She doesn't



Sompop worked all the way through school, doing anything from garbage removal to weeding to building dog kennels for his teachers.

Adventure guide in the jungle

While studying at university, Sompop works as an adventure guide for foreign tourists who want to walk in the mountains and jungles of northern Thailand. Some of the tourists work for organisations that fight for the rights of the child and against child labour. Sompop learns a lot from them. He learns even more through meeting the hill tribes in the remote mountain villages. He begins to understand more of their cultures and languages, but he also sees that many of them live in poverty and are treated badly by the authorities. It is worst for the children.

Sompop then starts to work with Michiho Inagaki, a Japanese journalist. Together they interview young girls at brothels in Bangkok. At this

time, nobody wants to talk openly about the growing sex industry in Thailand, even though thousands of tourists come here from all over the world to visit bars and brothels. Sompop is shocked by the girls' stories. They are treated like slaves. If they try to escape they face harsh punishment. Many are from poor mountain villages and have been tricked into coming here with promises of jobs as maids. Others have been sold by their own parents.

Gangs sell children

Sompop travels north to the Golden Triangle, a dangerous area where the mountainous regions of Thailand, Vietnam, Burma and Laos meet. Criminal gangs have been selling drugs and weapons in this area for

beat the children, like other teachers do. Instead she uses games, comic strips, pictures and exciting stories to awaken their interest. Sompop learns English and lots of interesting things about history and culture. This helps him see the world, and his own life, in a different light. Many people are expecting Sompop to quit school soon and start working full time. It's too expensive to go to high school – all the others in his class come from rich families. But when Sompop finishes primary school with top marks, a teacher tells him about a school in another city that has places for poor students – but only if they pass the difficult entrance exams.

Sompop takes the train to the school. He doesn't know anyone in this new city, so for the first few nights he sleeps on the streets. Everything is feeling hopeless when suddenly a boy his age pops up and asks:

“What are you doing here?”

“Looking for a place to stay.”

“Come stay with me!”

Sompop follows the boy to a ramshackle old building behind the temple. They enter, and the first thing that

hits them is a horrific stench. Once Sompop's eyes have grown used to the darkness, he sees piles of dead bodies, coffins and old clothes all over the floor and stacked right up to the ceiling. Still, Sompop is glad to have found somewhere to sleep. For two weeks, the boys study together. Then Sompop passes the entrance exams and gets a place in the school dormitory.



Sompop and his organisation work to prevent trafficking and protect children from the mountain regions of Thailand, Burma, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and the Yunnan province of China. This is called the Mekong Region, and there are many dangerous gangs here who trade in drugs, weapons and people across these borders.



almost a hundred years. These gangs have now started buying and selling children and women too. The centre of the trafficking industry in this area is in the small town of Mae Sai, by the border with Burma.

When Sompop comes here for the first time, in 1989, there are almost 60 brothels in this small town. The girls there are abused and made ready to live their lives as brothel slaves. They are told never to say where they come from, or their real age. They are given fake ID documents and sold to tourist resorts in Thailand and countries like Malaysia, Japan and Singapore.

One evening in Mae Sai, Sompop meets a tourist from Australia who has been com-

ing to Thailand for the last fifteen years to buy sex with young girls. He takes Sompop on a tour of the town. The man knows girls at almost every brothel. He jokes with the children, making funny faces and making them laugh. Many of the girls call him 'daddy'! But he exploits many of them, even ten-year-olds. And he's not one bit ashamed.

"They should be in school," says Sompop.

"No," says the man. "They can't go to school because they have no money and nobody wants them."

"Maybe," says Sompop. "But that can be changed!"

Many earn money through the girls

Sompop starts travelling around the hill tribe villages. Wherever he goes he meets people who earn money

through trafficking. Some parents sell their own daughters. Some believe that the girls are going to work at hotels or restaurants while others may know that they will end up in the sex industry. Some people get paid for information on which girls might be for sale. Taxi drivers transport the victims to the border, while law enforcement officials are bribed to turn a blind eye. Even the religious leaders don't protest. Most villages have hardly any girls left over the age of 13.

"What are you doing?!" says Sompop to the villagers in dismay. "Don't you have any children who want to go to school?"

The villagers laugh at Sompop. They think it's good that the children go away to work, and they nod towards a

few teenage girls from the Akha peoples, who have changed from traditional dress to jeans. They are ready to leave the village. Sompop asks the girls: "Do you want to go to school?"

"Yes," replies one of them, "but my mother already accepted some money, so I can't."

Sompop points at some younger girls and asks:

"What about them?"

"They'll go next year," someone explains.

"She has been booked already," says one of the villagers.

Sompop realises that some children need extra protection. For example, children whose parents drink or take drugs. Or who have a parent with HIV or AIDS, or another serious illness, and who need money for medicine.

Mae, 12, from Burma and Julie, 15, from China, live at one of Sompop's safe homes for girls. Neither of them can live with their parents. Mae's mother is dead and her father has had to move hundreds of miles away to find work. Julie's mother is very ill. At Sompop's home in the city of Mae Chan they are protected from the criminal gangs who are on the lookout for vulnerable girls, and they can go to school instead of working.



Earning from children's

EVERY CHILD who is sold and exploited is surrounded by adults earning money from their misery. Sompop calls it a 'bloodsucker cycle' where adults suck every penny they can get out of their children.

- Parents often get an 'advance' on the children's 'wages', which the children need to work to pay off. But high interest levels mean that the debt quickly grows and can never be paid

back. The children become debt slaves.

- Agents, people in the villages, give tip-offs on vulnerable children, and also get paid to turn a blind eye.
- Taxi drivers take the victims to the border, and also get paid to drive customers to brothels and bars.
- Traffickers who are linked to criminal gangs earn money by buying and selling children like commodities.



It is worst for the children who have already been sexually abused, sometimes by their stepfathers. They are seen as damaged goods, and people think that makes them well suited to working as slaves in the sex industry.

“Nobody cares, or takes this problem seriously,” thinks Sompop. “People think they’re ‘only children’. But I’m going to save as many girls as I can. And the only way to do that is to get hold of them before they are sold to the traffickers. After that it’s too late.”

Campaign of persuasion

Sompop finds 35 girls from different villages who are soon to be sent away. He tries to persuade their parents to let them go to school instead, and offers to pay the school fees. He pleads and shouts, nags and asks: “Are you just

going to give up all hope.” The situation becomes like a competition between Sompop and the traffickers.

Finally, Sompop goes home and manages to scrape together the money for school fees and uniforms. When he returns to the villages, half of the girls have disappeared already. Their parents couldn’t wait. But there are 19 girls left. Most of them live far and have trouble getting to and from the school in town every day. Some of the girls need protection from violent stepfathers, drug abuse in the family, or threats from criminal gangs. So Sompop has to arrange school and accommodation for all the girls. He talks with the parents again and says that they must sign a contract, just like the traffickers.



Many of the girls come from Burma (Myanmar).

“I promise to take care of your children as though they were my own daughters, for at least three years. You promise that they will be allowed to finish school. If you break the contract, you have to pay the money back.”

All the parents sign the contract. This is the beginning of Sompop’s own organisation: Daughters Education Program.

Along with a young teacher, Alinda, Sompop establishes a school and a home for the girls, in the town of Mae Sai. Things are tough to begin with, not only because they don’t have enough money. The girls have poor self-esteem and are afraid. Sompop encourages them to learn more about themselves and the world around them. Sometimes he almost weeps

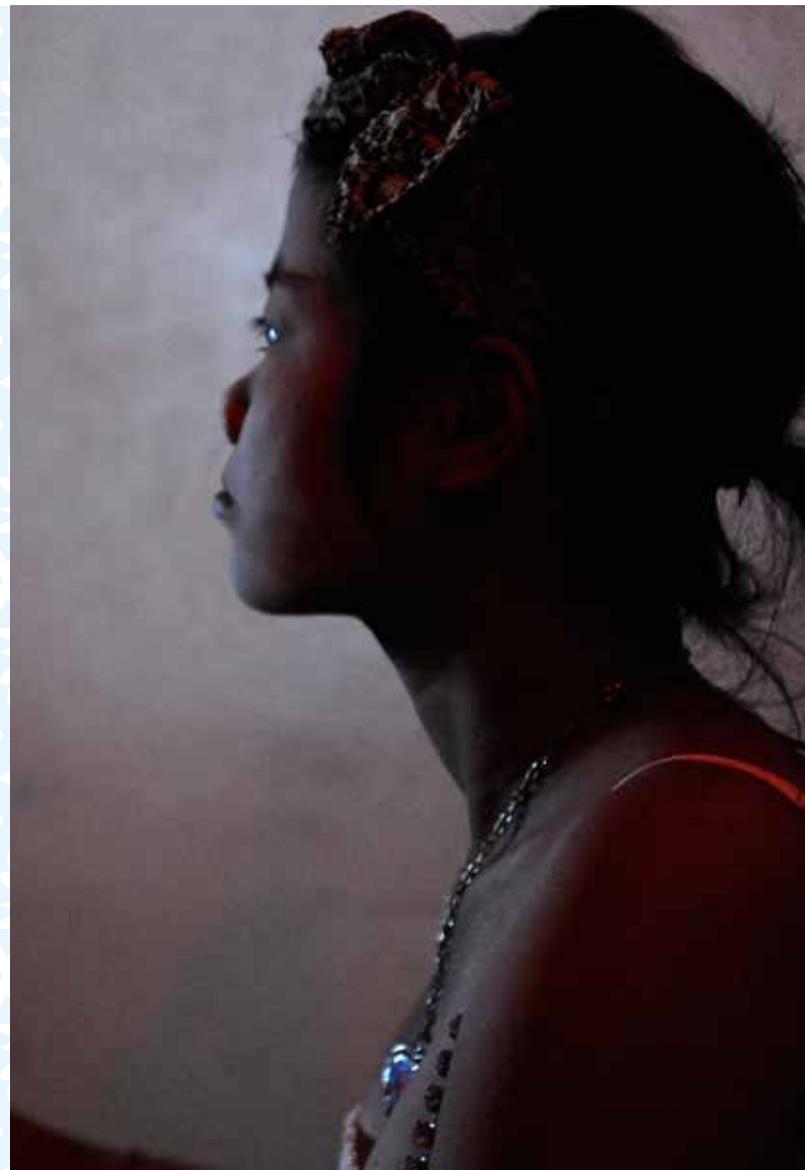


misery

- Pimps and owners of brothels and bars take almost all the money the children earn.
- Some local guides take tourists to bars and brothels and get a percentage of the money they pay. Many global travel companies also earn money from child sex tourism.
- Some banks lend money to brothel owners and trafficking networks and earn interest.
- Some religious leaders do not protest when children are sold and, according to their faith, they don’t turn down gifts of money, even if the money comes from trafficking.
- Some doctors are paid to write false health certificates for the children.
- Some law enforcement officials and civil servants are bribed to turn a blind eye to trafficking.
- Some politicians are linked to the trafficking industry and criminal gangs, for example, treating the criminals well in return for donations to their election campaigns.



A lot of people everywhere make money from child trafficking.





➔ **MOD, 12**, belongs to the Akha hill tribe. Her family fled to Thailand from Burma before she was born. Mod's father died when she was very young, and her mother is too ill to take care of her. In the village where Mod grew up with her grandmother, many people drink too much. Arguments and fights often break out in the evenings. Girls of Mod's age, from poor families, need to be protected from the traffickers, otherwise they are at risk of being sold and exploited, sometimes in the sex industry. That's why Mod now lives at Sompop's safe home for girls, near the border with Laos. Her grandmother misses her, but she knows that Mod has a chance of a better future if she gets an education.

for them. He wants to shake them and shout: "Wake up! Get moving, speak up, say what you think, stand up for yourselves!"

This is when Sompop decides that his school has to be different.

"Ordinary schools might be fine for children who have a good life already," he says to Alinda, the teacher. "But our children need more. They have to learn to read, write and count, but more than anything they need skills and knowledge that will help them through life. They're safe here at school but they can't stay here for ever. That's why we will teach them about trafficking, and the rights of the child, and about their own culture. Then they'll be able to protect themselves."

"We're going to kill you!"

Sompop begins to speak openly about the need to end trafficking, for example, in newspapers and with politicians. Before long he has made some powerful enemies among the people who earn a lot of money through human trafficking. The telephone

rings in the middle of the night and threatening voices hiss: "Leave town, or we'll kill you" and "We're going to burn your school to the ground". Sompop is not afraid for his own safety, but he's worried about his wife and two young children. So for almost ten years, he doesn't dare to live with his family, out of fear that they might be attacked. He meets

up with them in secret, in another town.

Law enforcement individuals visit Sompop several times. They are angry, and they say that he is destroying Thailand's reputation. He has to stop saying that children are sold as slaves and forced to work. He must not criticise the police, the army or the politicians. But Sompop will not be silenced:



Spirit house gives protection

Outside Sompop's schools and safe houses in northern Thailand there are miniature houses called 'spirit houses'. These exist all over Thailand, for spirits that are said to guard everything from homes and schools to paddy fields, factories, football pitches and temples. Every day, people light incense and leave fruit, flowers, soft drinks and sweets beside the houses, for the wellbeing of the spirits.



Sompop uses his knowledge and his sense of humour to help children to believe in themselves and become the leaders of the future.

“We can’t just sweep this problem under the carpet. This is reality!”

The fight continues

Today, almost 25 years have passed since Sompop began his work. The first 19 ‘daughters’ are adults and many of them now work with Sompop as leaders and teachers. Other ‘daughters’ have founded their

own projects, forming part of Sompop’s large network, and are fighting trafficking throughout the Mekong Region. Together, Sompop and his young students have built up a movement that has given protection and education to thousands of poor children. But much remains to be done. Every year, tens of thousands of children

still become victims of trafficking.

“We’ll never give up. It pains me to see girls locked up and abused in the brothels. With every child we save, we make the future a little better,” says Sompop. 🌐

How Sompop and his organisation work

Here are some of the things Sompop and DEPDC/GMS run:

- A school for hundreds of poor children who would otherwise be forced to work and would be at risk of being sold to traffickers. As well as ordinary school subjects, they are taught useful life skills.
- Safe homes for children who are unable to live with their families because of the risk of being sold or exploited, or who have been orphaned or abandoned.
- Leadership training for poor children and young people from the hill tribe groups.
- A radio and TV station where children can learn to use the media to make their voices heard, and raise awareness of trafficking and the rights of the child, in the native languages of the mountain peoples.
- An open evening school for older youth, parents and monks in the border area between Thailand and Burma.
- Schools and organic agriculture projects in the poor mountain villages.
- Campaigning to influence legislation and attitudes to children and trafficking.

Colour instead of uniform!

In Thailand, almost all school children wear school uniforms and even have a particular school hairstyle (short for boys, mid-length for girls!) but Sompop wants his school to be a place of freedom. The children are allowed to dress however they want, but just for fun, the school has its own colour scheme that the children can follow if they want!



Susanae, 12, crosses the border from her homeland, Burma, to Thailand every day. She and other poor Burmese children receive free education at Sompop's school. This also protects them from human trafficking and child labour.

Susanae



Child rights radio!

SUSANAE AND HER FRIEND JAN KAM are about to broadcast their first radio program on the school radio station: Child Voice Radio! There is a lot to keep track of. "The hardest thing is changing between talking and music, putting the volume of one up while turning the other down!"

Sompop believes that using the media is a good way for children to make their voices heard. That's why the children learn to make radio and TV programs at school. The TV programs are shown on the school's YouTube channel. Child Voice Radio is broadcast throughout the border area between Burma and Thailand, in the different languages of the hill tribes, six days a week. The students are the DJs and they decide what to talk about. They make programs about everything from children's rights to news and music. Susanae already knows what her next program is going to be about.

"We want to talk about things that happen at school, and about health," says Susanae, who also wants to talk about what life is like for children in her home village.

"If I didn't attend Sompop's school I would have to work. In my village, the rights of the child are not really respected. I wish that my parents didn't work so much, so that we would have time to talk to one another. Sometimes adults are not good at listening to children – they just shout at us instead. Maybe because they're tired."



5.30 a.m.
Wake up in Burma!



08.00 a.m. Cramped but cosy
A rickety old school bus waits near the border for all the children to squeeze in.



09.00 a.m. Language learning
Susanae loves learning new languages like Chinese and English.



06.00 a.m.
Pedal to Thailand
Susanae cycles towards the border, picking up her schoolmates on the way.

07.00 a.m. Cross the border
The children used to have to swim across the river to get to school in secret. But now everyone knows about Sompop and his school. The people at the border trust Susanae to come back to Burma in the afternoon.



11.30 a.m. Lunchtime chat
Susanae tells her big brother Pek what's happening at home. He is doing Sompop's leadership training course for young people, and he lives at the school.



crosses the border to get to school



Midday Rubber band games

Who can jump the highest?
In a game called Yang you push the rubber band down with your feet while it's being held above waist height!



14.00 p.m. Cooking lessons

In the afternoon there are practical lessons where the students learn woodwork, sewing, weaving, computing and cooking. Today Susanae is making a delicious banana dessert!



12.30 p.m. Clean-up time

Susanae and her school friends are helping to keep the schoolyard nice and tidy.



5.30 p.m. Homework!



4.00 p.m. Race against time!

The Burmese children hurry to the border, which closes at six o'clock. Once Susanae arrived too late and had to sleep at school!



9.00 p.m. Good night!

After a long day it's easy to fall asleep beside her little brother, mother and father.



Fanta protected from

Fanta is eight years old when her father disappears. Her mother says that he has a new job in a far away place, but he never sends any money home and it's hard for the family to survive. The traffickers are always searching for poor girls like Fanta. In some villages in her area, there are hardly any girls over the age of 13 left.

It takes time for Fanta to realise that her father really is gone. He hasn't been at home that much recently, because he took a second wife. Fanta belongs to the Hmong people, who have a tradition that men can have several wives. Fanta thinks this is unfair, because women aren't allowed to have several husbands. Her father begins by moving between his two families, but one day he just doesn't come back.

"Why does dad never come home?" asks Fanta.

Her mother replies that he's working far away from home and doesn't have time. But it just doesn't make sense. If he's working, why does he never send any money home? The family hardly have enough money to buy food and all the children have to stop going to school. One day, Fanta's mother says that Fanta and her little brother Sak are going to have to go away.

"You're going to live at a temple where they take good care of orphaned children," she says. She explains that



traffickers



One night fourteen years ago, Fanta was born in the family's house, built from bamboo with a roof of palm leaves. The house only has two tiny rooms, but according to Fanta's mother, her Father still managed to sleep through her birth!



Fanta and her family have hung a fabric amulet above the front door to protect their home against evil spirits!

she can't take care of them any longer. Their older siblings can work, but Fanta is only ten years old and Sak is eight.

"It'll be better for you, you'll be able to go to school there," says their mother when they start to cry.

Overcrowded temple

Fanta and Sak move to the temple, dozens of miles away. They have to squeeze into dormitories with 200 other children who also come from poor Hmong villages. They

are given food and they can go to school, but Fanta is homesick.

"There are too many children and not enough adults, they can't take very good care of us," says Fanta to Sak.

One Saturday morning, Sak and his friends sneak out and run down to the river to play. It's against the rules for the children to go there, because they can't swim. Sak and his friends peel fruit and throw the skin in the water to see whose floats the fastest. Suddenly one boy trips and falls over the edge, down into the swirling waters. Sak jumps forward and grabs his hand, but he is pulled down into the water too. The boys struggle desperately, but they can't stay afloat. When their

friends see them disappear under the surface they run as fast as they can back to the temple.

"Help! They're drowning!"

Fanta rushes to the river with the other children and the monks. She runs along the riverbank, scouring the waters, but it's too late. The only thing she sees is one of Sak's shoes, bobbing on the surface. After many hours of searching, they find the boys. When their bodies are laid out next to one another, Fanta can't believe that Sak

is dead. He looks like he's sleeping.

Helping the spirits

When Fanta comes home with her little brother's body, her mother says she doesn't have to go back to the temple. Fanta is glad about that, despite her grief.

The funeral goes on for three days. Her little brother's body is dressed in the finest Hmong clothes and laid in



Pet beetle

The youngest children in Fanta's village have big beetles as their pets and toys!



➤ a wicker coffin. The villagers sing special songs and play drums. When the coffin is carried to the burial ground, a torchbearer leads the way, so that Sak doesn't get lost on the way to the spirit life.

"Everybody has three spirits," says Fanta's mother. "One is reborn, one guards the body, and one is a spirit that guards our home."

Fanta is certain now, that she'll finally see her father. Surely he will come to her little brother's funeral? But he doesn't turn up. Something really is wrong.

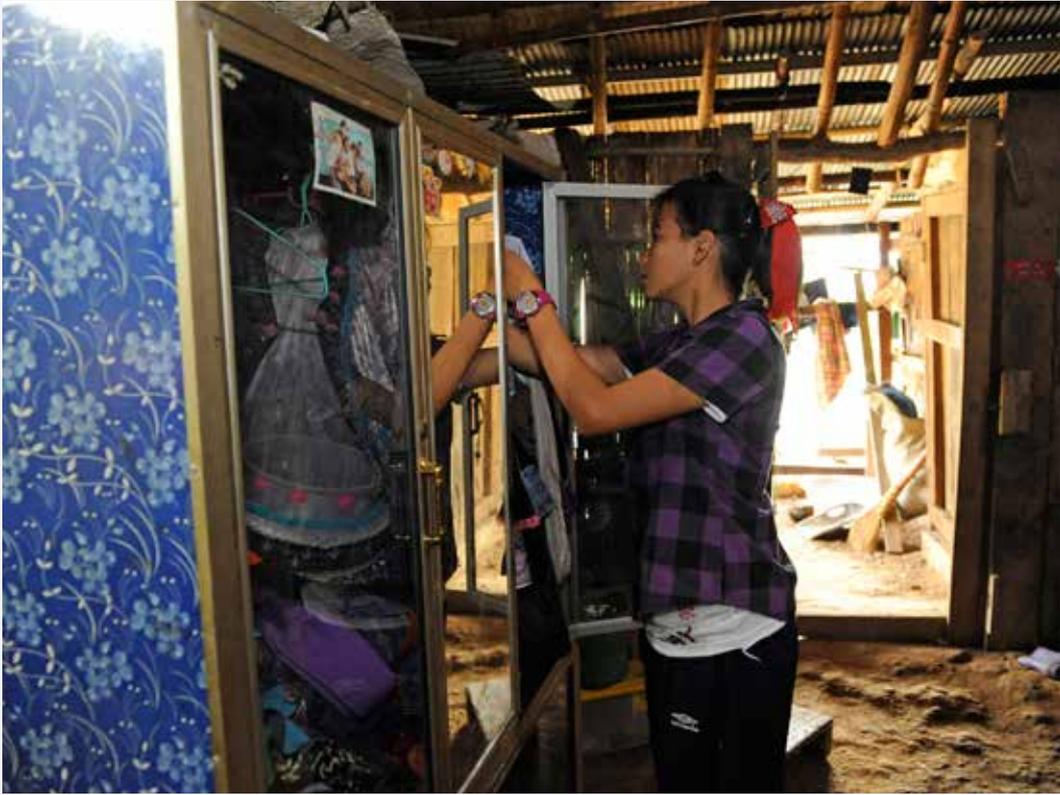
Fanta is allowed to start going to the little village school. Her mother and her older siblings work hard so that they can pay her school fees.

Two more years pass, until one day her mother suddenly says:

"Tomorrow we will see your father. He's in prison."

At first Fanta is speechless. "Why didn't you tell us before?"

"I didn't want to make life harder for you. If you had known that your father was in prison you wouldn't have



Fanta's parents and older siblings come from Laos. Fanta was the first in the family to be born in Thailand.

been able to concentrate on your school work."

Fanta doesn't agree. She is sad that her father is in jail, but even more sad that nobody told her.

Prison visit

Fanta's mother explains that her father has been sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment for drug smuggling. He says he's not guilty, and that may be true. He was arrested by the police at the border between Thailand and Burma, in the

city of Mae Sai. Gangs sometimes take advantage of poor hill tribe people there. Sometimes they conspire to frame people like Fanta's father for crimes that the gangs have committed. The punishments for drug crimes in Thailand are among the toughest in the world.

"If you plead not guilty, you run the risk of being sentenced to death. We couldn't afford a lawyer. When you are poor you have no chance," says Fanta's mother.

It takes two hours to travel to the prison in town. They have to walk the last bit of the journey, past high white walls with barbed wire and broken glass along the top. There is a long queue outside the entrance to the prison and Fanta is surprised to see so



Traditional Hmong clothes.

Fanta's wardrobe

Fanta belongs to the Hmong people, who have lived in the Mekong area for hundreds of years.

"We have our own culture, language and clothes. These days I don't wear Hmong clothes all that often. Most of the young people prefer jeans and casual clothes for everyday wear. But to join in with our festivals you have to wear traditional clothes. My mother made my beautiful clothes. I really like getting dressed up!"



This work hat protects against dirt and dust!



School uniform!



Fanta, 14

Lives: At Sompop's home for girls at the border with Laos.

Likes: Drawing and painting.

Happy when: Playing sport!

Angry when: Children are forced to work.

Favourite food: Pumpkin soup, oranges and strawberries.

Dream: For all children to be able to go to school!

Wants to be: A volleyball star.



Comfortable everyday clothes!

many children. She thought she was the only child with a parent in prison.

Four heavy metal doors clang shut behind Fanta. Her father's name is shouted out, and a guard shows them into a small room. It is divided by a wall with a window in it. Fanta and her father begin to cry as soon as they see one another.

Her father lifts the telephone handset on his side of the glass. First he talks with Fanta's mother, then with her older brother. Fanta thinks about all the things she'll say when it's her turn. But suddenly a voice announces through the speaker: "Five minutes left!". Fanta's father is only allowed a one-hour visit, once a year. When the time runs out, neither Fanta nor her little sister has had a chance to talk to him.

Protection from gangs

Fanta's mother can't read or write, and she remembers how sad she was that she couldn't go to school.

"When I was your age I was already married," she tells Fanta. "We fled from Laos to Thailand before you were born. In the mountains in Laos there were no schools or roads, nothing to eat, and no jobs. The Hmong people were treated badly. We couldn't survive there. Don't be foolish like your mother! Work hard at your studies. If I had the chance I'd start school now, even though I'm old!"

Fanta is in her final year at the little village school. Her family can't afford to send her

When Fanta goes home to visit, she helps her mother in the fields and collects wood. They get up at 4.30 in the morning, eat breakfast and make a packed lunch.

"We leave the house at six o'clock and walk to our field. It takes almost an hour. Then we work all day. But I don't get tired – I'm really strong."



to study in the city, where the schools are expensive. Just when everything seems hopeless, P'tu, a woman from the city, comes to visit the village. She is the principal of a home for girls who need extra protection and support. The home was founded by Sompop Jantraka and his organisation.

Fanta and her mother miss one another a lot. But her mother wants Fanta to go to school and to be protected from the traffickers. That's why Fanta has to live many miles from her home village, at Sompop's safe house.

"Girls like Fanta need to be protected from the traffickers," explains P'tu. "Fanta is just at the age the gangs are looking for. If she stays in the village, there is a high risk that she'll be a victim. In some villages in this area, there are hardly any girls left who are older than 13 or 14."

The last night

Fanta's mother is worried about sending her away. She'll never forget what happened to Fanta's brother Sak. But P'tu lets Fanta visit the





Mushrooms against trafficking

Fanta and the other girls at Sompop's home grow a popular kind of mushroom and sell them. The money goes towards the fight against trafficking!

home and the school several times. She and her mother decide that she will move there.

The night before she leaves, Fanta sleeps beside her mother for the first time since she was little. Her mother holds her tight and whispers in the darkness.

"Be a good girl and work hard at school. Don't fall in with the wrong crowd. And try not to miss me too much. I'm sure rich children are good at lots of things but they don't know anything about how to harvest corn or sow rice. You are strong, you can do anything!"

The next morning, Fanta's mother wakes her extra early so that they can spend as much time together as possible before her departure.

Two girls from other villages are already sitting in Ptu's car when she arrives. As they jolt off down the bumpy dirt track, Fanta waves goodbye to her family and friends.

When they arrive at Sompop's safe home for girls, Fanta unpacks, chooses a bed and learns the names of her new friends. That night, she falls asleep in an instant.

Misses her mother

After a few months, Fanta feels at home at the center in Chiang Khong. All the girls attend a school close to the home, and in the evenings

and weekends they learn about problems that are common in the hill tribe villages. They discuss drugs and alcohol and illnesses like HIV and AIDS. They learn about the rights of the child, as well as practical skills like cooking and sewing. Fanta is happy here, but she misses her family.

"I'm worried about my mother. She needs my help in the rice fields. But I have to go to school and she supports me," says Fanta.

Fanta has seen her father one more time since that first visit. This time he wasn't behind a pane of glass, he was out in the prison yard. They could hug one another and talk.

"I love my father and I miss him, but I wish he had never left us. I think it's wrong that men have more power than women in my village," says Fanta. "Boys and girls should be treated equally. If I get married in the future, I won't agree to my husband having more wives."

Fanta's father still has many years of his prison sentence left.

"I think the punishments here are too harsh," says Fanta. "The families that are left behind out here can't manage. I admire my mother and the way she has taken such good care of us. Without her we wouldn't have survived."



At Sompop's safe house for girls, everyone helps to cook, clean and wash clothes.

"Even boring tasks become fun when we do them together," says Fanta.



The girls help one another with their homework after dinner.

Children who need protection

CHILDREN LIKE FANTA, who belong to the indigenous hill tribes of northern Thailand, Burma, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia and the Yunnan province of China, are often poor and their rights are not respected. There is a high risk that they will be tricked by traffickers and forced to work, for example in the sex industry. Some children need extra protection, such as children like Fanta who have one parent in jail.

At the home there are also girls who have:

- parents and/or siblings who work in the sex industry
- drug or alcohol addiction in the family
- parents with serious illnesses, such as HIV or AIDS
- been subjected to sexual abuse
- fled their homelands because of oppression and/or poverty and do not have a residence permit.



Dangerous area for children!

CHIANG KHONG is beside the border with Laos. More and more traffickers are looking for children in this area, especially since Sompop and others began their successful fight against the criminal gangs near the border with Burma. Sompop has built a safe home in Chiang Khong to protect the most vulnerable children, the ones who are at risk of being sold to traffickers if they stay in their villages.

Sompop's colleagues travel around the villages telling children and their parents about the rights of the child and about what can happen to children if they are sent to big cities and tourist resorts to work.

Fanta is a sport freak!

FANTA LOVES PRETTY MUCH all kinds of sport.

"I want to be a professional athlete when I grow up. My dream would be to play



volleyball for Thailand! I don't think anyone from the Hmong tribe has ever played at such a high level – I might be the first!"

Fanta plays volleyball for her school.

"We compete against other schools and we have won several times. I'm at my happiest when I'm playing some kind of sport. I really love competing and I never give up. I always keep fighting, because I love to win!"

Fanta also loves table ten-

nis, football and most of all wicker ball, or takraw (which means ball in Thai). Takraw is an ancient and very popular Thai sport which is like a mixture of volleyball, football and martial arts, and is played with a rattan ball.





The girls in the village love to play ball games!

Apia, 12

"I often have to take care of my younger brother and do the house-work, because my mother has to work so much."

Likes: Maths and Burmese. It's good to be able to count, for example when you go to the shop!

Loves: Cycling. Especially cycling fast down steep hills.

Happy that: My father has been released from prison and lives with us again.

Wants to be: A singer.

Dream: To be able to go to university. I also want all the children in my village to be able to go to school.



H, 12

"I love my parents, but they are old and sick so we are very poor."

Likes: Studying Burmese, reading books and magazines, writing and playing ball games!

Wants to be: A doctor. I have asthma and my doctor helped me feel better.

Angry because: So many children are not able to go to school. They have to take care of younger siblings or move away to work.

Happy when: My brother comes home so the whole family is together.



Angkana's secret struggle

Angkana was eleven years old the first time she crossed the border from the dictatorship of Burma to attend Sompop's school in Thailand. Now, twelve years later, she is following in Sompop's footsteps and helping Burmese children get an education. But she has to work in secret, and does not want to show her face. Burma can still be a dangerous place to fight for the rights of the child.

"Sompop's school was so different," explains Angkana. "We were taught both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. And I learned how to think freely!"

The poor border areas of Burma are mostly populated by hill tribes.

"We have the lowest level of education in the whole of Burma," says Angkana. "There is no money, and there are far too few teachers."

Girls making a difference

When Angkana was 15 she attended Sompop's first ever leadership training course,



Angkana is following in Sompop's footsteps by working in secret to help the children in Burma's mountain villages. She doesn't want to be recognised and so that's why she doesn't show her face when she's talking to H, Amoko and Apia.

with girls from all over the Mekong Region (Thailand, Burma, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos). They called themselves the Mekong Youth Net.

"We learned about our countries and cultures, about how to interview children and how to set up an organisation. We also studied human trafficking and the rights of the child."

Many of Angkana's friends of the same age had left Burma to work in Thailand.

"When their parents went looking for them, they were gone without a trace. While studying on Sompop's course, I suddenly realised that my friends had probably become victims of trafficking."

Helping Burmese children

Today Angkana herself works in secret to defend children's rights in Burma.

"It can be difficult and dangerous to run an organisation

here, so we have to be extremely careful. I seek out the very poorest children who have a difficult home life. There is a high risk that they will be forced to stop school and start working. Some of their parents are sick or addicted to drugs. I give them money towards school fees and food, and take them to the doctor. I also tell the whole family about the dangers of sending children to work in Thailand."

Angkana gathers information about how life is for children living in the border area, which she gives to Sompop and his organisation, to help them plan their work better.

"I look up to Sompop and the others who were my teachers at his school," says Angkana. 🌍



Apia on her bike.

Amoko, 12

"I have six siblings and our dad has to work really hard for our sakes. My older siblings work too. I'm scared that soon I'll have to stop school to work and take care of my younger siblings."

Likes: Studying Burmese.

Wants to be: A teacher.

Likes: Being with my family and watching TV. One house in our village has a TV and we children usually gather there!

Dream: To travel and maybe move to Rangoon, the capital of Burma. And to build a playground in our village.



H, Apia and Amoko often play clapping games!

Hill tribes' hard life in Burma

For a long time, Burma has been ruled with an iron fist by a military regime from the largest people group in Burma, the Burmese. The regime has persecuted all those in the country who fight for democracy, as well as all those who belong to different ethnic groups. The hill tribes, like the Akha and the Karen, have been treated particularly badly. Children's schools have been shut down, villages have been burnt to the ground, food deliveries have been stopped and the hill tribes have been exploited through forced labour. As a result, many of them have fled to Thailand. Now the situation in Burma has improved a little. Many political prisoners have been released, such as democracy champion and the World's Children's Prize patron, Aung San Suu Kyi. But the hill tribe peoples do not yet dare to believe that their lives could get better.



Mae not allowed to swim for Thailand



Bang! A shot echoes around the tiled walls and the girls dive down into the water from their starting blocks. Mae, 12, is the first to reach the other end. But her joy doesn't last long.

“I love winning. It’s as though all the tiredness just runs off me,” says Mae, pulling off her wet swimming cap. “But afterwards I feel sad.”

Today Mae is competing in the regional championships in northern Thailand. The winners go through to the national youth championships. All of them except Mae.

“I don’t have Thai citizenship, although I’ve lived here my whole life. Whoever comes second will get my place.”

Doesn't exist

Mae belongs to the Akha hill tribe. Her parents fled to Thailand from Burma. They

were poor and couldn’t find jobs. Eventually they started selling drugs to survive, but were caught by the police and sentenced to life in prison. At first Mae lived with her mother in the prison, but after a while she was able to move to Sompop’s home for orphaned and abandoned children.

“I started school and received food, love and care. They became like my new family. Still, it always feels like something is missing when you can’t live with your own parents.”

Water brings health

Mae and the other girls at the

home had had difficult lives, and they often fell ill. Sompop had heard that water could have a healing effect, and took them to a swimming pool in town. But the man at the entrance desk looked irritably at the little girls in their torn clothes.

“They are not allowed in our pool – they look dirty,” he said.

Sompop was furious. He found another swimming pool, but the adults there said mean things too. Some parents didn’t want their children to share a pool with the children from the mountains.

“I’m going to build the best swimming pool in northern

Thailand,” said Sompop to his wife. “And any child who wants to swim in it can do so.”

Sompop used the last of his money to get the swimming pool built. Now the children could swim every day, and it soon became clear that Mae was fast as an arrow in the water.

Mother died

After several years in prison, Mae’s mother fell ill and died.

“My father had his sentence cut. Now he’s working in China,” says Mae “I wish I could live with my dad all the time, but he wants me to be able to go to school. He’s very proud of me.”

When Mae started winning medals, many people were surprised.

How could a hill tribe girl swim faster than the rich children from exclusive private schools?

“That makes me proud! Even if I can’t swim for Thailand I can still swim for the Akha people!”



Sompop often visits the village to talk with children and parents about their crops and their schoolwork.

Sompop’s school for

Among the paddy fields outside the city of Mae Chan in northern Thailand, a whole village has been built by refugees from Burma. These families from the Akha hill tribe have fled poverty and forced labour. Life in Thailand wasn’t easy for them either, before Sompop came to their aid.

“AT THE BEGINNING we weren’t allowed to go to school and we had nothing to eat,” says Boo Su, 10 years old.

Nobody in the village has a Thai residence permit, not even the children who were born here. It’s hard for the villagers to find work. They don’t speak very good Thai and they

don’t have permits to move freely outside the village.

“If we leave the area, we are harassed by the police,” explains Boo Su’s father.

Even so, none of the villagers want to go back to Burma.

“The army forced us to work over 200 days a year for free,” says one of the village

Mae has an ID card that states that she is not a citizen of Thailand.



Apia, 12

Lives: At Sompop's swimming home in Mae Chan.
Happy when: I win!
Sad when: I'm not allowed to compete in the Thai national championships.
Loves: My father, Sompop and my 'family' at the home.
Wants to be: A chef and a professional swimmer.
Dream: To swim in the Olympics. And to fight against trafficking, and for children's rights.



Mae has won lots of trophies and medals.



Mae and her friend Julie share a room at the home.



Akha children

chiefs. "They took our food and livestock, and they beat us if we protested. Some rebel soldiers, who were fighting against the regime, treated us just as badly."

after their crops using traditional Akha methods along with their parents.

Sompop built a school

Sompop heard that the children in the Akha village had no food and no school. He contacted one of his old students, a girl who belongs to the Akha tribe. She and Sompop started a school in the village, and an organic farm. Every family now has a little bit of land, where the children can learn to look



Boo Su, 12, wants to become a doctor or a teacher when she is older.

Hat reveals age!

When an Akha girl becomes a teenager, she swaps her simple child's hat for an adult woman's headdress. It will change throughout her life, as she gradually decorates it with embroidery, beads, tassels, fur, feathers, silver coins and rings. Every headdress is unique, and the heavier it is, the more things it has hanging on it, the older the wearer is!



Boo Su's mother in her traditional Akha clothes.

Adults don't understand young people

"MY MOTHER IS PROUD of me and my education because she can't read or write," says Jan Nuan, 15. "Even so, sometimes she wants me to quit school and start working. That makes me sad. My father wants me to finish school so I can have a better job and life."

Jan Nuan thinks adults don't know enough about trafficking.

"There are gangs that kidnap children and force them to work. I'm worried about my younger sisters. My parents work a lot and sometimes they have to leave us home alone for several days. They say we should lock the doors and not open them for anyone, but it doesn't feel safe."

Jan Nuan's favourite thing is being with friends. She hates it when her parents fight.

"Adults don't understand us young people, and they often just do what they want. Sometimes I cry, alone in my room. But the teachers at Sompop's school are great listeners. There, I've become less shy and better at expressing myself. Sompop teaches us about life, and how to be more independent."

Jan Nuan likes to study!



The young people on Sompop's leadership training course have to practice staring into one another's eyes. It's hard for them not to drop their gaze, as they usually do.

Future leaders!

"Look one another in the eyes! Don't stare at the ground!" Sompop calls out to the young people doing leadership training at his school in Mae Sai. The young people from the mountains are not used to showing confidence. But Sompop says: **"You are the leaders of the future!"**

B-boy is best!

"SOMPPOP IS A GREAT teacher and full of fun. He helps me to think and focus better," says Nut, 15. He has started the school's first b-boy crew!

"I've learned some tricks from older friends and from YouTube. My favourite dance crew is called Jabbawoockeez. They dance like they don't have any bones in their bodies!"

Nut's dream is to travel abroad to dance, but right now that's impossible. He was born to Burmese parents in Thailand and he has no birth certificate.

"I can't even travel outside Mae Sai without a special permit. The police have checkpoints where they



check everyone who is travelling south."

"There are lots of problems with drugs and criminal gangs in Mae Sai," says Nut.

"I often see girls at restaurants in tight clothes and short skirts, and I know they have to take guests to private rooms. I worry about my little sister, and I'm teaching her everything I can about how to protect yourself from trafficking." 🌐

Nut



Jan Hom wants to stop children from being sold



When Jan Hom was eight, a man visited her foster parents' home. He said he would pay them if they let their daughter work at a restaurant in town. They said no.

"I WAS LITTLE and I didn't really understand. Now it makes me scared, thinking about what could have happened. If I had gone with him I probably wouldn't be alive today. So child trafficking is an issue that's close to my heart. I tell everyone I meet about it.

If we raise awareness we can stop more children from being sold and exploited. Many children from Burma are easy targets. They can't read or write and know nothing about their rights. They can't get jobs so they have to take illegal work. My neighbour's daughter travelled to Bangkok 20 years ago and disappeared. They still don't know if she's alive or dead. And I have lots of friends who have disappeared. Only one has come back. She said that in Bangkok she was locked in a room, and then taken to another country with some other girls. She doesn't want to talk about what happened there, but I don't think it was good."

Given away

Jan Hom's father died shortly after she was born in Burma. Her mother married again and had to move to the mountains with her new husband. She couldn't take Jan Hom with her.

"My mother asked our neighbours to bring me up as their own child. They were happy, because they really liked me, and their own daughter had died."

Jan Hom and her foster parents live in a small bamboo house in Mae Sai, which Sompop's organisation helped them to find.

When Jan Hom was twelve, her mother came to visit from Burma for the first time.

"I was so happy. I had never understood why she didn't want me. She said it was difficult to give me up, but that she knew the neighbours loved me a lot and would give me a good home. Mum slept in my bed, and she cried and held me tight all night long." 🌐

Jan Hom says many Thai people are prejudiced against the hill tribes.

"For example, they say that my people, the Tai Yai, are thieves! That makes me feel hurt and angry!"



"I get so engrossed in stories about detectives, vampires or young people's lives!"

"I like Thai, Japanese and Korean pop music!"



"Knowledge can prevent more children from being sold. Many children don't know how to read or write, and don't know anything about their rights," says Jan Hom.

Jan Hom and her foster father in front of the family home.



KIMMIE WEEKS

CHILD RIGHTS HERO NOMINEE PAGES 90-109

WHY HAS KIMMIE BEEN NOMINATED?

Kimmi Weeks has been nominated for the 2013 World's Children's Prize because he has spent over 20 years, since he was ten years old, fighting for the rights of the child, especially for children affected by war.

WHILE FLEEING in wartime Liberia, Kimmie almost died of cholera. There and then he pledged to spend his whole life helping disadvantaged children. Kimmie and his friends founded 'Voice of the Future' and learned about the rights of the child. When Kimmie was 16 they organised a campaign to disarm the child soldiers in the civil war. This contributed to the liberation of 20,000 child soldiers. One year later, Kimmie had to flee. He had revealed that the newly elected President of Liberia, Charles Taylor, was recruiting child soldiers to the Liberian army. The President tried to have Kimmie killed. As a refugee in the USA, Kimmie continued his work for children affected by war, not only in Liberia but also in other countries, primarily Sierra Leone and Uganda. Kimmie and other young people now run an organisation called Youth Action International. YAI helps vulnerable children, providing a home for orphans, rehabilitation of child soldiers, education, health care and more. YAI also lobbies governments and parliaments to promote respect for the rights of the child.



When the war in Liberia begins, Kimmie Weeks is eight years old and flees from his home with his mother. In the refugee camp outside the capital city of Monrovia, Kimmie comes close to dying of cholera after drinking contaminated water. He survives and pledges to spend his whole life helping children who are suffering because of war. He has kept that promise.

“**B**ut woman, your child is dead. He's not breathing any more,” says a man to Kimmie's mother in the refugee camp. He takes the little body from her and carries it away.

Finally, Kimmie's mother gathers the strength to get up and go looking for her son's body. When she finds it among people who have died, she shakes it. Miraculously, Kimmie wakes up.

Twenty years later, Kimmie Weeks is known for his commitment to helping children who have grown up in war zones.



FOTO: CHRIS HONDROS/GETTY IMAGES

One evening, after boys with weapons banged on the door of the home Kimmie shared with his mother, they decided to flee.



War is coming

At the beginning of this story, Kimmie goes to school. He always sits at the front so he can hear the teacher and answer quickly if he is asked a question. He loves learning new things and knows that he is smart. He doesn't care that his classmates tease him, saying that they can't see what the teacher writes on the chalkboard because Kimmie's big ears are in the way.

Rumours begin to spread that rebels have crossed the border. On TV, the President talks about confiscated weapons and images of burnt out villages are shown.

"We have come to free the people of Liberia. It will take three days and there will be no bloodshed," says rebel leader Charles Taylor on the radio.

"I'm afraid," says Kimmie, and his mother tries to comfort him.

But things don't calm down. Quite the opposite happens. Rockets start hitting houses, and gunfire goes on for hours at a time.

Had to flee

Kimmie and his mother spend more and more time hiding on the floor. Then one evening, an explosion shakes the whole house. Shortly afterwards there is banging on the door. Fifty armed men and boys are standing outside. None of them wear uniforms, but they have weapons slung over their shoulders. One of them says:

"We have come to free Liberia. Stay inside!"

As soon as the rebels have gone, Kimmie and his mother sneak out the back door. They follow the flow of people fleeing in silent terror. There are checkpoints everywhere, and at each one someone is beaten or killed.

Kimmie and his mother manage to pass the checkpoints. Sometimes Kimmie's

mother covers his eyes with her hands. They can smell the dead bodies among the gum trees.

They reach a university, which has been transformed into a refugee camp. Kimmie looks around in shock. There are sick children crying, and people with empty looks on their faces, staring into space. The stench makes Kimmie sick. They manage to find an empty bit of floor in one of the buildings, and it becomes their home.

Kimmie and his mother have nothing with them. They have to beg for food from other refugees, and they hunt for edible leaves and roots. The water they manage to get hold of is not clean, but they have no choice but to drink it. That's when Kimmie gets cholera and becomes so ill that people think he's dead.

Wheelbarrow return

When they hear on the radio after many months of war that the country is at peace, Kimmie is still so weak that he is brought home in a wheelbarrow. Their house is empty. Everything they owned has been stolen or destroyed.

As soon as he has his strength back, Kimmie starts helping children affected by the war. He gathers the children in his area and suggests that they tidy up all the debris left by the war. The children make an enthusiastic start and all the people living in the area are delighted.

Their next task is to provide food for the residents of the area. Although the war is

over, it's hard to get hold of food. The UN troops, who are there to keep the peace, distribute food parcels. Kimmie leads a group of children on a walk to their headquarters, several kilometres away, to ask for food parcels to be given out in their area too. Although the soldiers say there are not enough food parcels, Kimmie and other children keep walking there every day to ask. Finally, the people in charge give in. The very next day, they bring supplies to Kimmie's area. Everyone cheers.

Children must be heard!

Every time Kimmie and the other children manage to achieve something, they feel good and it gives them strength to keep going. A UN peacekeeper gives Kimmie a copy of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

"Wow! Do you know what? Us children have rights!" says Kimmie to the other children. "We have to make sure that they are respected here too!"

Together the children start an organisation called 'Voice of the Future', and their slo-

PATRICK ROBERT / CORBIS / SCANPIX



After returning home, Kimmie and a group of children set up the organisation "Voice of the Future". Kimmie suggests that they should focus on stopping children from being used as soldiers.





Many homes were destroyed by the war. One of the first things Kimmie and his friends did was to clear up all the mess from the war.

gan is: ‘Children should be seen and heard!’ They take one article at a time from the Convention on the Rights of the Child. They knock on doors and talk to everyone they meet about the rights of the child. Since no children have ever done anything like this in Liberia, they become famous.

When they come to Article 38 of the Convention, which says that children should not be used as soldiers, Kimmie realises they have an important task ahead of them. All of them saw child soldiers during the war. At the next ‘Voice of the Future’ meeting, Kimmie suggests:

“We have to stop children from being used as soldiers!”

The children agree to demonstrate and try to persuade the rebel leaders to release all child soldiers. They start the ‘Children’s Disarmament Campaign’ with the slogan: ‘We can’t hold pens while our friends hold weapons’.

Disarm the children!

Kimmie and two other boys go off to see the rebels with a cassette player. When they approach a checkpoint, they put their hands up to show that they are unarmed, shouting:

“We want to talk to your commanders.”

The rebels think they are spies and force them onto the

ground. On one occasion the soldiers shoot the ground, right between the children’s feet. The children are so scared that they wet their pants and the rebels laugh scornfully. Sometimes Kimmie and the others are kept locked up for hours. But finally they always get to meet the commander and ask their question:

“Are you planning to disarm all the children in your army?”

All the commanders reply that they will do that, and Kimmie records their promises on the cassette player. The children then go to radio stations and ask them to broadcast the rebel leaders’ promises on the news. Kimmie is interviewed on radio and says:

“To all you children who are soldiers in this war, Voice of the Future says to you: All the promises that you will benefit from the war, and that it will make you rich, are just lies!”

The Children’s Disarma-

ment Campaign is successful, and over 20,000 children are set free.

The President’s child soldiers

By now Kimmie is 15. All their successes motivate the young child rights activists to do even more. People know who they are and what they are fighting for. Children have never before managed to make the people who run the country change their minds.

The country is at peace, and rebel leader Charles Taylor has been elected president, despite the fact that it was him who started the war. Kimmie hears a rumour that the national army has started training children to be soldiers at a military base near the airport. He takes the cassette player and jumps in a taxi.

“Can you drive me to the military base and wait outside please,” he asks the driver. When they arrive, Kimmie says to the guard:

“I have business here,” and



PATRICK ROBERT / CORBIS / GEMPIX

Disarm the children!

Kimmie and the other children in “Voice of the Future” got the commanders of the various armies to promise to disarm all their child soldiers. On the radio, Kimmie said to the child soldiers: “All the promises about you benefitting from the war are just lies!”





Kimmie set up the organisation Youth Action International when he was a refugee in the United States. He returned to Liberia and can work there together with YAI to fulfil his promise to help children affected by war.

the guard lets him in. Soon he sees the training field. 500 boys are marching back and forth, carrying fake wooden rifles. They lift their wooden rifles and pretend to shoot. Kimmie goes straight to the soldier who is leading the training and says:

“Good afternoon sir! My name is Kimmie Weeks. Could I talk to some of the children here?”

“Sure, talk away. We’ll take a break,” says the soldier and walks over to his office. Kimmie starts recording.

“I come from Grand Bassa,” says the first boy. “They came to get me, and said that I would get good training and I could help Liberia wage war in Sierra Leone.” The others tell similar stories.

Once Kimmie has talked to twenty of the boys he hears someone shouting:

“Pikin (little boy), come here! You have no right to be

here! Come heeere!”

But Kimmie doesn’t turn round. He runs as fast as he can through the gate to the waiting taxi and tells the driver to step on it. Kimmie realises that his recordings are going to be difficult for President Taylor to explain away.

President’s death threats

Kimmie goes to the Minister for Justice and says:

“What are you doing, training 500 children to be soldiers?”

The Minister replies:

“That’s a question for the President!”

Kimmie gets to meet President Charles Taylor at his office. Kimmie goes alone, because nobody else in the child rights group dares

go with him. They know that people who have criticised President Taylor have disappeared and been found dead.

Kimmie steps through the door and finds himself face to face with Charles Taylor. He is overcome with fear, but he doesn’t show it. He says that he has seen child soldiers in training and that this has to stop, in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. President Taylor flies into a rage and leans towards Kimmie shouting:

“I’ll tell you something my young friend, if you do anything about this, you are at risk of disappearing, do you understand?”

“I understand, Mr President,” replies Kimmie and hurries out. He can’t help

checking to see if he’s being followed. But whatever the President said, this news has to get out.

Passport for escape

The next day, Kimmie organises a press conference. He talks about what he has seen and recorded at the military base. The story makes headline news in all the newspapers and on radio and TV. The President denies that the army is training children, and says that it is Kimmie who is a ‘threat to Liberia’s security’.

The President’s security service watches Kimmie. Soldiers pop up outside his office. They sneak around outside his mother’s house. They come to school. Kimmie realises he is in danger. He no longer dares to sleep in the same place for more than one night. Then Kimmie gets a letter from the

Kimmie as a hero on crisp packets in Liberia.





Ballots – not bullets.

➔ US Embassy, asking him to attend a meeting.
 “We want to help you leave Liberia,” says the ambassador. “It’s too dangerous for you here. President Taylor has already interrogated your friends, and people are looking out for you at the airport and the harbour.”
 “All this for little old me!” thinks Kimmie in amazement. “All I wanted to do was help the children in Liberia!”
 The next day Kimmie

leaves, disguised as a traditional dancer, with a dance troupe that is going on tour. The ambassador has given him a false passport. They let him off at the border and the border guard says:
 “Welcome to Côte d’Ivoire!”
 Kimmie can relax. He is safe.

Doesn’t forget his promise
 Six months later, Kimmie is able to fly to the USA. He is

alone, and far away from his beloved mother. At first he flips burgers in Delaware. But soon he manages to get into a good school where he gets top grades, and can go on to university.

But Kimmie hasn’t forgotten his promise to help children affected by war. Along with a few other students, he starts Youth Action International (YAI). This is an organisation where young people support children and young people affected by war, not only in Liberia but in other countries too.

Five years later, Kimmie is able to return to Liberia for the first time. The war is over and Charles Taylor has fled to Nigeria.

Kimmie’s mother doesn’t

know he’s coming home. When he steps out of the car and walks up to their house, the neighbours come running, shouting:

“Kimmie’s back!”

His mother comes out of the house to see what all the fuss is about. They hug each other and cry tears of joy.

Most people would have chosen to stay in the US and live a more comfortable life there, but Kimmie came home.

“Liberia is my home,” he says. “I was almost one of the children who died in the war. Don’t forget that every child who dies because of war or famine could have been a person who made the world a better place.” 🌍



KIMMIE’S ADVICE TO YOUNG PEOPLE:

Be like an ant!

KIMMIE IS INVITED to speak at events all over the world. Every year, over 40,000 young people get to hear him. The money he earns is used to cover the costs of projects in Liberia and the other African countries where YAI works. His advice to young people is:

1. Find out what you want to get involved in.
2. Find a link between you and the thing you want to support.
3. Don’t get involved in something just because other people are. Think for yourself!

4. Fantasise about what you want to do in life, for yourself and for others, and work hard to achieve it.

Kimmie often says:

“When war breaks out, it’s as though life presses the pause button. You can’t live for real. Life stands still because of fear.”

“Be like an ant, not like a grasshopper! Ants build, grasshoppers eat up the things other people have planted.”

“We want to build a bridge from ‘I can’t’ to ‘I can’. Everything is possible.”

Liberia is all we have. Let’s say no to violence.



Clean water for all!

Kimmie almost died because of dirty water. That's why he wants to make sure all children get clean water to drink:

"Before the war we had water for our houses in Monrovia. But the rebel soldiers destroyed all the water pipes." Everyone in Monrovia still has to buy water for drinking, washing, and doing laundry and dishes.

WATER DELIVERER Ojuku Weah takes orders and delivers containers of water every day.

"One family usually buys 10 gallons (38 litres) a day," he says, loading up his wheelbarrow with containers. "But this water is only for showering and washing clothes. You shouldn't drink it, it can make you ill."

38 litres of water costs almost US\$0.13, and one container of drinking water costs US\$1, so poor people still drink the laundry

water, or other dirty water. The drinking water is mostly sold in bags and bottles. That water comes from wells that companies have bought the rights to use. They purify the water, package it and sell it.

So Kimmie and YAI give families in Monrovia's poorest neighbourhoods a water filter, so that they can purify dirty water and make it safe to drink, for example, in West Point, which is Monrovia's poorest neighbourhood. When Kimmie

shows the residents of West Point how the cloudy water becomes clear and safe to drink, they cheer. Kimmie drinks a mug of it to show that the water is now clean. The onlookers want to taste it too.

"We want to make sure that more poor families get filters like this," promises Kimmie. "Children shouldn't have to get sick from dirty water. Clean water is a human right."

Liberia's President, Ellen Sirleaf, has now asked Kimmie to take responsibility for making sure that all the inhabitants of Monrovia – 800,000 people – get running water again. The broken water pipes are going to be restored. More than half of the city's inhabitants are children.



Water for washing and drinking.



The filter makes the dirty water drinkable.



A gulp of the filtered water ...



... tastes good, and it won't make you ill.

Drinking water in bags is expensive for poor people, who have no choice but to drink whatever water they can get hold of, even if it's bad quality. That's how Kimmie fell ill with cholera, and almost died.



Girls learn a trade

"AFTER SCHOOL I walk for an hour to get here to the YAI girls' center. Here we can learn a trade. I've already learned to do hair extensions and nails, like at a real beauty salon. The course is free. That's lucky, because my family would never be able to afford to pay. When I've

finished the course I'm going to start a hair salon. If I earn enough money I'll continue my education. I want to be an engineer and help to rebuild Liberia. The first thing I'm going to do is fix and asphalt all the roads. They're in a terrible state. Then I'll make sure all the roads have



streetlights. The worst thing that happened to me was when I had to take care of my aunt's baby instead of going to school."

Charity L Jargbo, 15



The land of freed slaves

LIBERIA WAS FOUNDED in 1847 by freed slaves from the USA. In 1840 there were 4 million slaves in the USA. But more and more people believed slavery was wrong. Some people thought the slaves should be freed and made US citizens. Others thought they should be returned to Africa. From 1820 on, around 15,000 freed slaves were transported by ship to the part of Africa which was then named Liberia. Liberia means 'freedom'. The capital city was named 'Monrovia' after James Monroe, who was President of the USA at the time.

The freed slaves brought with them the way of thinking that they themselves had experienced: that some people were better than others. They had been treated badly. In the new country they became the highest in society. Those who were already living in the region were treated badly by those who came from the USA. The new arrivals, the Americo-Liberians, put themselves in charge and became the country's upper class. They still are. The unfair division of power was one of the reasons for the civil war. The rebel leader Charles Taylor said that he would free the country from the Americo-Liberians. But instead he took power himself – and Charles Taylor himself is an Americo-Liberian.

Lots of things in Liberia are similar to the USA: the flag is almost the same as the US flag, but it only has one star in the upper left-hand corner instead of 52. Much of the constitution is the same, the currency is called the dollar, and the people speak English.

“Kimmie’s words made me lay down my weapon”

When he was 14, Francis was kidnapped and forced to be a child soldier. He learned to kill, and lived a terrible life. But when he heard Kimmie Weeks on the radio, he started to dream of an end to his time as a soldier.

Early one morning our village is attacked. We hear gunfire from all around us, and people run in all directions to get away. Grenades explode. Some hit houses, which go up in flames. Suddenly I realise I’ve lost my family, and run out onto the road with many others who are trying to flee.

“The rebels have set up a checkpoint, guarded by boy soldiers. Some of them look younger than me. They are wearing all manner of strange clothes. One wears a white dress, another a suit that is much too big. They have magic amulets round their necks, grenades and ammunition over their shoulders, scary tattoos on their arms and war paint on their faces. There are skulls hanging on poles. They fire shots into the air to scare us. ‘Line up! Boys on the right! Girls on the left!’

“Anyone who doesn’t obey them straight away is shot. Panic spreads. People scream and weep in despair when they see what is happening to the people around them.

‘You there,’ shouts one of the boy soldiers, pointing at me in the line of boys. ‘Take this case of ammunition. You’re going to carry it for me. Move it!’

“I didn’t know then that this was the beginning of a living nightmare.”

Became inhuman

“I was forced to jog with the heavy ammunition case on my head. If I wasn’t fast enough, the rebels shot at the ground beside my feet. Eventually we arrived at the rebel camp.

“I had to learn how to handle an automatic rifle. At that point I stopped being a



PATRICK ROBERT / CORBIS / SCANPIX

human being, even though I had grown up as a normal boy. I learned to kill, as an obedient soldier.

“We child soldiers were always sent out in the front line. They gave us drugs to make us brave. We didn’t know what we were doing. If we survived an attack, the leaders rewarded us by giving us a higher rank to make us

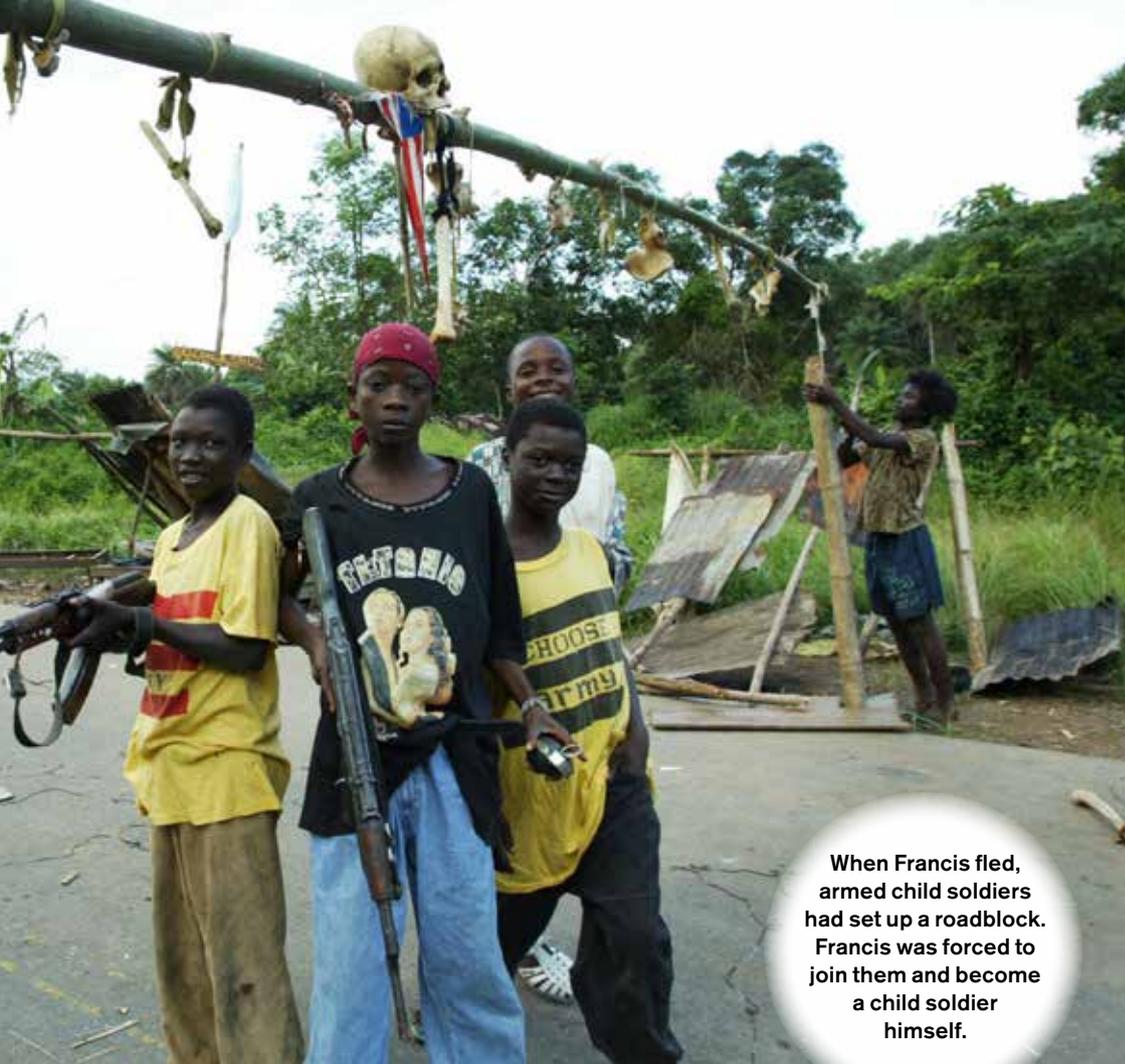


When he heard Kimmie Weeks speaking on the radio, Francis began to dream of an end to his life as a soldier. Today he works for peace.

Convicted of crimes against humanity

ON 26 APRIL 2012, former president of Liberia Charles Taylor was convicted by the International Criminal Court in The Hague, the Netherlands. He was sentenced to 50 years in prison for crimes against humanity during the war in Sierra Leone, Liberia's neighbouring country, because he 'planned some of the most brutal crimes in the history of humanity, including torture, rape and killing'. Charles Taylor also supplied the rebels in Sierra Leone with weapons. The rebels paid him in diamonds, which he smuggled to Belgium. People call them 'blood diamonds' because they were used to pay for weapons that killed 50,000 people and displaced 2.5 million more. The diamond smuggling made it possible for the war in Sierra Leone to continue for over ten years.

However, Charles Taylor has not been convicted for the crimes he caused in his homeland of Liberia. It was Charles Taylor who started the war in 1989. He promised it would be over in three days. But it went on for 14 years. 200,000 people were killed and half the population fled to neighbouring countries. Over 20,000 children were forced to become soldiers.



When Francis fled, armed child soldiers had set up a roadblock. Francis was forced to join them and become a child soldier himself.

feel good. The troop became our family, and the commanding officers were our parents. We wanted to show that we could fight fearlessly, because then they praised us. Anyone who showed fear was punished immediately.

"We thought the rebel leader Charles Taylor was a hero, and we cheered when we saw him."

The peace ambassador

"Things carried on like that for what seemed like an eternity. But one day, sitting in the camp with the other child soldiers, cleaning my weapon, I hear a young man talking about the war on the radio, in a completely different way to anything I've heard before. He says that we child soldiers have been tricked. That the rebels are exploiting us. He also says that it is against the law to use children as soldiers, and that

all child soldiers must be allowed to leave the fighting. It was the voice of Kimmie Weeks.

"I think about it and realise that what he is saying is true.

"I started to dream about an end to my life as a soldier. But I couldn't flee from the camp. If I tried they'd kill me instantly. The conflict was still going on in the part of the country where we were, although peace talks had begun in the capital and many child soldiers had been disarmed. I felt incredibly frustrated. I thought constantly about whether I was going to die now, when I'd only just realised that I should stop fighting.

"Finally, our rebel leader signs the peace agreement. That's when I meet Kimmie in person. He comes to one of the camps for child soldiers. He says something that I will never forget:

"You are young like me. We are the Liberia of tomorrow, and our country needs all its young people. Don't let weapons and rebel leaders destroy your lives. As soon as you use a weapon, you destroy your own life and the lives of others. Work for peace, not war!"

"I felt motivated to follow his example. After all, Kimmie was a young boy like me. He had been forced to flee Liberia because Charles Taylor wanted to kill him. And now he had chosen to come back, to help us. We called him the peace ambassador.

"Kimmie helped me and other child soldiers to create an organisation for the children and young people who had been soldiers and wanted to return to normal lives. I work for peace now. I will never use a weapon again." 🌍



Abigail makes c

PATRICK ROBERTY / CORBIS SYGMA



A child soldier during the war in Liberia.

The terrible times begin when Abigail is seven, and her mother comes rushing in with her little brother on her back.

“Quick! Pack your clothes! We have to get out. Soldiers have started looting and killing people. They’ve blocked some of the roads,” she cries.

Today, Abigail is 17 years old and is a volunteer with Kimmie Weeks’ organisation, YAI. She teaches poor children to read.

Before the war, life was good. Abigail attended her beloved school, where she had always longed to go.

But when Abigail has only been in school for one year, worrying news is reported on the radio. The rebels are

approaching the capital city of Monrovia, where Abigail lives. The war is creeping closer every day. Until one day they have to flee.

Escape

They run through the streets, but around one corner they run straight into boys with large weapons. The boys shout and fire their guns to scare people. There are grown men on their knees with rifles aimed at their heads.

Abigail freezes in terror. She wonders how young boys can behave like this.

“What’s in your bag?” yells one of the boy soldiers at

Abigail, grabbing the bag.

“And you, woman! Got anything else?”

The boys search Abigail’s mother from head to toe. Finally they find the money she has hidden under her clothes, and laugh triumphantly.

“Ha! I knew it!” says one boy.

They walk for many hours with lots of other people. Nobody talks. The only sounds are footsteps on the road and children crying.

“Mum, I’m tired,” complains Abigail. “Can’t we rest?”

“No, hurry up, we must keep going,” says her mother, grabbing her hand.

A small pick-up truck appears on the road. Everyone shouts, “Stop! Give us a lift!” Although the back is already crammed with people, the driver stops. Abigail’s mother quickly grabs the side and pulls herself up. She manages to grab Abigail’s arm just as the truck begins to drive on.



Children happy

“Where are we going?” asks Abigail.

“I think we can get to grandmother’s village this way,” replies her mother.

From the back of the truck, Abigail can see crowds of people fleeing. Some carry their belongings on their heads, others use wheelbarrows. She sees children weeping in despair, looking for their parents. She sees injured people at the roadside, and dead bodies out in the fields.

Goodbye mother!

The next day they arrive at grandmother’s village.

“Oh joy!” exclaims grandmother when she sees them.

After a couple of weeks, Abigail’s mother says:

“My darling Abigail. Be a good girl now and help your grandmother with growing the vegetables. I’m going to take your brother and go back

to Monrovia. If things have calmed down I’ll come back for you.”

“Please mother, let me come with you!” pleads Abigail.

“No, it’s better for your here. But I have to take your brother with me, because he’s just a baby.”

Every day, Abigail walks to the road to watch for her mother returning. She waits to meet buses and cars coming from Monrovia. But her mother never comes.

“You have to work hard so that we have plenty of crops to sell when the war is over. Then we can go to Monrovia and you can start school,” promises Abigail’s grandmother. Abigail works in the fields, collects water, removes weeds and, finally, sows seeds.

After more than a year, Abigail’s grandmother says the words she has been waiting for:

“Now we have enough to harvest.”

Abigail is delighted. Maybe now she can find her mother and start school.

Back to school

Much of Monrovia has been destroyed by the war. Many houses are shot to pieces or burned out. They move into a house with some relatives.



Abigail, 17

My best thing: My TV and my soft bed!

Loves: Learning new things.

Dreams of: Building a hospital so that even poor people can get medical care.

Doesn’t like: When parents don’t let their children go to school.

Worst thing that’s happened: That my mother died and can’t see how well my life is going.

Wants to be: A nurse, because then you really help people.

But nobody knows where Abigail’s mother and younger brother are. Somebody says they saw her at the border with the Ivory Coast, and that she was on the way to Nigeria. That is all Abigail manages to find out.

They find a spot at the market where they can sell their vegetables. Every evening they count how much money they have made, and hide the

The children often come to Abigail for advice if they have problems, like if they are being beaten at home or bullied at school.





Some days Abigail goes to the playground after school to talk to the children and help those who have problems.

"I've just moved to town with my mother," says one girl. "My mother can't afford my school fees so that's why I have to sell bread every day. I hope to be able to start school next term."

"You'll see, it'll work out," says Abigail encouragingly. "Study hard once you start school. Then you'll go far."

money in a plastic bag under the mattress they share. One evening, Abigail and her grandmother are sitting on the bed as usual, counting their takings from the market. Abigail's grandmother says:

"Now my dear Abigail, we have enough money for you to start school."

Abigail hugs her grandmother, jumps down onto the floor and starts to dance around. She remembers what her mother used to say:

"Abigail, don't forget that

there are two paths to success. Some are born into success, while others have to fight for it."

Meeting Kimmie

One day when Abigail comes home from school and opens the door, her mother is sitting on the sofa! Her little brother is sitting beside her. She runs to them and hugs them for a long, long time.

"Mother! Where have you been? I've missed you so much!"

Her mother explains that

she had to flee across the border to escape the fighting. But Abigail can see that something is wrong. It's obvious that her mother is ill. One night, three months later, she dies. Abigail cries herself to sleep every night and stays home from school. But when she has calmed down she tells herself:

"Crying isn't going to bring her back. I'm going to show the world that Mama Winnie's daughter can make it, even though she isn't here!"

Some time later, Abigail is invited to the end of term ceremony at her friend's school. There is a special guest speaker. It's Kimmie Weeks. When Kimmie talks about his experiences of the war, Abigail can identify with what he says.

"Look at that, such a person who has been through the same difficulties as I have. That means that I can be successful too."

"Don't let hardship stop you in your life. Take your studies seriously and become what you want to be," she hears Kimmie say.

Wants to help children

When she gets to school the next day, Abigail says:

"Do you know what?! I heard Kimmie Weeks yesterday!" Her classmates want to hear everything he said.

When Abigail is called into the principal's office, she wonders what she has done wrong:

"Maybe I didn't go out at break time... or... maybe someone has died?" But that's not what the principal wants to say.

"Come in. Take a seat and I'll tell you what this is about. Kimmie Weeks and YAI have offered to pay your school fees, since you are one of the best students in the school and you work so hard."

"My dreams are coming true! If only my mother could see me now!" thinks Abigail.



Abigail loves her soft toys, and all the children who visit her do too.

Sometimes ten neighbouring children gather in Abigail's soft bed to watch a film on TV.



Dressed up with lovely nails.





“Abigail is always fair. She is friendly to people in the area. She takes care of children, plays with them and teaches them things. More people should be like her,” says Abigail’s housemate Mayamu.

a week in one of the poorest parts of Monrovia. She knows from experience how big a difference it makes when someone is there for you when you are young. When someone looks after you and cares about you.

“I know I can make children feel happy. We sing and play a lot. At ordinary school, you do the same old stuff every day. I want to create a big school that everyone enjoys attending. Laughter helps you to learn.”

Abigail has also become a leader in her area. Many children come to her with their problems. Some come in tears after being beaten. Abigail listens, comforts and offers advice. Sometimes there are ten other children sleeping in her bed.

“I’m proud of being part of Kimmie’s organisation. It’s much better when young people help each other. We take each other seriously.”

There is something else Abigail wants Kimmie’s help with. She finds out where his office is and asks to meet him.

“How can I help you?” asks Kimmie.

“I am so grateful for the grant you have given me. Now I want to help children who face the same struggles I have faced. Just like you. What can I do? I have time after school every day.”

Teaching poor children

Kimmie suggests that Abigail should do the YAI course and learn to teach children who can’t afford to go to school. That suits Abigail perfectly. She loves being with children and teaching them things. Now she is a YAI volunteer, teaching children several days



“Oh how I longed to start school. It was so terrible when the war broke out and I had to stop again. Education is so important. That’s why I volunteer at YAI’s extra school, helping children who are not able to attend ordinary school,” explains Abigail.



Wearing school uniform.



Abigail’s favourite shoes to wear at home.

During the war, Abigail helped her grandmother grow vegetables. When they sold them at the market, they got enough money for Abigail to be able to start school.



Selling things to go to school

IN LIBERIA, only half of all children go to school. The war made many families poor, with no means to pay school fees. The war also made many children orphans. That's why children have to sell things, to earn money for their school fees. Those who live around the YAI playground take the chance to rest under the big tree, and to play and talk with their friends. Abigail usually goes there to give the children advice.

Playing in peace

"CHILDREN HAVE the right to play! All children need to play! But play is not a given for many children here in Liberia. The country is at peace now, but many children still cannot play as there are so few places where they can play freely. That's why we fought hard to keep the playground here in Paynsville. The authorities planned to take it down and build houses there instead. We raised money to restore the playground. It was badly damaged after the war – there were bullet holes in the slide and the swing frames had all been knocked down. Now children come here to play again. Our volunteers come here to talk to children and give them the motivation to go to school. And the children who have to work selling things to help their families can come here for a while too."
Kimmie Weeks

Buy biscuits!

Patience, 13
Biscuit seller



Buy soap!

"My father thinks it's good that I work and earn money for my school fees. At the moment I'm selling soap. I would rather paint adverts outside shops. I'm really good at drawing."
Prince, 15
Soap seller



Buy a broom!

Paul, 15
Broom seller

Buy a toilet brush!

Rufus, 15
Toilet brush seller



Buy bread!

Rebecca, 13
Bread seller



Buy water!

Asarah, 10
Water seller



No play in wartime

"IN WARTIME, when you're hungry, you can't laugh," says Lass. "In wartime you can't play football, or visit friends, or do anything that's fun. During the war we lay on the floor, terrified of being killed. We need peace to be able to play."

Theatre against trafficking

"MANY PEOPLE ARE AFRAID to come to West Point. A lot of former rebel soldiers live here, and people are poor. There are many children here who have been kidnapped from villages in the country and brought here to work for someone, begging or selling different things. They don't go to school and are treated like slaves. Poor girls are exploited by older men. Sometimes the man offers to pay the girl's

school fees, but only if he can exploit her. We do street theatre to help people understand that it's wrong to treat children like that. YAI supports us because they believe it's important for people to know what's happening to children. People like our plays and discussions often arise afterwards."
Philomena, 15





Wants to learn

"I love coming here. Before I had nothing to do all day, because my parents can't afford to pay school fees. But I want to learn too, just like the children who go to school. And I am learning now! They tell us stories here, and teach us songs and rhymes. The worst thing I know is not being able to learn things. I want to become a journalist and write about what happens in other countries so that we in Liberia can find out more about the world."

Tom, 15



Want to be the Just Lawyer

IT'S THE END of term at Zoe-Louise Preparatory School in Monrovia and Anthionette, 12, is introducing today's speaker: "Kimmie Weeks is a role model for us, because he works hard to make life better for children in Liberia." Kimmie's organisation, Youth Action International, has trained the teachers at Anthionette's school and provided more fun school resources.



Anthionette, with her role model Kimmie.

It doesn't matter how old you are or what your background is," says Kimmie. "I grew up with no father, I was hungry and I had to beg for money to pay my school fees. Keep fighting! Don't give up! Make Liberia a better place to live!"

"I want to be a just lawyer," says Anthionette. "Because here in Liberia, many lawyers are unjust. Anyone who has money can make sure guilty people get away with crimes. That's not good. I want Liberia to remember me as the Just Lawyer."

Students at YAI's extra school

YAI HAS founded extra schools in poor areas for the children who can't afford to go to an ordinary school. Abigail comes to the extra school in New Kru Town after ordinary school several times a week to help teach the children.

Wants to be president!

"I'm so happy to have started school here. It's like a real school, but more fun. I used to have to work every day and wash clothes, fetch water and go to the market for food. But one day my aunt told me about the extra school, where children can learn things, and said that I could go! Now I can write my name and I have loads of new friends. I want to be the president of Liberia. When I'm president I will lower the price of rice, because poor people can't afford to buy it."

Rina, 9



YAI makes school fun

"UNFORTUNATELY, many schools in Liberia are boring," says Helena Carter, who runs the school program at YAI. "Often the teaching just consists of a teacher writing on a chalkboard while the children copy into their jotters. If any student makes a mistake or talks in class, the teacher is quick to punish them with the cane. We want to change that. It has to be fun for children to learn. That makes it easy to learn."

"That's why everyone loves the YAI school program. We do games, songs, rhymes and dances. We train the teachers not to beat the children. They think it's impossible to get children to obey them without hitting them. But that's totally wrong. 'Talk to the children,' we say. YAI has trained 400 teachers. The schools that are part of the program have become very popular and lots of children want to attend them."



“Stop beating children!”

When Nene arrives at the children’s home, all the other children are standing in front of the building to greet her. She is shy and doesn’t want to let go of her grandmother’s hand. Then one of the children walks up to her and says:

“I’m Kulha. If you want we can be best friends, you and me.”

Nene’s move to the YAI children’s home couldn’t have had a better start. Now, several years later, Nene has grown confident and performs street theatre for the rights of the child.



Nene grew up with her grandmother because her mother died in the war when she was a baby. Nene’s grandmother couldn’t afford to let her go to school. Nene often hid just inside her front door, peeking out at all the other children rushing past on their way to school. She didn’t want them to see her, because then they would shout mean things at her:

“Look, there’s the girl who doesn’t have a mother! She doesn’t even go to school!”

Nene would go running to her grandmother and sit on her knee, crying.

“There, there Nene, don’t cry. Be brave!” her grandmother would say. “That’s the only way to move on in life.”

It was painful to feel excluded from something that seemed so much fun. She was so curious, but being bullied had made her shy.

One day, a stranger called at grandmother’s house.

“I’ve heard that your grandchild doesn’t go to school,” said the woman. “If you want, she could start going to a school near the children’s home that I am the director of. It’s free.”

The journey to the children’s home was the longest and happiest journey of Nene’s life. When they arrived, all the children were waiting for them. That was when she met Kulha. They did indeed become best friends, and since then they have done everything together.

“Kulha is like my sister,” says Nene. “The other children are like my siblings as well.”

Child Rights Club

Nene hardly dared to speak to anyone when she arrived at the children’s home, except Kulha of course. But one day a man came to visit. He wondered if any students wanted to start a Child Rights Club at school. Nene thought: “I’d love to do that, but I’m not brave enough...”

Afterwards, some of Nene’s classmates came running.

“Nene, will you help us to start a Child Rights Club?” said one girl.

“No, I can’t, I don’t have time,” replied Nene, avoiding the issue.

“Please, we need you to be secretary. You have such good writing, and you’re doing well at school and you’re always kind to others. Go on!”

Nene felt flattered. She hadn’t realised that they thought she was so good at things. Finally she said:

“OK, I’ll join in. I’ll have a go at being secretary.”

There were over 50 students at the first meeting. Nene was so nervous that her hand shook as she tried to write down what everyone said. Before falling asleep that night, she prayed:

“Dear God! Help me to be confident enough to speak at the next meeting.”

At the next Child Rights Club meeting Nene shared together.

“I’m proud of getting this far. I’m only 16 and already I know loads of things. I hope others can feel the same way,” says Nene.



her ideas and helped to plan lots of activities. She wrote the minutes with a steady hand. She had become brave and confident!

Giving advice

The Child Rights Club has changed Nene's life. Students and teachers alike come to her for advice. When the principal is away, he usually asks Nene to read out messages to teachers or parents. She visits parents who won't let their children go to school and makes them change their minds. At one Child Rights Club meeting, the group discussed the fact that many parents beat their children. Some children have scars on their bodies, others come to school with bruises, and others have to stay home because they have been beaten so badly.

"It's just not right. People should not beat children," says Nene. "What can we do to make them understand?"

"Maybe we could write sketches and perform them where there are lots of people," someone suggests. Everyone thinks that's a great idea.

A few weeks later, everyone has their part to play and the whole group heads for the town square. They knock on

Kulha and Nene are doing work experience at a car and motorcycle workshop. They're learning to drive motorbikes and cars, and to fix engines.

"My favourite thing is taking the engine apart and putting it back together," says Nene. "It's a bit like learning how the human body works, with all the different parts that make the whole thing work."

doors and encourage people to come out and watch. They have asked the Town Crier to tell everyone what's about to happen. He walks around calling:

"Don't go to the fields today! Gather in the square! Gather in the square! There are people who want to talk to you about the rights of the child! Gather in the square!"

Lots of people come, probably several hundred.

Don't beat children

Nene yells and beats 'her child' with a cane. In another sketch, a father uses the money meant for his children's school fees to buy beer. The audience laugh and comment on what's happening in the plays. Someone shouts in agreement. Someone else gets angry and says:



Nene in her photo album, which is one of her most treasured possessions.

"Of course we have to beat our children, otherwise what will they turn into?"

After the performance, they talk about the rights of the child.

"You have to stop beating children – it isn't good for them. Talk to them instead," says Nene. Nene walks up to one of the noisiest women and says:

"If you talk to your children in a normal way, not in a nasty or angry voice, they will listen to you. I promise!"

Nene stands close to the woman she is talking to. She has noticed that people listen better if you do that. The woman stares at Nene in surprise.

"Well... I see... maybe I'll give that a try," she replies.

That evening as they fall asleep, Nene says to Kulha:

"Do you know what? I had an idea today. You know we both dreamt of becoming doctors and starting a hospital where poor people can get help? But now I could imagine becoming an actress and making films that encourage

children and help people understand that children have rights."

"Maybe we can do both!" says Kulha. 🌍



Nene, 16

Loves: Sport.

Hates: Fighting.

Favourite foods: Rice and bread.

Best thing: Getting to move to Kimmie's children's home and start school.

Worst thing: The war, when people killed each other.

Role model: Ellen Sirleaf Johnson, President of Liberia.

Wants to be: A doctor or an actress.

Nene and Kulha run hand in hand. They have been together almost all the time since the day Nene arrived at the children's home.



One day at the home for orphans

THERE ARE 66 CHILDREN living at Kimmie's YAI children's home. Most lost their parents in the civil war. Everyone who lives there helps with cooking, cleaning, clearing land and tending their crops when they're not at school. The children's home is almost self-sufficient. The building used to be so badly damaged that the rain came in. But thanks to YAI, a new, bigger home has now been built.



4.30 a.m. Wake-up call
"Rise and shine!" shouts Mama Kumba. "Time to wake up!"

5.00 a.m. Morning shower
The children's home has its own well where the children fetch water for everything. The bucket is heavy when it's full, but better than have to make two trips.



6.00 a.m. Morning prayers
Everyone joins in with the traditional prayer songs.



8.00 a.m. Preschool
When the older children have gone to school, the younger ones have classes at the children's home.



7.00 a.m. Time for school
All children over twelve go to school along the main road towards Freetown. If it's raining, the children wait until the rain stops before they walk to school.



6.30 a.m. Breakfast
Every morning, rice and grated meat is served for breakfast. It's a good mixture for growing children.



2.00 p.m. Lunch
It's fufou for lunch (porridge made with cassava) served with boiled leaves, similar to spinach.





3.00 p.m. Playtime!

Once everyone has come home from school, eaten and rested, there is time for games and sports. The younger children are drawing 'The King's Daughter' on the ground.

4.00 p.m. Crops

Most of the food that is eaten at the children's home is grown there. All the children help to sow seeds, remove weeds and harvest the crops.



6.00 p.m. Evening prayers

"Dear God, help me to live my life in a good way, and take care of my mother and father in heaven," pray the children during evening prayers.



7.00 p.m. Homework time

It's dark by seven o'clock. So that the children can do their homework, Mama Kumba switches on the big battery-powered reading lights.

8.00 p.m. Good night prayers and chit chat

Before going to sleep, Nene and Kulha take the chance to listen to the radio and chat about the day's events. Then they pray for protection during their night's sleep.



9.00 p.m. Lights out!

Mama Kumba locks the door and makes sure everyone is quiet.



Kimmie talks with the team.



Football unites

PRINCE FC are playing Plumcut Young Professionals and YAI have given both clubs balls, football strips and shoes. They also train the team captains, Prince and Lass. The final score is 2-2 and the players gather to listen to Kimmie Weeks:

“If more people learn to cooperate like you guys, this country will go a long way. Football builds peace. We’re going to make sure there is a football team in every neighbourhood, and train more team captains to be role models like Prince and Lass. Many children in this area have suffered because of the war, and have lost parents. They don’t go to school, instead they wander the streets, ending up in criminal gangs or on drugs. We are going to give them back their hope.”

Prince won't give up

“I HAD THIS IDEA that we could start playing football seriously here in our neighbourhood. Even though I knew we were broke, I asked my mother if I could buy a leather football. I went down on my knees and said:

‘Please mum, can I buy a football?’

‘No Prince, you know we can’t afford it,’ she replied crossly.

But I didn’t give up. I went to my aunt and uncle, who are older than my mother, and asked them to persuade her. They thought it sounded like a good idea, and they came home with me.

‘Prince has been selling water for years. Surely you can let him buy a football?’ said my aunt.

My mother was annoyed but she looked at me and said: ‘OK then, start saving and buy the football.’

I sold water like never before. I rushed home from school, fetched the coolbox full of water and went out onto the streets. It took several weeks to save up enough. Then I took the bus into town. I rushed to the sports shop, put my money on the counter and got the beautiful leather ball. I felt like I was walking on air all the way home. My team mates went crazy when they saw me coming home with the football.

To be a good team you have



to stick together. You can’t be good without taking training seriously, just like school.”

We stick together

“A while ago my mother said:

‘I’m sorry I was so negative when you wanted to buy the football. I can see that it has been good for you and for many others. People respect you. And I do too.’

Now we stick together in our area. I’m the team captain of Prince FC and I always say:

‘Stick together and don’t fight. Respect all the others in the area, even the other teams.’

Now that we have received support from YAI I feel like a part of something bigger. We young people need role models. There are not many people who have time for us

young people, but Kimmie and his staff do. Both Lass and I are YAI volunteers and mentors for our teams. I want to be a good youth leader and I think I’ve made a good start. Parents come to me and thank me, because their children have changed since they started playing with us. That feels good.”

Prince, 15, Favourite footballer: Ronaldo, Portugal

What makes a good leader?

The team think Prince is a good leader because he: **is generous, helps others, is respectful, gives good advice, understands their situation, is patient.**



TEXT: GUNILLA HAMNE PHOTOS: SENAY BERHE



Fredrick's good heart



Fredrick always stands up for friends and people who are worse off.

"MY HEART BEATS a bit faster when I think about football. It has given me lots of new friends. That's why there are fewer fights in our neighbourhood, now that we have football to focus on. I'm planning to be Liberia's latest football star.

My heart doesn't only beat for football, but for other people too. Others say I have a good heart and that's something I'm proud of. When someone in our neighbourhood is hungry I share the food we have at home with them. If I get Christmas presents I always give some of them away to people who

didn't get anything. Every day I round up the children in my neighbourhood who don't go to school and teach them. Then they don't feel so excluded. I usually go to their homes and encourage their parents, saying 'Let your child go to school. Try to save up for the school fees.'

I lent my football boots to a friend, and when he returned them one sole was falling off. That's why I don't have proper shoes today, just plastic sandals. But I borrow shoes from someone else when I'm playing a match. These things always work out."

Fredrick, 14



Fredrick warms up in flip-flops, but during the match he borrows shoes from whoever he replaces on the pitch.



Shy Lass becomes a leader

"I'M THE TEAM CAPTAIN of a football team called Plumcut Young Professionals. I'm incredibly proud of our team. Next year we'll be joining division three, if we can raise enough money for the fee. That's why we do cleaning work in the neighbourhood every Saturday.

For me, being a leader is something new. Before I was always on my own. One day my mother said:

'Lass, you can't just go around on your own your

whole life. Think of something you can do for others.'

At first I didn't really understand what she meant. But one Saturday afternoon when I was standing watching some boys kick a ball, it came to me: I'm going to start a team! A few people in my neighbourhood heard about my plans. I heard on the grapevine what they were saying:

'How will Lass manage to get a football team together? He can't even talk to people.'

Their comments just made me even more motivated. I started to talk to the people I had seen playing football and asked them if they wanted to join in.

I feel like a new person now, and young people come to me for advice. Maybe it was the war that made me shy. My mother and I slept under tables at market stalls, or in abandoned shacks. I saw horrific things and I was terrified.

It still makes me sad to

think about how people treated one another. That's why what I do seems important - helping people to unite instead of fighting and killing one another. Football is a good way to get young people to do something together. Now that we have equipment and support from YAI, it's going to be even better."

Isaac Lass, 16

Favourite footballer: Lukas Podolski, Germany



Lass doing his team talk.



Organise a World's Children's Press Conference

Twice a year, you and your friends can organise a World's Children's Press Conference. The idea behind these events is that only children should speak, and only children should be interviewed by journalists. Every year, children all over the world hold hundreds of press conferences at the same times. The first is held to reveal the three Child Rights Heroes who have been nominated for the World's Children's Prize. The second is held at the end of the WCP Program, when children all over the world have voted to decide who should receive the awards for the rights of the child.



Before the girls who held the World's Children's Press Conference in Kathmandu revealed the results of the Global Vote – the year's Child Rights Hero – they talked about the situation for the rights of the child in Nepal. "Every year, around 12,000 children are victims of trafficking and are taken to other countries," says Samjhana.

HOW TO DO IT:

1. Time and place

If possible choose the most important building in your area for your press conference, to show that the rights of the child are important! Or you could hold it at your school.

2. Invite the media

Invite all newspapers, magazines and TV and radio sta-

tions, giving plenty of notice. Write the time and place clearly. You can use email, but make sure you also call the journalists you think may be interested in coming! Remind them the day before the press conference by telephone or by visiting them.

3. Prepare

Write down what you plan to say. Give yourself plenty time to prepare what you want to

say about the rights of the child in your country. Shortly before the press conference you will receive secret information from the World's Children's Prize, which should be revealed at the press conference.

4. Hold the press conference

If possible, begin with music and dancing, and explain that other children all over the

world are holding press conferences at the same time. Then proceed with the press conference roughly as follows:

- State facts about the World's Children's Prize

The World's Children's Press Conference in Jalisco, Mexico, and one of the articles it resulted in.



At worldschildrenprize.org you'll find:

Child rights fact sheets for your country, advice on how to invite journalists, questions for politicians and other tips. The website also has press images which journalists can download and use for free when they write about the World's Children's Prize.

If there are several WCP Global Friend schools approaching the same media outlets, it's a good idea to hold a joint press conference. For example, one representative from each school could be on stage to present the press conference.



Eligen niños a sus líderes

La votación se hará desde las escuelas que quieran participar en el ejercicio

¡A votar!

Anna Mohd, Tanzania: Ayuda a niños con discapacidades en poblaciones remotas del norte de África desde 1990. Sabana Vazobri, Argentina: Trabaja por el derecho a la educación de las niñas; mantiene escuelas nocturnas para niñas en la zona de la frontera con Brasil.



When students at ETEC Paulina Botelho, Centro Paula Souza in São Carlos in Brazil held their World's Children's Prize Press Conference, they had investigated child labour in Brazil and presented their findings. Lukas, 16, says:

"There is a lot of inequality in Brazil. Children often work in slave-like conditions here. While studying the World's Children's Prize Program we found children who work extremely hard in tough conditions on a farm outside São Carlos. The main issue we raised at our press conference was child labour in our city and our country."

and if possible show a short WCP film clip.

- Explain how children's rights are violated in your country.
- State your demands – how you want politicians and other adults to improve respect for the rights of the child in your country.
- Reveal the 'big news' of the day, about the World's Children's Prize Child Rights Heroes.
- End by giving the journalists a press release and the WCP fact sheet on your country. The press release is a document that summarises information on the WCP, the rights of the child and the Child Rights Heroes! You can get a sample press release from the World's Children's Prize.

CHRISTINE COLSON



"The World's Children's Prize does fantastic work to promote children's rights."

H.M. Queen Silvia of Sweden standing in front of a picture of Desmond Tutu, giving his WCP glass globe to Bomkazi from South Africa.

Desmond Tutu new patron

People who have made outstanding contributions to the rights of the child or the World's Children's Prize can become Honorary Adult Friends and patrons of the World's Children's Prize.

At the most recent Award Ceremony, a new patron was introduced. He has fought apartheid and racism. Throughout his life he has stood up for the rights of the child, justice and peace. The children of South Africa know him as 'The Arch' – Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and former archbishop, Desmond Tutu.

Queen Silvia of Sweden was the first patron of the World's Children's Prize. Now three global legends are patrons too: Nelson Mandela, Aung San Suu Kyi and Xanana Gusmão. Mandela fought against apartheid and for a South Africa that belonged to all the nation's children. He



JAMES MAKAY

was imprisoned for 27 years, then became the first president of the free South Africa, and received the Nobel Peace Prize. Aung San Suu Kyi was detained under house arrest for fifteen years for her fight for democracy in Burma. Freedom fighter Gusmão was imprisoned for seven years before becoming the first president of East Timor, and he is now the country's prime minister. The patrons also

"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. I look forward to a close and fruitful cooperation with your foundation."

Aung San Suu Kyi

include world leader and child rights advocate Graça Machel. Machel, Mandela, Suu Kyi and Tutu all belong to The Elders, a group of experienced leaders who work together for the good of humankind.

You will find more patrons at worldschildrensprize.org



"You have our support whether we are alive or in the grave."

Nelson Mandela

"The World's Children's Prize takes the rights of children not only to where they often are being fulfilled, but even to situations of conflict and of deprivation. It reminds the children that they have rights, and that they have to demand the fulfilment of their rights. The prize is a wonderful experience. It is for the sake of the children and also to touch the consciousness of all of us not to rest until we can say: We did it!"

Graça Machel



It's time for the grand finale of this year's World's Children's Prize Program. Many of the participating schools hold their own closing ceremony, where they celebrate the Child Rights Heroes and the rights of the child. At some schools the children invite parents, politicians and the media. They perform and show the video of the Award Ceremony in Sweden.

"Welcome to Gripsholm Castle in Mariefred, and to the Award Ceremony for the World's Children's Prize," says Lisa from Zimbabwe in the video. The rest of the Jury are sitting behind her on the stage.

A string quartet from Lilla Akademien school performed in front of images of the three children who were honoured posthumously (after their death) with the very first World's Children's Prize in 2000. They are former debt slave Iqbal Masih from Pakistan, who was murdered in 1995, Anne Frank, who died in a German concentration camp in 1945, and Hector Pieterse, who was shot by the apartheid police in South Africa in 1976.

We celebrate the



There was enthusiastic applause for the Inkwenkwezi Sisters from Delft and Khayelitsha, townships on the outskirts on Cape Town, after their performances at the ceremony.



All the Jury children were on stage throughout the ceremony. Here, David from the UK is explaining which children he represents on the Jury, while Hamoodi, Gabatshwane, Emelda, Ndale, María Elena and Liv listen.



Jury children María Elena from Peru and Mae from the Philippines wait for the ceremony to begin.

rights of the child

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

ANNA MOLLEL

The children who participated in the Global Vote chose *Anna Mollel from Tanzania* to receive the 2012 *World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child*. H.M. Queen Silvia presented the award to Anna, for her over 20-year-long struggle for children with disabilities in the poor rural areas of northern Tanzania. Maasai boy Lomunyaki, who couldn't walk before he got help from Anna, joined her on stage.

Lisa from Zimbabwe, who led the ceremony, had written a poem for the prize laureates, which ended with:

This world needs more
people like you
Thank you for risking
your lives for us



"Being honoured by children brings great responsibility. While I accept this prize with thanks, I renew my pledge to continue this struggle," said Anna Mollel in her speech.

Hanoi College of Art gave a first-class performance for the rights of the child.





Jury member
Gabatshwane from
South Africa sang.

**WORLD'S CHILDREN'S
HONORARY AWARD**

SAKENA YACOABI

Sakena Yacoobi from Afghanistan was honoured on stage along with Ahmed Muktar Bahra, when H.M. Queen Silvia presented Sakena with the *World's Children's Honorary Award*. Sakena was praised for her long and often highly dangerous fight for children's and women's rights, and in particular for girls' right to go to school.



**WORLD'S CHILDREN'S
HONORARY AWARD**

ANN SKELTON

Ann Skelton from South Africa was joined on stage by Khanyisile Ngidi when she was presented with the *World's Children's Honorary Award* by H.M. Queen Silvia. Ann was honoured for her 20-year-long and successful fight for the rights of children affected by the legal system in South Africa.



Bomkazi from South Africa danced in tribute to the new patron of the World's Children's Prize, Desmond Tutu.

Thanks! Tack! Merci! ¡Gracias! سپاس
Obrigado! धन्यवाद நன்றி! شكراً!

In Bangladesh: ASF-Acid Survivors Foundation, Redwan-E-Jannat **Benin:** Juriste Echos Consult, Jacques Bonou, François Ablefonlin **Brazil:** Grupo Positivo (Portal Positivo, Portal Educacional, 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-Araquara, ONG Circo de Todo Mundo, Samuel Lago, Christiane Sampaio **Burkina Faso:** Art Consult et Development, Malachie Dakuyo **Burma:** Community Schools Program,

Eh Thwa Bor **Burundi:** DAJBU/DYF, DBF **Cameroon:** SOS Villages d'Enfants Cameroun **Czech Republic:** Vzajemne Souziti **D.R. Congo:** FORDESK, Tuzza Alonda, APEC, Damien Kwabene, APROJEDE, Amisi Musebengi, BVES, Murhabazi Namegabe **Gambia:** Child Protection Alliance (CPA), Bakary Badjie **Ghana:** Ministry of Education, ATCWAR, Ekua Ansah Eshon, Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child, Unicef, VRA Schools **Guinea Conakry:** Ministère de l'Éducation, Le Monde des Enfants 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, Barefoot College, Vasu Srinivasan **Kenya:** Ministry of Education, Provincial Director of Education for both Western and Nyanza Provinces, CSO Network for Western and Nyanza Province, Betty Okero **Mali:** Malian Association for Monitoring and Support for Women and Children, Safiatou Doumbia **Mauritania:** Association des Enfants et Jeunes Travailleurs de la Mauritanie, Amadou Diallo



Emelda from Mozambique presented H.M. Queen Silvia with a lily of the valley bouquet on behalf of the Jury, to thank her for helping them.

“Thank you for a wonderful ceremony. It is a great thing that you all work for the rights of the child. I promise to fight for the rights of children all over the world,” said Queen Silvia.



The Katarina Girls' Choir, the Jury children and all the children who performed sang the closing song together – ‘A world of friends’.

CAM ON ឧបកុណ !: مهرباني: شكريه: တၢ်ဘျး ကျးဇုး

Mexico: Secretaría 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, Amelia Mabecuane, FDC (Fundação para o Desenvolvimento da Comunidade) **Nepal:** Maiti Nepal, Janeit Gurung **Nigeria:** Federal Ministry of Education, the Ministries of Education in Kogi State, Lagos State, Ogun State, and Oyo State, Royaltimi Talents Network, Rotimi Samuel Aladetu, CHRINET, Children's Rights Network,

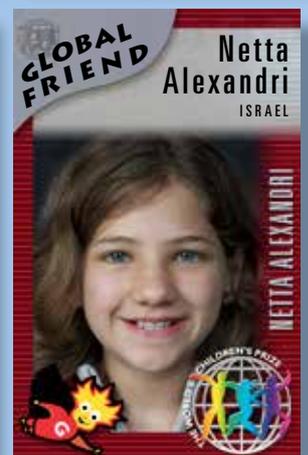
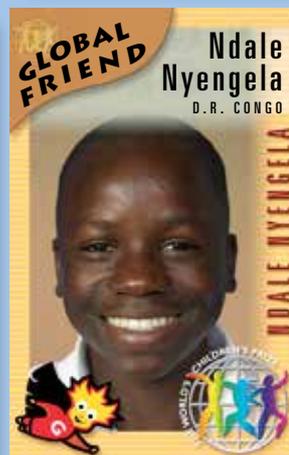
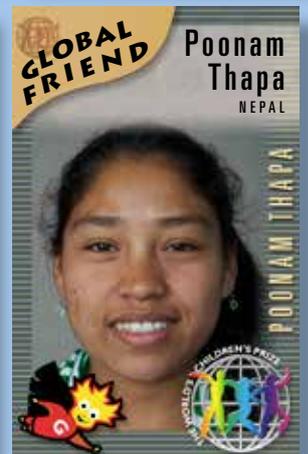
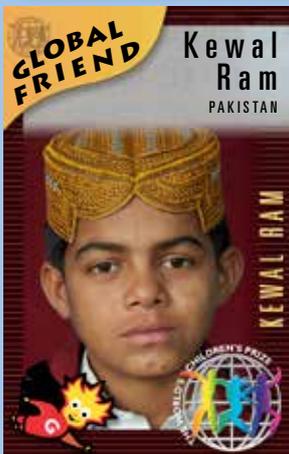
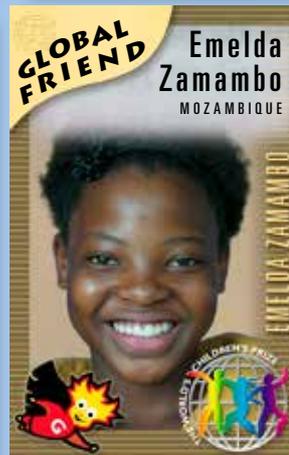
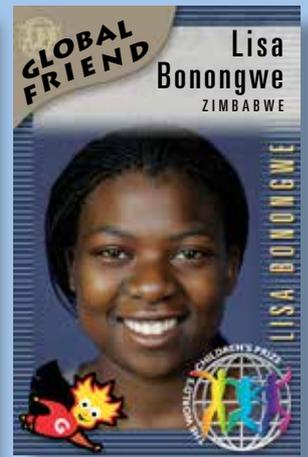
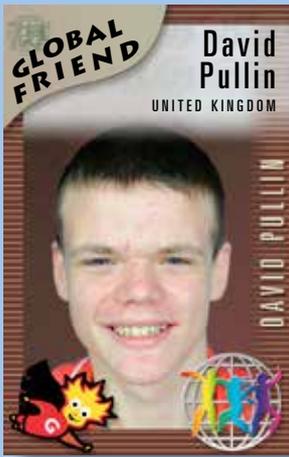
Moses Adedeji **Pakistan:** BLLFS, Mir Sarfraz, BRIC **Peru:** Centro Yanapanakusun **Philippines:** Visayan Forum, Julio Flauta, Lowel Bisenio **Rep. Congo:** ASUDH/Gothia Cup, CUDE-Club de l'UNESCO pour les Droits de l'Enfant **Rwanda:** AOCM **Senegal:** Ministère de l'Éducation, Ministère de la Femme, de la Famille et du Développement Social, EDEN **South Africa:** Ministry of Education, National Department of Education, Department of Women, Children and Vulnerable People in the President's Office, Eastern, North West Department of

Education and Department of Social Development, Bojanala Platinum District Municipality and Department of Education, IEC-Independent Election Commission, BOSASA, Marlene Winberg, Nadia Kamies, Vusi Setuke, Maki Boshomane **Uganda:** Uganda Local Governments Association, Gertrude Rose Gamwera, Wakiso District, BODCO, Nason Ndaireho, GUSCO **UK:** The Children's Rights Director for England, Roger Morgan **Zimbabwe:** Girl Child Network, Edinah Masanga.

THE 2013 WORLD'S CHILDREN'S PRIZE JURY

LE JURY POUR LE PRIX DES ENFANTS DU MONDE 2013 EL JURADO DEL PREMIO DE LOS NIÑOS DEL MUNDO 2013 O JÚRI DO PRÊMIO CRIANÇAS DO MUNDO 2013

THE 2013 WORLD'S CHILDREN'S PRIZE JURY



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