



Keeping children safe: EveryChild's focus on child separation

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“ Our vision is a world where every child has the right to grow up in a safe and secure family, free from poverty and exploitation. ”

Foreword

Global statistics about children living in poverty and deprivation make distressing reading: 12 million children have lost their parents to HIV/AIDS¹, 100 million children are forced to fend for themselves on the street², 121 million young children do not go to school³ and 246 million children are forced to work to survive⁴. The numbers are truly vast, but behind every statistic is a child struggling to live their life as best they can in world of poverty, fear and exploitation.

EveryChild – an international development charity – protects the most vulnerable and excluded children and gives them the chance to grow up in loving families with a safe and secure future.

In order to have the greatest impact on the lives of children who need our support the most, we are focusing our programmes on what we know we do well – and asking ourselves a hard question: ‘what can we do better?’ Building on our strengths, we will focus our resources on supporting children who have been separated from their families or communities, and those who are at risk of separation.

These children, like millions of others, go to bed hungry, do not get a proper education and are forced to work long hours – but, because they are separated from their families, they suffer even greater adversity. Forced to cope with a grim and frightening adult world, they face innumerable hardships on their own. Vulnerable and invisible, they are susceptible to violence, emotional injury and abuse. We believe that these children, above all, have the need and right to be protected. By drawing on our past successes and rejuvenating our work with a new focus, we are well positioned to make a real and lasting difference to their lives.

Our new focus will enable us to support children and their families to stay together in a loving and safe environment. Where this is not possible or appropriate, we aim to find alternative family or community-based solutions, like foster or kinship care. Above all, we aim to ensure the safety and security of these most vulnerable children, protecting them from violence and abuse and giving them the childhood they so richly deserve.

Anna Feuchtwang

Anna Feuchtwang
Chief Executive, EveryChild

¹UNAIDS, UNICEF, USAID, from E & S Africa assessment report, page 2. ²<http://www.unicef.org/sowc06/profiles/street.php>
³http://www.unicef.org/girlseducation/index_bigpicture.html. ⁴http://www.unicef.org/protection/index_bigpicture.html



Our work

Regional focus

In **Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia (EESCCA)** we work to reduce the number of children living in institutional care, supporting and protecting vulnerable children who are, or are at risk of being, separated from their family and community. We have programmes in Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan.

In **Africa** we work to prevent child abuse and exploitation, protecting and supporting vulnerable children who are, or are at risk of being, separated from their family and community, particularly child labourers, orphaned children, trafficked children, and children in conflict with the law. We have programmes in Ethiopia and Malawi.

In **Asia** we work to prevent child abuse and violence, protecting and supporting vulnerable children who are, or are at risk of being, separated from their family and community, particularly trafficked children (including commercially sexually exploited children), child domestic workers and children living and working on the street (in particular those who are in, or likely to come into, conflict with the law). We have programmes in India and Cambodia.

In **South America and the Caribbean** we work to prevent child abuse and violence, protecting and supporting vulnerable children who have suffered, or are at risk of, neglect, or physical or sexual maltreatment. We also work with children who are, or are at risk of being, separated from their family and community, particularly children living in institutions and those living and working on the street. We have programmes in Peru and Guyana.

We always aim to aid the process of change, rather than be a permanent presence in the countries and projects we work in. By ensuring that all our programmes become integrated into the local structure, we enable vital services to be maintained and developed without the need for our continued support. In the coming years we will support our programmes in Albania, Bulgaria and Romania to become independently sustainable, and we will hand over our programmes in Brazil, Thailand and Uganda to our local partners.



What we do

EveryChild believes that community and family-based solutions, e.g. reintegrating a child with their natural or extended family, placing them in foster or kinship care, or national adoption, are the best form of care for children in all but exceptional circumstances. The individual nurture and attention that a safe, secure and loving family environment can offer is extremely powerful and cannot be bettered.

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), growing up in a family environment gives a child the chance to fully and harmoniously develop his or her personality in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. To this end, we work with vulnerable children who are, or risk being, separated from their family or community.

- **We give children the chance** to grow up in loving families and communities.
- **We protect children** from abuse, discrimination and exploitation.
- **We empower children**, their families and communities to create opportunities for a better life.
- **We innovate** to bring about lasting, positive change in partnership with communities and governments.

How we work

Through our network of overseas offices, we are able to identify the violated rights of vulnerable children and families and operate projects that directly benefit them. Our projects are strengthened by our policy of not employing expatriate staff overseas.

We work alongside a range of local, national and international partners and play an active role in networks and alliances to create the greatest impact and influence. We pilot innovative projects that demonstrate results, encouraging our successes to be replicated and adapted to benefit the greatest number of children. We empower communities and strengthen their ability to shape their own futures.

We do not advocate a 'quick-fix' approach, instead we make sure that our solutions take root in communities and deliver lasting improvements. Wherever we can we seek to influence and change national, regional and international legislation, policies and practices to bring maximum benefits to today's and tomorrow's children.

“When I went to the EveryChild centre, for the first time since I was separated from my brother and sister, I genuinely felt that someone else cared for me.”

Aberash (aged 12), Ethiopia

We aim to work with the local government and community to protect the most vulnerable and marginalised children who are, or risk being, separated from their family or community. Children who live and work on the street, live in large institutions, are infected/affected by HIV/AIDS, have disabilities, have been sexually exploited or are in forced labour are among the most discriminated. We work to reduce stigma and discrimination by raising awareness of their plight, and lobby for and develop, together with local partners, inclusive services in education, health and rehabilitation.

Participation is a key factor in our programmes. We aim to ensure that the children and families we work with, play an active role in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of our projects. As well as helping them gain new skills and build their confidence, it is vital that these most marginalised children are given a voice that will be heard and respected.

Across all regions we work to uphold the best interests of the child. This ethos sits at the very heart of our work: we fight to change laws that do not adequately protect children and work with parents and communities to create vital change.

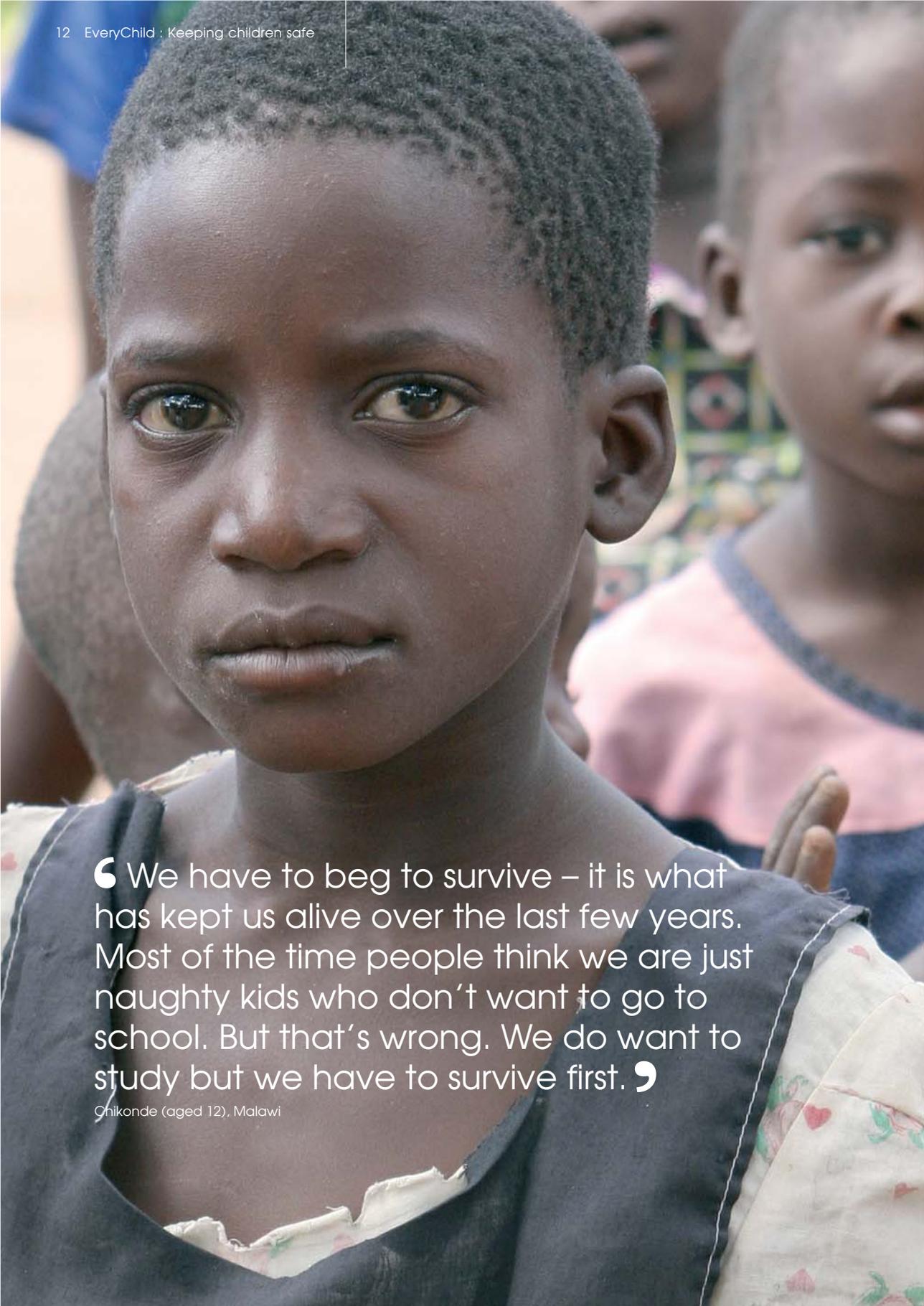
We follow the framework of the UNCRC and set out to implement the Convention's standards. We encourage local and national governments, communities and families to fulfil their obligation to protect children from harm, uphold their rights and give them the best possible care.

“I began to take part in the EveryChild and Save the Children UK joint Youth Empowerment project and I found out that children and adolescents have a lot of rights, but that they also have a lot of duties. I used to be too shy even to speak in a school meeting, but now I'm proud to be participating in the decisions made in my municipality and I remind people of their rights and obligations.

There are programmes for young people that I only found out about when I joined this project and started getting interested in the problems of my community. Despite the forums and conferences about children and adolescents, it was the adults who used to take the decisions. Now young people themselves are present and not ashamed or afraid to express their opinion. I know that the objective of the project is to develop the abilities of young people in the area of public policy, but this wasn't all I learned. Knowing and developing my ability to fight for what is mine by right and knowing that there is no shame in demanding what is ours was a good thing to learn.

Now I'm proud and very lucky, because I don't intend to miss the chance I have had. I intend to use my knowledge and bring this information to other young people and show them what they are capable of and that they have the ability to get what they want. At each meeting my opinions changed and I plucked up the courage to give my opinion, because I found out that there are people who are going through this problem and don't have the courage to speak up. I know that it's not just that person's problem, but mine as well, because I can help them.”

Milena (aged 17), Brazil



“ We have to beg to survive – it is what has kept us alive over the last few years. Most of the time people think we are just naughty kids who don’t want to go to school. But that’s wrong. We do want to study but we have to survive first. ”

Chikonde (aged 12), Malawi

Our focus on separation

EveryChild works with separated children, i.e. those who lack parental care. We also work with children who are at risk of losing the care of their families and communities. We particularly focus on long periods of separation, be they unintentional (for example children who become orphans) or planned (children who run away from home to escape violence or abuse, who move away to work, are put in residential care or are trafficked and sold).

The causes and effects of separation

Children at risk of separation may have parents who are still alive, but are unable or unwilling to care for them. When every day is a struggle for food, shelter or warmth, harsh social and economic conditions can force a parent to place their child in an institution (to be cared for by the state), send their child out to work or leave them to fend for themselves on the street. With no support or social safety net, desperate families fighting to survive have little choice.

Although poverty is the significant underlying factor, there are a number of complex reasons which trigger child separation. Family disintegration (due to violence, abuse or exploitation in the home, divorce, separation, remarriage or

relationship difficulties) can lead to a child becoming separated from the family. Negative cultural and social attitudes can force single parents or parents with a disabled child to abandon them, hide them away or place them in residential care at an early age. HIV/AIDS is another precipitating factor which can lead to family breakdown. In the coming years HIV/AIDS will have a huge impact on the numbers of children separated from their parents, and not just in terms of orphans. Discrimination, high medical costs, death of breadwinners and heads of household will place enormous pressure on already vulnerable children and contribute to higher numbers of children living and working without parental care.

"I scavenge for throw-away junk on the streets and at the dumps. I spend all day alone, walking and searching for thrown-away things that can be resold or recycled.

Sometimes I meet up with some of my friends at the dumps – our skin, hands and faces are all filthy and most days you can't even recognise us because we are so dirty – all the time we have black stinking coal on our skin. The junk dealers who buy my goods are kind enough... but the real danger to me is after I have sold my wares at the dealers' shops or homes and I have the money on me. This is when I am most vulnerable. There is a group of gangsters who know when us kids have money, they have approached me before and threatened me, demanding I hand over my money. They sometimes wait for me and my friends outside the shops or dealers' homes..."

K (aged 15), Cambodia

Families face enormous financial pressure and many struggle to meet their most basic needs. In recent years, globalisation and rapid urbanisation have led to the breakdown of traditional structures.

Families and children sometimes have little option but to try and earn money outside traditional sources. Whereas they may have worked in the fields or at home, parents may instead seek better economic opportunities by moving to cities, children may be sent away to work in order to support their families or they may choose to leave themselves, in search of a better life.

A more extreme and sadly growing phenomenon is children who are trafficked from rural areas to larger towns, for the purposes of commercial sex work or exploitative labour.

The trauma of separation

Many separated children are statistically 'invisible' because they are absent from data collected from households, schools, clinics and workplaces. The numbers may well run into scores of millions. Hunger, disease, inadequate housing and little or no education are huge problems for children living in poverty across the world. But those who are separated from their families face even greater hardships. Within days of being separated from their family, whether they are on the street, in institutions or in forced labour, children are likely to face emotional, physical and sexual violence or abuse.

A child growing up without the protection of their family or community has little or no access to education or vital healthcare. Statistics show they have a high risk of becoming involved in criminal activities or

substance use. They may be sexually active at an early age and vulnerable to unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. Furthermore, the cycle often repeats itself: it is not uncommon to see second and third generation street children in some towns and cities, and parents who have been placed in an institution themselves are likely to do the same to their children.

Secure attachment to a parent or care-giver in the early years of a child's development is an important basis for trust and the foundation of a healthy personality in adult life. Our experience and research has shown that children who become separated from their family show poor emotional, social and physical development. Long-term institutional care has been found to be particularly damaging to children. As well as showing signs of developmental delays, young adults who have spent

a large part of their childhood in large residential institutions are over-represented among the unemployed, the homeless, those who abuse substances, have been in jail, or have been sexually exploited.

Exploitation among the poorest children and families is rife. An estimated 246 million children are engaged in child labour, of these almost 75% work in hazardous conditions⁵. Many are simply hidden away. It is impossible to know, for example, how many are exploited in domestic service. Forced to work long hours for little or no pay, their work keeps them away from home and school and can often have a negative impact on their health and wellbeing. With poor health and no education, these children have little hope of breaking out of the cycle of poverty, and are destined to repeat their parents' struggles and hardships.

'Almost without exception, children who are in domestic labour are victims of exploitation, often of several different kinds. They are exploited economically: forced to work long hours with no time off, and for low or no wages.

They are exploited because they generally have no social or legal protection, and suffer harsh working conditions. They invariably are deprived of the rights due to them as children in international law, including the right to play, health, and freedom from sexual abuse and harassment, visits to or from their family, association with friends, decent accommodation, and protection from physical and mental abuse.'

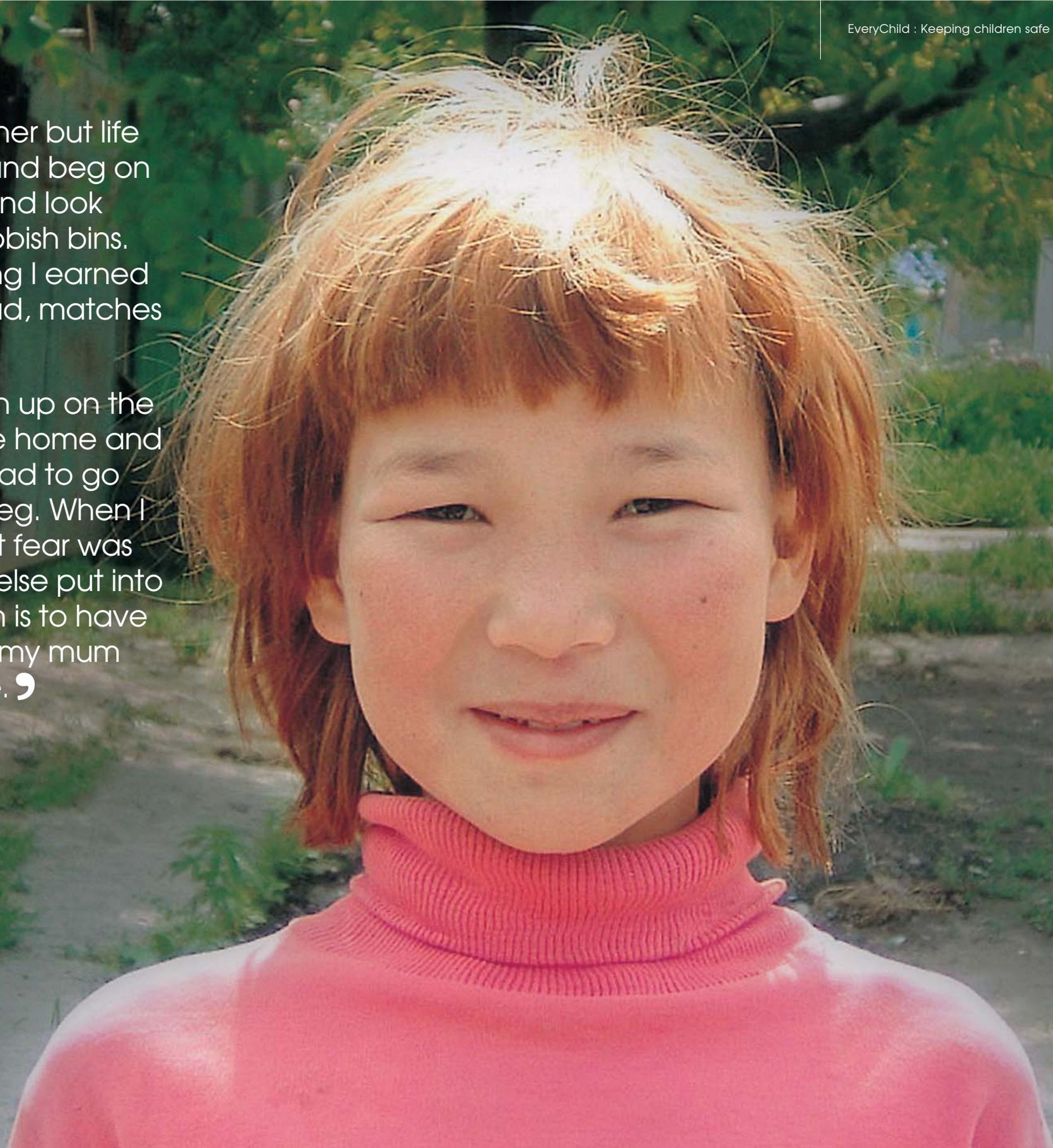
Source: International Labour Organisation, IPEC

⁵ UNICEF

☪ My family used to live together but life was tough so I would go out and beg on the streets to ask for money, and look for food and clothes in the rubbish bins. I would bring my mum anything I earned so she could go and buy bread, matches and medicines.

Sometimes I would get beaten up on the streets and then I would come home and live with my mum. But I soon had to go back to the streets again to beg. When I was on the streets my greatest fear was that I would be beaten up or else put into a detention centre. My dream is to have a good job so that I can help my mum and we can have a better life. ☪

Lilya (aged 14), Kyrgyzstan





Discrimination and stigmatisation against separated children is common, particularly against those who are disabled, affected/infected by HIV/AIDS, living in residential care or living and working on the street. This, combined with a loss of family identity, can lead to depression and other mental health problems. Children who come into conflict with the law are also often subjected to violence and a lack of legal protection during arrest and detention.

In short, children who are separated and living without parental or community care face multiple violations of their rights: they are not listened to, are unprotected and exploited, often discriminated against and have little or no access to education or healthcare.

To uphold children's rights and protect them against violence and abuse, the behaviours that devalue children must be changed and those who are responsible for their care must be held to account.

It is vital we create an environment that protects children, but that requires ongoing efforts by individuals and organisations. Families and governments bear the primary responsibility for ensuring children are protected from harm. However, they require the support of "...civil society, donors, international agencies, the media and the private sector – to confront and stamp out abuses, challenge attitudes and prejudices and monitor and evaluate exploitation⁶".

Daniel, who is just over a year old, was born with HIV/AIDS. He lived with his parents, who are also infected with the virus, in a small wooden house near Linden, Guyana. When the landlord found out the family had HIV/AIDS, he evicted them without warning.

The family faced similar discrimination in the hospital. The nurses would leave HIV/AIDS patients unattended for long periods of time; and, at first, they did not want to touch Daniel or even change his nappies. Worried about their son, his parents took him to another hospital in the city where they were advised to take Daniel back to Linden to be admitted urgently. Daniel was rushed back and the severity of his condition was explained to one of the nurses. But the doctor in charge of the children's ward, refused to admit him, saying "the child will die, take him home to die."

Source: Guyana

⁶ UNICEF, The State of the World's Children 2006: Excluded and Invisible, Chapter 3: Invisible Children



Our interventions and solutions

The children we work with

EveryChild changes children's lives by ensuring their rights are realised and not violated. We focus our efforts on children who are, or risk being, separated from their families, including:

- Children living in institutional care, and those at risk of being placed in institutional care.
- Children living and working on the streets, including those who are in, or likely to come into, conflict with the law.
- Child workers, particularly those who are exploited in domestic labour.
- Trafficked children, including commercially sexually exploited children.

Within these categories are high-risk groups:

- Children with disabilities.
- Children affected and infected by HIV/AIDS.
- Children who suffer, or are at risk of, violence or emotional, physical or sexual abuse.
- Girls.
- Children from ethnic minorities.
- Children from 'lower-caste' groups.

Our programmes

EveryChild's work is designed to have both a preventative and a curative effect on child separation. To enable children to grow up in a safe, secure family environment, we work with communities and local governments to establish a legislative framework that prioritises family-based care for all vulnerable children.

We believe that children should be enabled to claim their rights and empowered not to be separated from their parents against their will. We work to keep families together and prevent children from being abandoned to institutions or the street, or being forced to work. In instances when competent authorities determine that separation is in a child's best interest, or where separation has already occurred, we advocate family-based solutions such as foster or kinship care, which ensure children are integrated into a safe and secure family environment.

Keeping families together

We offer support and guidance to prevent family breakdown

We strengthen family structures and devise practical solutions that are in the child's best interests. Skills training, counselling and advice help families develop coping strategies, which in turn prevent family breakdown.

In Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia (EESCCA), social workers, trained by EveryChild, assess individual and family needs to identify the support required to prevent a child being admitted to institutional care. Families whose children are at risk are given practical and emotional advice, as well as continued support and encouragement, to enable them to cope with any subsequent difficulties so that institutionalisation can be avoided.

In other regions, family days and classes share information about child rights and offer leisure activities to help families bond. Community workshops and better parenting classes give advice about child development, non-violent discipline, education and HIV/AIDS, and address issues such as domestic violence and alcoholism. We also facilitate access to local social networks, which enable families to lean on each other in times of crisis and seek ongoing advice and guidance from their friends and peers.

We strengthen the economic security of families

If family incomes can be raised, parents and children no longer have to leave the family unit in search of work. Easing this pressure prevents separation and leaves children free to pursue educational and other vital opportunities. We work with local organisations to help communities increase their employment and livelihood prospects.

In Africa, information and training on improving farming methods (e.g. crop rotation and diversification, and the benefits of growing both food and cash crops) help families provide for themselves and their children.

In EESCCA, legal and practical advice help struggling families access the social assistance benefits to which they may be entitled. We also help them to obtain the tools and information they need to restructure debts, or to find suitable accommodation and employment.

In other countries, vocational skills training and savings and credit schemes create a source of income and a vital safety net which prevents low-income families plunging into debt should a crisis occur.

Larysa is one of three sisters. Her parents were both alcoholics; after her father died, her mother lost her parental rights. All three children were placed in institutional care – but because the system places children according to their age, the siblings were split up. Larysa was just seven years old when she was placed in the institution and she has not seen her mother since.

She spent her final two years in a children's home, leaving the institution when she was 16 years old. Larysa tried her best to build a life and began studying at a technical college. She also had some property rights to the old family house, but her mother had disappeared leaving the house uninhabitable and with large debts.

Young and vulnerable, Larysa fell pregnant. She urgently needed somewhere to live and found a small, dilapidated room in a house with no electricity or heating. Under a constant threat of eviction from her landlord, Larysa was desperate. She was determined not to place her baby in an institution, but could not see how she could care for her child in such circumstances.

Thankfully her case was referred to the EveryChild Family Support Service. Trained social workers provided emotional and practical support and advice before and after her baby was born. Free legal advice ensured that Larysa could gain full property rights to her mother's house, as well as claim all the benefits she was entitled to. Building materials and a small loan meant that some repair work could be done to the house and all the utilities reconnected.

Larysa's dream is to have all her sisters living at home with her and her new baby. Sadly we discovered that her youngest sister was adopted internationally and no further trace of her could be found. But her middle sister is in an institution nearby and Larysa is determined to give her a loving home.

Source: Ukraine

Getting children back into families

We work to reintegrate children back into their birth or extended families

In EESCCA, EveryChild trains social workers to provide emotional, practical and material support to enable the reintegration of institutionalised children back into safe, secure and loving families (biological or extended). Long-term preparation and support before and after reintegration is an essential part of the process. We also look to develop social services in the area so the support can be maintained after our intervention has ended. All of our programmes are developed in partnership with governments, with the aim of supporting them to develop an effective and integrated deinstitutionalisation programme.

In Asia, we work with a local organisation to assist street children who live and work in slums or in the railway stations. Around 97% of the children (in India) roaming the platforms, begging, sweeping and doing other menial jobs, have parents and a community they could return to. In Bangalore we provide safe homes and temporary accommodation for these children, where they receive counselling, rehabilitation and vocational skills development. We trace their parents and, where it is appropriate for the child to return home, offer support and guidance to reunite the families and help them stay together.

We develop alternative solutions for children who cannot live with their own families

“In Sub-Saharan Africa, where HIV is a major, and often the most significant, cause of orphaning, over 90% of orphans live with a relative.”⁷ Kinship care or informal fostering is a common response; it allows the children to remain in their community and hold on to a sense of family-belonging. In Africa, we support this type of family-based care for children who are separated from their parent(s). Our programme, implemented in collaboration with the government and other agencies, provides support services and material aid to already poor families. This enables them to care for vulnerable children who would otherwise be destitute and alone.

In EESCCA, in order to break the cycle of institutional care and all its associated deprivations, intervention at the earliest point is critical. Where it is not in the best interests of the child to live with their parents, we seek to develop family-based alternatives such as foster care. We train local partners to recruit and support foster parents to care for children who would otherwise be living in institutional care. A child may be fostered as a short-term measure to prevent placement in an institution; once the family is more stable, the child can be reintegrated back home.

Alternatively, if the child has already been placed in an institution, foster care will provide them with a loving family environment until they can be reintegrated with their birth family (or adopted if reintegration is not possible).

In other instances, daycare or rehabilitation centres for children offer advice, treatment and respite care for families. Similarly, Parent and Baby Units provide short-term accommodation and support to vulnerable parents who are at risk of placing their child in an institution. These centres and units offer a supportive environment in which parents can consider their options, as well as receive training and advice about parenting.

We trace the families of abandoned children

If a child has run away from home, been trafficked, or is living in an institution or on the street, they may have no idea where their parents or extended family are. Wherever we can, and when it is in the best interests of the child, we seek to reunite these children with their families. We are building child protection networks to trace the families of separated children; in South East Asia, where trafficking is one of the major causes of child separation, we are also developing systems to monitor missing children in the community.

⁷ International Social Service & Unicef, Improving protection for children without parental care – Care for Children Affected by HIV/AIDS: the Urgent Need for International Standards

Oliko and Oleg married very young. When their son Nikusha was born, the family were facing a serious financial crisis. Unable to find work and at risk of losing their home, the desperate parents felt they had no choice but to place their son in the local state-run institution when he was just five months old. Oliko and Oleg missed their son terribly, but felt that at least he would be well fed and cared for.

Nikusha spent five months in the institution; throughout that time his parents could not bear to be apart from him and visited him as often as they could. Having lived in an institution himself until he was 18, Oleg knew how bleak and lonely that life could be. He remembered the trauma of being separated from his parents and was distraught to have put his son through the same experience.

The director of the institution referred Oliko and Oleg to the EveryChild Family Support and Foster Care program. We gave the family practical and emotional support which enabled them to take their son home. The team put the family in touch with a local organisation which provided them with food and clothes. We also helped Oleg find a job which would enable him to support his family. He said, "We want Nikusha to have a better life than we did. We will never leave him again."

Source: Georgia



Corina was two years old when her mother sold her, without her father's consent or knowledge, to a family who wanted a servant to cook and clean in their home. The family beat her and worked her tirelessly for eight years. Unable to endure the suffering any longer, Corina ran away when she was ten years old to the streets of Chisinau, Moldova's capital city.

Our project worker found Corina shivering in a doorway, just a few days after she had run away. She was taken to the Tolstoy Centre – a care centre for street children – where, for the first time in years, she ate a proper meal instead of the usual scraps. She said that for the first time she could remember, someone looked into her eyes, spoke to her warmly and made her feel safe. Over time, and with the support of trained professionals, Corina gradually regained her trust in adults and learned how to play – something she had never been allowed to do before.

The psychologist worked with Corina to encourage her to talk about her past and try to remember any details about her family and where she lived before. In time the social workers were able to ascertain which region Corina was from, and traced her father, Ion, through the local authorities.

The first day he came to visit Corina was emotional for everyone – this solemn little girl's eyes lit up with a joy never seen before. EveryChild helped Corina and her father get to know one another again. Ion desperately wanted to give his daughter the loving home she deserved. We also helped him apply for the grants and support to which he was entitled, so he would be able to care for Corina properly. She now lives at home with her father, and has started school for the first time.

Source: Moldova



Keeping children safe

We protect children and empower them to claim their rights

EveryChild works to prevent violence, abuse and exploitation, protecting and supporting some of the world's most vulnerable children who are, or risk being, separated from their family and community. We raise awareness of children's rights, the issues and causes of child abuse and the role of the authorities to protect children.

Communities are often unaware of the consequences of child separation; they need to be equipped with the knowledge to act as a pressure group and enabled to change behaviours to keep children safe. We teach life skills to help children and families avoid separation, and raise awareness to help prevent discrimination and stigmatisation of people affected by HIV/AIDS, disability or single parenthood. Workshops and activities help children learn about their rights to a full education and a childhood free from exploitation and fear. With training and new knowledge, children, parents and communities are empowered to claim and defend their rights.

In order to strengthen the ability of parents to care for their children, we provide training in parenting skills, which encourages more communication, listening and understanding. We also develop child-friendly counselling services to try to improve the quality of life of those children who have suffered abuse or trauma, or are living with HIV/AIDS.

In some of the countries where we work, in partnership with local authorities, we develop services for children living and working on the street, as well as abused or maltreated children and their families. Our non-formal education projects mean that out-of-school and working children can benefit from primary education. The centres offer flexible hours that acknowledge the children's other commitments, provide them with basic education and a chance to be reintegrated back into the formal school system. More importantly, these centres are a safe-haven where street children – who are vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and trafficking in their daily lives – can be protected and their presence monitored by the local community.

Street children are also protected in safe houses, which provide intensive rehabilitative and supportive services, including counselling and skills training. The children are helped to find jobs or apprenticeships in order to further their reintegration into the community and to help them move on in life.

“Both my parents died from HIV/AIDS-related illnesses within two years of each other. My parents were unable to leave any money for us to live on. We were left destitute in a government-rented house but were soon taken in by different relatives. Being separated from my siblings was the saddest moment of my life. I had no idea where my brother and sister were taken. I was only ten years old at the time.

I had to leave school and start work as a domestic servant to earn money. I worked until late at night. I couldn't see a way out, so I decided to run away from my relative's house. On the first night I was raped.

It was horrible on the street but we did what we did simply because we had to survive. Given what had happened to me, I thought the only option was to get involved in prostitution to save money to get myself back to my old way of life.

After spending almost a year as a prostitute, I met another girl who knew about an organisation called Forum for Street Children-Ethiopia (EveryChild's local partner). I went along with her to the organisation's drop-in centre, where I met other children in the same position as me. The centre provided washing facilities and we could join in recreational activities, too.

For the first time since my parents died, and I was separated from my brother and sister, I genuinely felt that someone else cared for me. One day they took some of us to another project called a 'safe home'. There I met other former child prostitutes who were now involved in training and factory work. I hope to save enough to leave the safe house and move into a home of my own and start my new life.”

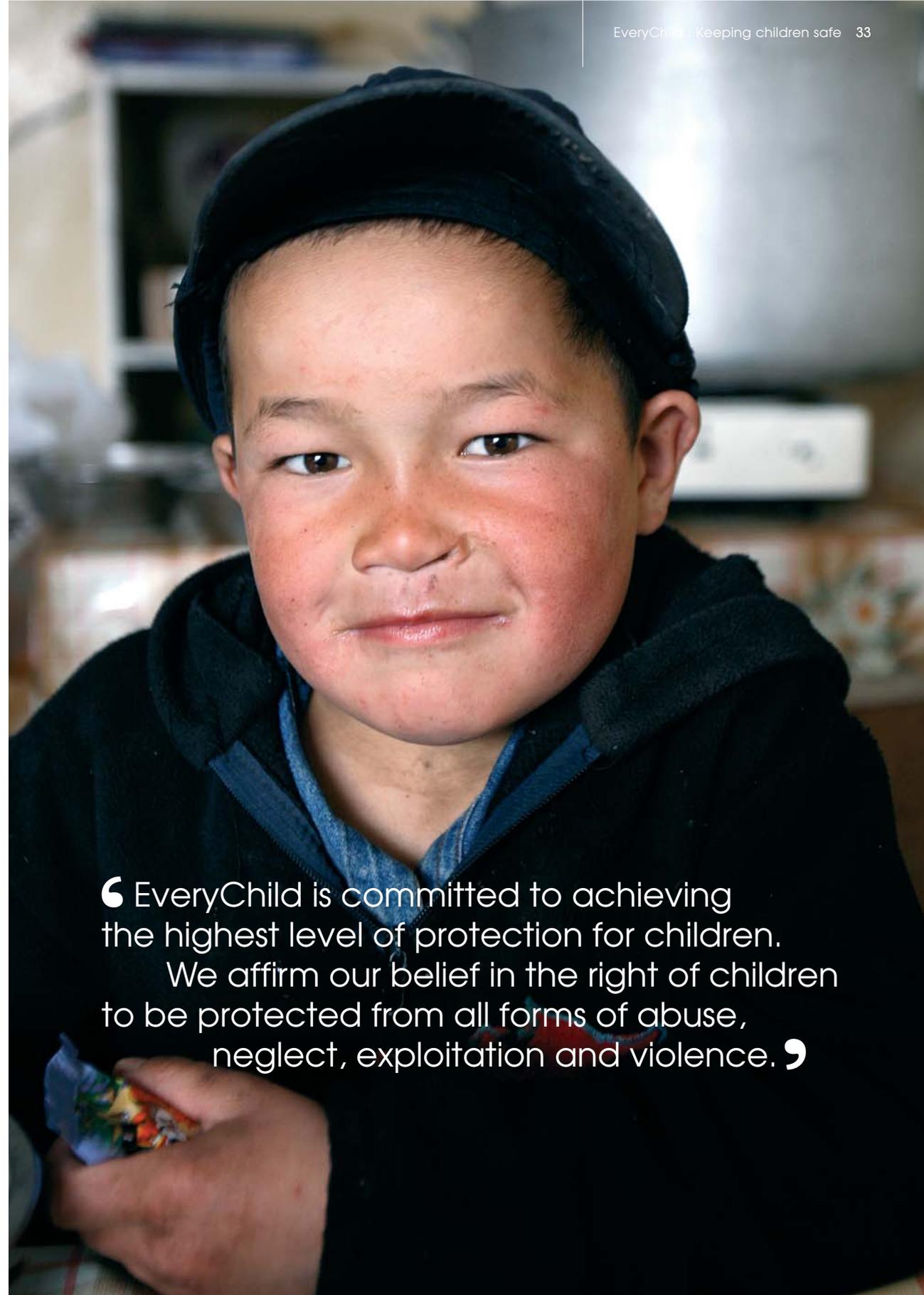
Aberash (aged 12), Ethiopia

We are committed to protecting children

As a member of the Keeping Children Safe Coalition, EveryChild is committed to achieving the highest level of protection for children. We affirm our belief in the right of children to be protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence, in line with the UNCRC. We believe that everyone has a responsibility to protect children and as an organisation we employ certain precautions, in line with our Child Protection Policy.

EveryChild has principles and codes that describe acceptable standards of behaviour and promote good practice. Projects for children, families and communities, including child sponsorship, need to be implemented in a safe environment. Our codes, standards and procedures help build a safe organisation and minimise the risk of abuse.

We have a Code of Conduct for our London-employed staff, Trustees and volunteers. Safeguarding checks, such as disclosure of previous convictions or police checks (if disclosure is unavailable), form an important part of our recruitment policy. This, alongside regular training and support, ensures that our Child Protection Policy is rigorously implemented.



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Creating fundamental and positive change

In many countries, there is inadequate or inconsistent legislation to address the issues of child separation. Not all governments demonstrate the same desire for change and childcare reform is often low on the political agenda. Many government responses fall short of the demand of the current situation. Some countries have no policies on separated children, and where policies do exist, laws are rarely converted into practice due to lack of financial resources or weak structures at a local level.

EveryChild works to develop and enhance services for children and families by working alongside local and national governments to reform childcare policies and laws. We support governments to enforce and strengthen legislation and monitor legislative progress. We offer advice about budgeting and encourage governments to deliver their objectives. We also seek to raise awareness through the media so that policies are successfully implemented at a local level. We use our expertise to help bring about changes in policy and law, to make lasting improvements in children's lives.

In order to successfully convince governments that our suggested methods work, we run pilot projects – either directly or with other local like-minded organisations. In doing so, governments and communities can see for themselves the positive impact on children and families. We then offer guidance and support to encourage local partners, governments and community groups to manage and expand the project independently, without our intervention. In this way, we make certain that every service we initiate will last long into the future.

→ In **The Kyrgyz Republic**, we are helping to develop children and family support services in several areas. We work with government partners at national, regional and local levels and have played a significant role in supporting the development of new approaches for the provision of support to children and families at risk in the community. This has included recruiting and training community-based social workers and enabling regional and local authorities to introduce dedicated departments to manage and expand the work.

We provide technical assistance to support the development of essential services that can prevent child and family separation and curtail the widespread use of institutional care. These include services that enable the reintegration of children living in institutions (including those with disabilities), the introduction of foster and kinship care, and outreach work with children living and working on the streets.

→ In **Georgia**, EveryChild works closely with government partners and other non-governmental organisations to support major changes to the current childcare system. A significant achievement has been the introduction of family support, reintegration and foster care services. We have shown that families can remain together if they are given the help they need, demonstrating that family-based alternatives to institutional care are achievable solutions. As a result, the government has begun to implement a programme – with our continued assistance

– to dismantle the existing system of institutional care for children and replace it with a range of community-based services. Key target groups include children in institutional care (including children with disabilities) and those at risk of being separated from their family.

→ In **Moldova and Ukraine**, EveryChild is leading projects funded by the European Union. Working in close collaboration with the government, these long-term projects aim to reduce the number of children in institutional care. This includes developing new services for children and families, raising public awareness, proposing more flexible budgeting systems (to ensure more money is invested in services which support children to stay in their families) and developing social work training. One of the key objectives is the development of legislation that will enable these changes to take place.

→ In **Russia**, we are working with local government to help develop a range of family support services which dramatically reduce the risk of children being placed in institutional care. The services work in targeted geographical areas and we are helping local authorities to increase and improve the range of services they offer to families at risk, who may be in crisis or may need general support. The services also target particular groups, e.g. children with profound disability who currently receive little or no appropriate care, and new parents who are at risk of placing their babies in institutional care.



“ We use our expertise to help bring about changes in policy and law to make lasting improvements in children’s lives. ”

→ In **Malawi**, we are working to change current child labour legislation and enforce new laws to prevent child labourers from being deprived of an education. Alongside our lobbying work, we aim to improve access to education and encourage children to go to school. Workshops and activities teach children about their right to a full education and a childhood free from exploitation and fear.

→ In **Ethiopia**, EveryChild, together with our local partner, Forum on Street Children-Ethiopia (FSCE), played a crucial role in changing the way police deal with street children. Prior to our intervention, children were often mistreated on the streets and in police stations, and locked up with adult offenders. With our support, FSCE began an awareness-raising programme with police commanders and trainees, using police radio stations and magazines.

Child Protection Units (CPUs) now operate in police stations, staffed by trained police officers, to ensure that all cases involving children are dealt with separately, in a manner sensitive to the child's vulnerability. If the offence is relatively minor, the CPU arranges a programme of community-based rehabilitation, together with the child and parents (if possible). This programme ensures that children are not locked up with adult offenders, with the risk of abuse and exposure to criminal activities. Thanks to this work, child protection is now seen as an accepted police activity and has been incorporated into the police-training curriculum.

→ In **India**, when the tsunami hit in December 2005, EveryChild's expertise meant that we were best placed to focus on long-term care. Working alongside organisations which specialised in direct emergency aid, we focused on the security and protection of children whose lives had been affected by the tsunami. In Nagapattinam, where the children were particularly exposed and vulnerable to abuse following the tsunami, we established a database to track children who were separated from their families and helped reunite them with relatives. We compiled information about children who had lost one or both parent(s) and shared it with the state authorities. This enabled these children to receive special assistance from the government to which they were entitled.

→ In **Cambodia**, we are working to develop and strengthen Village Volunteer Networks, with the primary aim of protecting children and caring for their best interests. Community volunteers, teachers and leaders are being trained on all aspects of child protection – from recognising and reporting abuse, to the process of referring cases to the appropriate agencies and authorities. In time, those who have been trained will cascade their learning to a wider audience across communities and schools.

→ In **Peru**, as part of our mission to eradicate child abuse and maltreatment we have trained staff on child protection legal issues. As part of the campaign, bus and taxi drivers in Lima were taught how to recognise and report incidences of child abuse which may occur in their vehicles. Bus drivers put large stickers in their buses proclaiming "Campaign against child sexual abuse – promote the rights of children and adolescents" so that children know that this is a safe environment for them to be in. We are also taking part in a wider campaign, with other like-minded NGOs, to pressure the government to declare child physical maltreatment (i.e. corporal punishment) illegal.

→ In **Guyana**, EveryChild is partnering with others to set up a working group on alternative care for children and is actively inputting into national consultations on child protection, supporting the development of national policies that protect orphans and vulnerable children. We are already having plenty of impact: a recent radio and television campaign reinforced the message that sexual abuse of children is unacceptable.

Coinciding with International Children's Day in June, the campaign stimulated debate about incest, a taboo subject for many Guyanese, but nevertheless a growing and hidden problem. Radio listeners were urged to "trust your own instincts and ask questions" if they suspected children were victims of incest. The pleading eyes of a small child exhorted TV viewers to "please make it stop."



Looking ahead

The vastness of the problem of separated children calls for an immediate and concerted effort by all concerned. At present, the current levels of investment, both in terms of effort and financial resource, do not meet the complex needs surrounding separation.

There is an urgent need to compile an accurate profile of separated children in individual countries and the interventions that are currently in place. At present, international data is scattered and outdated, undermining the planning of effective interventions. EveryChild is seeking to co-ordinate responses at a national, regional and international level, so that we can provide a meaningful and long-lasting response to the problem of separation which will reach even more children.

We need to work alongside other non-governmental organisations and international agencies that focus on separated children. Specialising in this way allows us to focus our resources where they are needed most, and, by sharing our experiences, we hope to effectively build on our past successes and continue to bring lasting change to children's lives.

Across the world, EveryChild is supporting thousands of children – getting them back into loving families, preventing them from being separated, protecting their rights and keeping them safe. Through our partner organisations we rescue children from the streets, institutions, enforced domestic work or child prostitution and help reunite them with their families and communities. If you would like further information about our organisation or programmes, please email gen@everychild.org.uk or call us on **+44 (0) 20 7749 2490**.

EveryChild around the world

These are the countries where we are working to improve the lives of separated children, and those at risk of separation.



If you would like to receive additional copies of this document, please contact us on **020 7749 2490** or email **gen@everychild.org.uk**.

Alternatively, please visit **www.everychild.org.uk/reports.php** to download a copy.

