

impact

ON EDUCATION

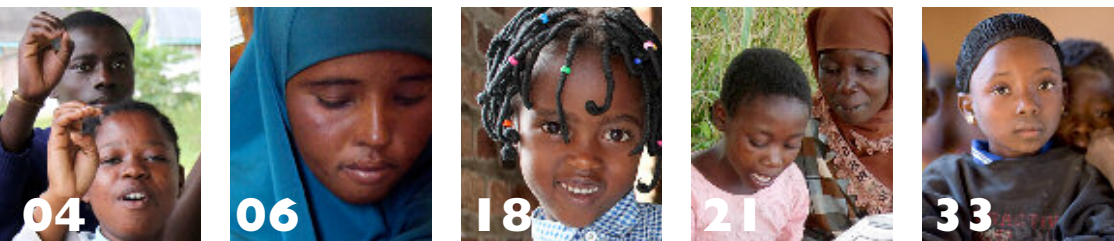


Laurent Duvillier



Save the Children

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**01 Directors' letter****02 Education Global Initiative** Moving ahead on education**Inclusion****04 Kenya** The Day of the African Child is for ALL children**06 Somaliland** Khadra learns without fear**08 Zimbabwe** Attending school: a right realized**10 Senegal** The benefits of inclusive education**12 Kenya** Living the Theory of Change through laws and policies**14 DRC** School is for everyone**Early Childhood Development****15 Mozambique** A little teacher at home**16 Mozambique** No boundaries to learning**18 Rwanda** Learning that learning is fun**20 Malawi** Child care centres are beacons of hope**Literacy****21 Malawi** Girl, blind in one eye, excels in school**22 Uganda** From learning to read to reading to learn**24 South Sudan** Learning still possible regardless of age**Education & Child Protection****26 Côte d'Ivoire** Saty's story: continuing her education away from home**28 Ethiopia** Dropping the whip**Girls' Education****30 Mali** Pushing the frontiers of girls' education through sponsorship**32 Swaziland** Empowering girls in Swaziland**33 Day of the African Child**

"Education is the most important thing. It hurts me when I see some [children] go to school but others do not have this possibility."

—Doudou Ba, 14
Senegalese boy with a disability

Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to bring you the latest edition of *impact*, focusing on EDUCATION.

Through our education work, we seek to ensure that every African child receives a good quality education and learns the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in the 21st century.

Sub-Saharan Africa is home to the vast majority of children out of school. We support them to stay in school and to complete a full course of primary education. We also improve the quality of education by training teachers, revising curricula and advocating positive discipline. We encourage girls and children with disabilities to learn and play, and work to develop children's physical, emotional, intellectual and social skills. We engage youth, helping them to make the transition to responsible citizens.

In countries affected by conflict and in places hit by natural disasters, we are building schools, equipping classrooms with materials and ensuring that kids can go to school on full stomachs. Our interventions provide children with a safe and secure place to be, help to build peace and reverse the damage wrought by crises.

In this issue, we bring to you a range of stories from the field, where we work to bring real change not only through programmes, but also by initiating changes in policy and legislation. We hope that you will share these stories, using them to urge your governments to comply with international education obligations and secure the necessary funding to advance the agenda on education.

Happy reading!

Sincerely,
Save the Children Directors in Africa

Moving ahead on education

I am delighted to have this opportunity to send a message to our colleagues in the Africa regions about our achievements in education as One Save the Children.

The good news is that the world has made very significant progress over the past decade towards the Education for All goals. The number of children out-of-school fell dramatically from over 100 million to under 70 million between 2000 and 2008. African countries made a significant contribution to this achievement with the number of out-of-school children dropping from 42 million to 29 million in Sub-Saharan Africa. However as many of you will know, there are still big challenges to be overcome to ensure that every child receives a good quality education – including the poorest and most marginalised and those children living in conflict situations or affected by emergencies.

I am proud to say that Save the Children is making a major effort to tackle these challenges. Last year Save the Children spent US \$266 million to support education programmes that reached 10 million children directly in 70 countries worldwide. Nearly half of the children we reached were in the 20 countries across Africa that run education programmes.

2012 will be an important year for all country offices in Africa as we transition to Save the Children International (SCI). This new structure will offer us the opportunity to build up our community of education practitioners throughout Africa as well as strengthen relationships with other thematic areas.

The Education Global Initiative provides a framework for innovation and collaboration as well as a strategic framework for all our education work across all members and country programmes and many of you recently participated in consultations to develop Save the Children's first ever global education strategy, *Moving ahead on education: A focused strategy for achieving our education goals 2012-2015*.

This exciting new strategy sets out a broad framework for our programmes as we learn to work together as one organisation. The strategy focuses on five strategic objectives:

- All children have access to a good quality basic education—especially those who are excluded and marginalised or living in conflict-affected fragile states.
- Children and youth at risk of, or affected by, emergencies have access to quality education as a fundamental part of all humanitarian responses.
- An increased number of young children have access to quality early childhood care and development programmes that ensure their rights to survival, health and education.
- To empower vulnerable youth in rural and urban areas through education and training to become active economic, social and political citizens.
- To secure global and national policy change so that all children benefit from their right to a good quality education.

We have also identified two breakthroughs which we hope to inspire in the way the world treats children and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives:

- All children are literate by the time they leave primary school, and
- All children caught up in humanitarian crises have access to quality education.

Our work continues to focus, therefore, on both access to and quality of education. Access and quality are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, we must strive to ensure both. We have made a public commitment to three million children living in conflict-affected fragile states that we will grant them access to education and we will continue to track progress towards this target as a demonstration of our seriousness.

We will not achieve any of our goals without the dedication and commitment of all of our staff and managers in the field. I want to take this opportunity on behalf of the poor children of the world to thank you for your efforts. Keep up the great work.

Tove Wang
CEO of Save the Children Norway
and Chair of the Education Global Initiative



Jenny Bloxham

The Day of the African Child is for ALL children

The theme of the Day of the African Child (DAC) this year is Children With Disabilities (CWDs). African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child chooses a specific theme for DAC every year, which the government, civil society and children are encouraged to focus on. It provides a great advocacy opportunity.

CWDs have all the same rights as all other children; including the right to education. Nevertheless, in Africa very many of them are still hidden in their homes. The main obstacle to ensuring education for CWDs is the negative attitudes and beliefs among parents, communities and even duty bearers. Particularly, the mentally impaired are considered useless or cursed; bringing stigma to the whole family. Can you think of many people more marginalized than a poor rural girl with a disability? Yes, these are the people that Save the Children strategy is committed to reach.

According to the social or rights-based model, we are not staring at the medical problem anymore. The challenge is not the child or the disability, but the environment that is not conducive to different kinds of children. CWDs should have the right to choose to attend the community school and not be sent away to special schools, separated from their family and community. However, their voices are rarely heard or their achievements seen.

In Vihiga, Western Kenya, Save the Children has been partnering with a local NGO, Girl Child Network, as well as district education structures, particularly Education Assessment and Resource Centres, to ensure attainment of inclusive education for all children. This year, they have been planning the DAC celebrations together with other government departments, civil society and children. They intend to mobilize the entire community to ensure active and meaningful participation of children with disabilities in the event. These children will show their talents through talk shows, exhibitions, drawings, paintings, performances etc. The objective is to raise awareness on the rights of children with disabilities and break the myth that disability is inability.

Academic performance is still overvalued, and many teachers are “teaching to test” rather than teaching to enable learning. In the words of one boy: “those classmates



Students say hello in sign language at the Kwale school for the deaf. Communication barriers do not need to hinder the participation of children with disabilities.

who cannot learn so fast, the teacher forces them to repeat class or tells them that they are too stupid to learn with others”. That attitude is now slowly changing, as teachers and communities are starting to appreciate even the small steps in learning or improving life skills.

For more information contact *Kirsi Peltola*, Child Rights Advisor, Save the Children Kenya, kirsi@savethechildrenfin.or.ke

Khadra learns without fear

Khadra, 17, lives in Dubur village in Somalia. In 1999, she lost both her hands to a landmine. She picked up an unusual object lying on the ground near her house in Dubur. Within seconds, the object exploded. It was an Antipersonnel, Antimagnetic Pressure Mine. She was rushed to Berbera Hospital, where she spent 30 days in pain and despair. The doctors had no choice but to amputate.

To compound the tragedy, Khadra was being denied access to formal school. She joined a Quranic school instead in 2001, after she healed from her injury. She finished in four years. But her thirst for learning remained unquenched. Eventually, she was able to move to the Dubur Alternative Basic Education (ABE) school in the Sahil region of Somaliland, supported by Save the Children.

Khadra's village is drought affected and the majority of people move from one place to another in search of fodder and water for their animals. She lives with her family in a traditional Somali hut. Luckily, the school is located near her house.

Despite having a serious disability, Khadra is like any other girl who has dreams to achieve. Her economic condition and disability raise a question mark, however, Khadra has never surrendered to her circumstances, and focuses on moving ahead. She aspires to be a teacher or development worker and wants to serve the underprivileged children in Somaliland. Khadra's dignity, optimism and ambition have made her a model for others.

Save the Children has been supporting the Dubur ABE school with support from the European Commission. Apart from constructing the school, the project has been providing the school with basic learning and teaching materials including textbooks and learning materials to children from poor families.

There are five teachers in the school, including one female teacher. Teachers are recruited, trained and managed through the Ministry of Education of Somaliland. Save the Children also provides training to teachers, capacity building to education authorities as well as awareness raising for community members on the rights of children, inclusive education and the learning needs of children with disabilities.

Additionally, the project has established children clubs, where children like Khadra become aware of their rights, build up their self-confidence, and are inspired to attend school regularly. Today, Khadra is preparing for the grade eight leaving exam, and will soon join secondary school. Her ambition is to become a university graduate.

For more information contact Fatoun Farah Hassan, Education Project Officer, Save the Children Somaliland, fatounfarah@scsom.org



Fatoun Farah Hassan

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Attending school: a right realized

Gogo (Grandma) Ndhlovu never thought that she would live to see the day that her ten-year-old granddaughter Thembeni would go to school like other children in the village. But that day came much sooner than expected.

Thembeni received a wheelchair under Save the Children's Re-write the Future programme, being implemented in Matobo district in Zimbabwe. The programme has been assisting many children with special conditions to access school.

"This is a miracle! I am so happy because my granddaughter can now move around our home, village and even go to school on her own. She could not do all this from the time she was a baby," said Gogo.

Thembeni developed a condition known as hemiplegia and one side of her body was paralysed shortly after birth. Speculation over the cause of her sickness led to her parents divorcing. When her mother remarried, she left Thembeni in the care of her ailing grandmother.

Sending Thembeni to school was never an option for Gogo, as it meant carrying the child on her back for four kilometers every day to get to Mahetshe Primary School. Now, Thembeni is attending early childhood development classes there, and will soon be proceeding to grade one.

When she grows up Thembeni wants to become a teacher. "Thembeni is a very intelligent girl who loves to socialize with other children," said her teacher Ms. Saziso Ncube. "If she had come to school earlier she would be at the same grade level as her age mates and would be coping without any difficulty."

Save the Children is supporting a number of activities in Matobo district which include training of Early Childhood and Development teachers, provision of teaching and learning materials, supporting sporting activities and assisting children with special needs to get assistive devices that can enable them to attend school and also learn without difficulty.

For more information, contact Cleopatra Nzombe, Acting Technical Program Manager Education, Save the Children Zimbabwe, cleopatran@savethechildrenzw.org



Laurent Duvillier/Save the Children Sweden

After class Doudou Bâ (in striped orange shirt), 14, plays with one of his classmates in front of his school in Keur Mbaye Fall, Dakar, Senegal. He has been integrated into a school where students with and without disabilities learn together in the same classroom.

The benefits of inclusive education

Shortly after birth, Doudou lost both legs in a car accident. The only way Doudou can walk is with the help of crutches or by wheelchairs. The boy experienced many difficulties in accessing schools that are usually not fit for children with disabilities and suffered discrimination in the classroom. He was about to drop out of school.

Thanks to Save the Children and its local partner organization COSYDEP (Coalition des Organisations en Synergie pour la Défense de l'Éducation Publique), Doudou has been integrated into a school where students with and without disabilities learn together in the same classroom.

Doudou's house is not far from his school but it takes him two hours to get home every day as there is no pavement but just sandy roads with heavy traffic. In November 2011 Doudou's school was rehabilitated with special equipment and cement alleys that made the classrooms easily accessible to all children using wheelchairs or crutches.

Story and photos by Laurent Duvillier. For more information contact Ibrahim Coulibaly, Media and Communications Officer, Save the Children Sweden Cote d'Ivoire, IbrahimC@ci.savethechildren.se

"I appreciate the fact that I was accepted by the school and my classmates. It's beautiful. It's really beautiful. They could have rejected me. They could have said they only accept children who have feet. They could have said that children with disabilities have to look for other places to study. But they did not. All of us have been enrolled in the same classroom. They put all students together. It shows we are all equal. We are all human beings, whether living with a disability or not."

"In my class, I had problems at first. Some children laughed at me. They said nasty things such as 'what is a disabled person doing in our school?'. This usually happened at the end of the class or in the playground, but now my classmates come to me for forgiveness—and I'm always ready to forgive them. I don't take it personally. I know they don't mean to hurt me."

"I have a message for the children living with disabilities —don't be ashamed to go to school. Get out and go for it. If you say you want to become someone in life, start a family and have children, do not be ashamed. You shouldn't beg in the streets, you should go to school and study instead. If you decide to cut off from the outside world and stay at home, how can you fix your problems? No one sees you. No one can help you deal with your problems. I'd rather get out than stay at home."

"I like the way school benches have been re-arranged in our classroom. It allows us to work in groups. We can share information with each other. Sometimes a student does not know the answer, but in the end everyone can find out. In my group I have been chosen as the 'moderator'. When there is a quarrel within the group, I am responsible for coming between those who argue and bring them together to talk and agree."

"I do have a wheelchair but I prefer using my crutches. When I go to the blackboard, I feel more comfortable with crutches. This way I can move more easily. My classmates help me a lot. When I am done with my assignment, one of my classmates brings my notebook to the teacher. And if I have to go to the blackboard, one of my friends gets the sponge wet for me and hands it out to me."

"If I were in front of the President of Senegal, I would ask him to help children but particularly those with disabilities. The whole country won't grow unless we are all at school. Our President is the 'guardian' of our country. He must make every effort to ensure that all children go to school—whatever it takes. We cannot stay on the street and beg for money. Education is the most important thing. It hurts me when I see some go to school but others do not have this possibility."

—Doudou Ba

Kirsi Peltola



ECD pupils in Sheywe primary school, Western Kenya Caption. By the time these children finish primary school, will they still have retained their curiosity and eagerness to learn?

Living the Theory of Change through laws and policies

Laws and policies are legal frameworks that facilitate all children to realize their rights. They task the duty bearers (foremost the Government) in supporting children to enjoy their rights and undertake their responsibilities.

The old Chinese proverb tells us: 'Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.' Paying school fees for a child will make him happy today, but ensuring that the free education policy is implemented will make millions more happy, and in a much more sustainable way. In short, that is why we should ensure that every project also includes policy work.

In Kenya, Save the Children partner Girl Child Network has been working with the Ministry of Education (MoE) in the revision, formulation and implementation of various education policies for five years already. This includes advocating for an inclusive approach to education embedded in all the key policies and strategic frameworks. Currently, the education sector is still operating under the old Education Act that was passed in 1968 (so it really needs rewriting!). Girl Child Network is therefore partnering with the government in the current education reforms that seek to realign the education sector with the Constitution 2010. The Government appreciates having continuous long term support in this process instead of just one-off comments or criticism. Progress is slow but steady.

Some particular successes of the steady child rights advocacy work by Girl Child Network:

- Recommendations on the teachers Service Commission Bill (a bill that will enable the TSC to be independent as outlined in the constitution) to the Committee on the

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Implementation of the Constitution. Amongst the agreed upon issues is zero-tolerance on Teachers who are perpetrators of sexual offences and child violations in schools and harmonization of the Teachers Code of Conduct to the current laws.

- Development of a Circular with the TSC outlining the conduct and role of teachers in relation to child protection and gender based violence in schools. This circular has since been disseminated in all schools across the country.
- The importance of child participation is now understood by the MoE, and adopted as an approach that will be integrated in the teaching methodology and curriculum.
- There is now more emphasis on competency assessment rather than just academic examinations.
- Issues of children with special needs are incorporated in the sector reform, but more inclusion is needed instead of separate special schools and units.

The principles guiding education reform are quality, access, equity, relevance and innovations. Civil society has been advocating particularly for a more equitable education system, so that even poor children in remote areas can access quality education. The children's sector in Kenya pointed out that nobody had actually asked the children what kind of education system they would prefer. Thus another Save the Children partner KAACR (Kenya Alliance for Advancement of Children) arranged consultations with children, whose views were included in the civil society memorandum. The children did not want the number of school years to change, but they applauded other changes in the education system, such as abolishing tuition fees, ending terms earlier and having a grading system with less examination pressure.

Change takes time. But it is possible.

For more information contact Florence Annan, Deputy Director, Girl Child Network, florence@savechildrenfin.or.ke or Kirsi Peltola, Child Rights Advisor, Save the Children Kenya, kirsi@savethechildrenfin.or.ke



School is for everyone

Blaise Imblapaye Tungulo is eleven years old. He is a dwarf—a disability that makes everyone regard him as an object of wonder in his village in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

His mother did not accept this view. She wanted to send Blaise to school when he was six. However, due to a lack of resources, this was not possible. After their father's death, Blaise and his brother went to live with their uncle. Again, it was poverty that forced the children to stay home.

Save the Children organised a community meeting to identify and enable vulnerable children to be reintegrated into school. Blaise learnt that he was a candidate for free schooling, and that he was eligible to join the second grade. He grabbed the opportunity with both hands.

Blaise's school, the Bukeleme Elementary School in Ituri province, is supported by Save the Children, which provides equipment for the school, trains teachers, and works with parents and teachers to build a positive learning environment. The proceeds of the school canteen and a kitchen garden on the premises pay for several vulnerable children whose families are unable to afford their school fees.

Initially, the children at school were afraid to play with Blaise, and he felt isolated. Save the Children worked with teachers, students and parents on a number of topics including child protection and inclusive education. It worked! Slowly, everyone was more accepting of Blaise. He made friends, and began to enjoy school.

In the most recent school exam, Blaise stood first! He is excellent at mathematics, says his teacher. "When I grow up, I want to be a trader," he says.

For more information, please contact Boubakar Lompo, Education Program Coordinator, Save the Children, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), educoord.savethechildren@gmail.com

A little teacher at home

Luke Valente Chaúque lives in Gaza province, Mozambique. His five-year-old granddaughter, Rael Nelson, is his 'little teacher at home'.

Rael narrates to him all the stories she hears in class. When she finishes a story, she says, "I am the Animadora ('Animator' at her preschool)!" That's his cue to tell her what the moral of the story is. Luke enjoys this daily game with his grandchild.

The Animadora at Rael's preschool uses story-telling as a way to engage the children's attention and to help them to learn. Save the Children is supporting Rael's preschool as part of its Early Childhood Development (ECD) programme, which promotes cognitive development, encourages questioning, and the exploration of ideas and the child's environment.

Preschools in Mozambique are usually privately run, tend to be located in urban areas, and are too costly for many children. Save the Children brings the opportunity of preschool learning to less served communities at lower costs by involving the community in the creation and management of the preschool.

Luke is pleased with his decision to send Rael to preschool. "She brings home new knowledge every day," he says. "I ended up buying a basin and soap after she began to ensure that she washed her hands after using the toilet—something that she learned from the Animadora. Washing our faces when we wake up is another habit we have acquired with her insistence."

Luke loves it when Rael wishes him good morning in Portuguese, encouraging him to speak the language with her. He also likes to watch her organizing her school bag for the morning.

This year, Rael completed preschool, and has joined the primary school. Luke is very proud. Rael says that the primary school is a 'serious' business, because she will work with numbers and letters now, not just stories.

For more information contact Nacima Figia, National Education Coordinator, Save the Children Mozambique, nfigia@savethechildren.org

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—Luke Valente Chaúque

No boundaries to learning

Clencia, a young girl from the village of Lipango in Mozambique had her very first pre-school class under the shade of a mango tree.

It was 2008, and Clencia was just five years old when Save the Children reached her remote area and introduced its early childhood development program to hundreds of children from ages three to five.

Under that tree and later in a preschool classroom, Clencia learned how to draw using pencil and paper, an important step to writing. She also learned how to sing and dance. While attending preschool, Clencia quickly made friends, gained confidence and overcame her shyness towards other children and adults.

Most children in the poorest communities around the world do not receive the support they need during early childhood to reach their academic and social potential. In Mozambique, for example, only four percent of children who are at ages considered critical for growth and development (ages 0-3) have access to educational services.

Save the Children addresses this gap by introducing its Early Childhood Development program in many poor communities. Designed to teach basic thinking, listening, reading, writing, and social skills, the program aims to increase the percentage of children entering and succeeding in elementary school.

This program promotes learning not only within classrooms, but in homes and community spaces as well. Skilled facilitators team up with community health workers to engage the children, their parents, and other members of the community in activities that promote the importance of well-being and early childhood education. Books, toys, games and other materials to encourage children to learn are all made locally.

In some countries, Save the Children may also partner with elementary schools. This partnership helps support the organization's effort to ease the transition of children from preschool to the more formal setting of an elementary school.

Today, at age 8, you can see how an early start on learning has made a difference in Clencia's life. As one of the first graduates of Save the Children's early education program in Mozambique, she is now a vibrant third-grader, always surrounded by friends.

Her third-grade teacher, Ana Paula, says that "While Clencia excels in all disciplines, her problem-solving skills in math are enviable. She is totally at ease and shows interest by asking questions."



Domingos Mahangue

Clencia, age 8, sits with her mother, Ligia as she practices the reading and writing skills she learned from Save the Children's early childhood development program in Lipango, Mozambique.

She adds that Clencia, like others who attended pre-school, is "quick to grasp new concepts and easy to teach." She notices Clencia's leadership skills, observing how she, along with others like her, "motivates her peers by leading them in songs and games they learned in preschool."

Clencia's mother, Ligia, also notices the positive changes in her daughter. She says, "Save the Children's early learning program awakened my child's intelligence". This remark goes to the heart and soul of a program that can have lasting change on children's lives—even if it has to happen in the humblest of places, a patch of shade under a mango tree.

Story by Tippin Coscolluela-Litke, Volunteer, mcoscolluela@savechildren.org



Feza, six, with her father. “My favourite thing is counting” says Feza. She proceeds to count one to ten in both Kinyarwanda and English. In just a few months she will enroll at the local primary school. She is excited because she will go with her two best friends from the ECCD centre. “I can’t wait to start school”.

Learning that learning is fun

Feza Leah is six years old. She’s been attending a community-run Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centre in south-western Rwanda for the past two years. With the support of Save the Children, Feza’s community is running a centre where children aged 3-6 can come for several hours each day.

At the centre, a specially-trained caregiver carries out fun activities which are designed to improve young children’s developmental skills (cognitive, language, socio-behavioural, fine and gross-motor skills). This serves the dual purpose of preparing children for primary school, and providing a safe place for them to play whilst their parents work.

Feza’s father, Jean-Baptiste, says there is a marked difference between children who have attended ECCD centres and those who have not. “When our ECCD children arrive in Primary 1, they are prepared to learn. The other children have huge difficulties in adapting from their previous lives of tending to animals or just hanging around.”

Jean-Baptiste’s older son, Louis, also attended an ECCD centre a few years ago. He is now nine years old and is always among the top performers in Primary 3. Jean Baptiste is convinced that the early exposure to learning is still paying off.

“It is not only what they know – it is also their behaviour and attitude” Jean-Baptiste continues, “Feza’s time at the ECCD centre has taught her to be organized. She even copies her elder brother when he is doing his homework, and she shows us the songs and dances she learned that day.”

Save the Children trains ECCD caregivers in facilitating activities to help children learn some of the building blocks of school – letters, numbers, colours, etc. – through a medium of playful songs and dances. By making learning fun, Save the Children hopes to encourage children and parents in the positive value of education.

For more information contact Hannah Matthews, Member & Donor Liaison Officer, Save the Children UK in Rwanda, h.matthews@Savethechildren.org.rw



Child care centres are beacons of hope

Five year old Blessings Kida lives in Mkanda Village of Zomba District in Malawi. His mother, Mary Mchiko, is a subsistence farmer who earns just enough to feed her family.

Mary noticed that Blessings was experiencing delays in achieving some developmental milestones. For instance, he began crawling at nine months, and didn't walk before he was two. She took him to hospital to see what was wrong, but the medical personnel did not find any problems. Mary began to fear that Blessings was showing signs of some kind of paralysis. And with time it seemed he was showing signs of mental retardation and confusion. He did not enjoy playing with other children, and often hit them and cried uncontrollably. His language and communications skills remained underdeveloped.

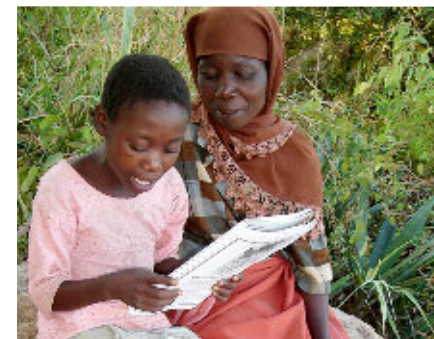
Mary needed to take care of her newborn baby, and she found it more and more difficult to take care of Blessings. The Atupele Community Based Care Centre was set up in her village in October 2010, serving a hundred children. It turned out to be the ideal place to unlock the challenges Blessings was going through.

"I never valued and appreciated what was happening at Atupele Community Based Care Centre until I heeded the advice [of the management] and took Blessings there," recalls Mary. Before, he could not even call out his mothers' name. Now, he can tell her he wants to use the toilet.

The activities at the Atupele Community Based Care Centre have transformed the boy. Through songs, storytelling and other teaching and learning aids, Blessings has started playing with his peers and engaging with his caregivers. He has started developing abilities to speak and use his once feeble limbs. He is also able to feed himself and identify some of his friends by their names.

Save the Children supports 320 such community based care centers in Malawi.

For more information contact Ruth Kamphanje, Program Assistant,
rkamphanje@savechildren.org



Girl, blind in one eye, excels in school

Beatrice Kaiwe is an 11-year-old girl from a remote village in Malawi. Blind in one eye, Beatrice had not learned to read even after completing several years of primary school. She was embarrassed by her failure to read, and refused any help from teachers and mentors, including the one offered by Mai Margaret Thaulo of Save the Children.

Mai works as a mentor and a reading camp leader for the Literacy Boost program initiated by Save the Children. Literacy Boost works to improve young children's ability to read and learn inside and outside the classroom walls through community activities like reading camps and book banks.

After several unsuccessful attempts to get Beatrice to attend the reading camp Mai took a stand: if Beatrice refused to go to the reading camp, she would go to Beatrice's home instead and read to her. Her efforts paid off when she noticed Beatrice's growing interest in listening to stories.

"I deliberately stopped reading for her at her house and told her that we had to continue doing the activity at the reading camp," Mai said. "Because of her growing interest in listening to stories, she decided to show up at the camp one day and that was the turning point."

Today, as a 4th grader, Beatrice is thriving at her school and has been chosen as one of the group leaders in the camp. The girl who was once described by her teacher, Mr. Kayenga as "very quiet and withdrawn, often crying when asked to read in class," has mastered the alphabet and can read up to almost 40 words in one minute. Her sister, Lucy, a 7th grader, helps out by reading to her daily.

When asked about her experience, Beatrice said, "I never knew that one day I would overcome my inability to read. I am so thankful for what I have learned from the reading camp and want to share my knowledge with my friends in the village and at school."

Story by Tippin Coscolluela-Litke, Volunteer, mcoscolluela@savechildren.org

From learning to read to reading to learn

In 2009 Save the Children with support from Wellspring started implementing non-formal education in Amuru and Nwoya districts of Northern Uganda. This region had suffered a prolonged insurgency against the Lord's Resistance Army, a war that lasted for 22 years and led to enormous destruction of lives and livelihoods in the region. Many children who yearned for the opportunity to access school missed out on education for multiple years.

The non-formal CHANCE schools established by Save the Children in close collaboration with communities and district local governments have provided access to children especially in remote and hard to reach areas. To improve the quality of education these schools have started to implement "Literacy Boost", an innovative program helping young children develop reading skills in and out of school. Currently thirty schools have opened, enrolling over 4,500 children and 105 teachers. Seventy-five of these teachers are paid a monthly stipend by Save the Children and the remaining 30 by the community. Center Management Committees with a total of 250 members have been selected and trained by Save the Children together with the Center Coordinator Tutors from the Gulu Primary Teachers College on their duties. These non-formal learning centers started in temporary traditional structures, built with support from the communities. The parental and community involvement has been very successful and these centers are "owned" and managed by the communities. At the same time Save the Children is lobbying the government to include these schools in the official education system, ensuring teachers training and sustainable salaries.

"I used to look at written text but didn't know its meaning. When so many books were brought to our school by SC and we were allowed to borrow those books and take them home, I started reading with my friend (reading buddy), I now know how to read the letters from a to z and I even know the sounds of the letters because our teachers tell us to practice this in class."

—Obina Andrew, student



Amy Jo Dowd

Simple reading cards help children practice and enjoy reading.

To enhance the quality of education, focusing on literacy, Save the Children introduced "Literacy Boost" at the end of 2010. "Literacy Boost" is Save the Children's innovative, evidence-based response to the alarming global trend: a rise in the number of children finishing primary school unable to read. A recent national survey (March 2012) revealed that literacy levels are falling in Uganda. At primary 3 it decreased from 57.6% in 2010/2011 to 47.9% in 2011/2012. Literacy Boost involves the development of low-cost and locally made reading materials to keep children engaged and interested in reading, writing, using games, songs and other fun activities in reading and writing lessons. The community action and material development aims at providing books and developing book-banks within the community, while trained community reading mentors conduct reading camp activities, including "reading buddies". Reading awareness workshops are organized to help parents support their children's reading and writing activities at home and create a print environment within communities and household. Currently, Save the Children has trained 105 teachers in 9 teacher training sessions. The project established 34 reading camp sites and trained 68 reading camp mentors and provided assorted Luo and English readers to these camps.

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Emmanuel Kenyi

Learning still possible regardless of age

At 35 years old, Riek Machiek believes it is not too late for her to learn how to read and write her name in English. Machiek enrolled for the Save the Children supported Alternative Learning Programme (ALP) in October last year.

Machiek and her classmates attend classes under a tree every evening. Although she is still in level one, she is determined to reach great heights. Machiek never went to school before, but four months into her studies she can now afford a smile after learning how to write and read a few sentences in English.

“I have come to acquire knowledge so that I can read and write my name. I don’t know how to read the names of medicines, although I am a midwife,” Machiek shares.

Some women laugh at me. They ask me why am I going to school when I am old, instead of leaving the chance to young people. I tell them that education has no age limit.

—Riek Machiek, 35

“I didn’t go to school at all in my life, so I am still starting level one. I grew up in the village where there were no schools. When I was young I didn’t know anything about education. Now I am married to an educated man so I want to study and be at the same level with my husband.”

The majority of women in Rumbek didn’t go to school because of traditional beliefs. As a result parents prefer to keep girls at home training them to become future mothers.

Machiek is one of the few lucky women; she learnt to work as a midwife through her husband in his clinic while still in Khartoum. But now she must learn how to read and write to enable her to work properly.

“When you don’t go to school and learn, it is difficult for you to work in the hospital because you cannot fill the records of your work, and reading instructions on the medicine is difficult,” Machiek adds.

“Today everything needs education. Now people understand the importance of education. I will continue with education until I become old or blind. Now I want to study until university and become a certified nurse.”

“Some women laugh at me; they ask me why am I going to school when I am old, instead of leaving the chance to young people. I tell them that education has no age limit,” she says.

Machiek has to come to terms with a lot of challenges as she continues with her studies. “Our biggest problem as women is that we have a lot of things to do at home, like cooking and taking care of children. This makes it difficult for mothers to come to school. Some women fear to come to class because they are already old, while other husbands don’t allow their wives to attend classes because they feel it is waste of time going to school.”

Save the Children is supporting ALP to help men and women in Rumbek, Lakes State, so that women like Machiek can go to school despite their age.

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Saty's story: continuing her education away from home

Saty is nine years old. In November 2010 she and 500,000 other children in Côte d'Ivoire fled their homes in the wake of heavy fighting that resulted from disputed elections. Saty left school in Abidjan, moving from town to town for safety, until she arrived in Duekoué, in the west of Côte d'Ivoire.

"I was in Anyama (south area) with my father, mother and my little sister, Cyntish, during the time the conflict got worse in January. Later we moved to Yopougon. The battle started there and we had to move on again. My father stayed in Abidjan and I came to Duekoué in February with my mother and my little sister."

Duekoué was not actually the best place for Saty and her family. It was one of the most affected conflict areas. On the move again, Saty and her disabled mother left Duekoué to find refuge in Man, another city in the west of Cote d'Ivoire. They spent two months there before returning to Duekoué. That was where Saty had the opportunity to return to school, having already missed four months.

"When I came back to Duekoué in May, my grandmother registered me at the Catholic Mission school. She did not pay anything!"

Saty is doing well according to her volunteer teacher, Mr. Gnotin, and she is happy to have friends to play with.

"Before I was just with my family and I played with my sister...but now I have friends and we play together every day. It is better...now I can go to the next grade and my mother will be so happy, school is my happiness too."

Saty's mother, Cynthia is relieved her daughter can now access education: "Before in the war Saty had no school, no hope and I did not know when it was going to end. It felt like forever we would be moving and moving. But here we feel safer and she goes to school every day which is very important for her future if she wants to find good work."

"Before I was just with my family and I played with my sister...but now I have friends and we play together every day. It is better. Now I can go to the next grade and my mother will be so happy. School is my happiness too."

—Saty, 9



Ozoukou Daniel / Save the Children

Nine-year-old Saty studies at the Catholic mission school in Duekoué. She is one of 40,000 children who have been targeted by Save the Children's "Back to School" campaign.

In response to the need for emergency education in places such as Duekoué, Save the Children has provided educational materials such as school kits, teacher kits and recreation kits. They also provide support for catch up learning activities, awareness raising for "Back to School" and advocacy centred on the integration of displaced pupils into functioning educational structures.

Save the Children recruited and trained volunteer teachers to ensure quality supervision and education for internally displaced children in conflict areas such as Duekoué. Said Mr Gnotin: "When the crisis got worse in March all the teachers left the Catholic mission ... we have been recruited and trained by Save the Children to ensure education to children who are internally displaced."

Around 1,000 pupils attend these classes and Save the Children provides all students with school kits. The training provided by Save the Children to volunteers has ensured children can succeed in graduating to the next class: "Almost all of our pupils passed to the next grade, succeeding in the primary test," said Mr Gnotin. He also described how it is to have Saty as a student: "Saty is a very good girl with good behaviour. She has lots of friends and always tries to be friendly to the new students."

Saty is ambitious for the future. "I want to be a nurse when I finish my studies," she says. "I want to cure people!"

Saty's mother plans on leaving Duekoué when it is safe for them to return home to Abidjan and be reunited with their father. For now, despite the disruptions in her life, Saty is able to continue her education. However she is looking forward to going back to her school in Abidjan, "I miss my friends and my teacher. I want to go home soon—when it is safe."

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Dropping the whip

'Promotion of Safe Schools in Ethiopia' is a project that Save the Children has been implementing in schools since 2010 in collaboration with four local NGOs. The project aims at improving the quality of education through reducing the prevalence and incidence of violence against children in schools and the community.

The major activities of the project include: strengthening school and community structures to prevent, protect and respond to violence against children; equipping teachers with basic skills of child centered teaching approach; empowering children to actively participate in issues relevant to their lives; and strengthening psychosocial and medical services for survivors of violence.

The African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) in Ethiopia is one of the partners working on this project in Hawassa town, 270 kilometers from Addis Ababa. ANPPCAN implements the project in five schools, including Ethiopia Tikidem Primary School which hosts over 2,300 students, more than half of which are girls.

Henok, age 15, is in grade seven at Ethiopia Tikidem primary school. Like many of his mates, he experienced many challenges in his own community and at school. Overall, he never forgets the physical punishment by the subject teacher: "One day I was busy at home and came to school without doing my homework. The teacher asked us to show the homework but I could not do this. He told me to go out and there were others who followed me for the same case. He had us kneel down for some time and then he beat all of us with a stick. That day I cried a lot and will never forget it throughout my life. I hated the teacher and the subject. For the teacher it was normal and others were also doing the same. Children in school have no chance to explain their problem before the teacher."

Many children experienced the agony that Henok faced. Despite the law to ban corporal punishment in schools, many teachers still practice it. Teachers, children and the community had little or no information on effects of violence on children and their school performance. This can be attested from the words of W/ro Dume who has been teaching for over a decade; "I have been in teaching for over 15 years. I used to believe in caning children to make them disciplined both in school and at home."

Parents and the community including educators seem to understand less the impact of corporal punishment and violent acts on academic performance and holistic development of a child. The project has attempted to change the long entrenched negative traditional and pragmatic attitudes and social norms against children.



Save the Children/Ethiopia/2011

Haimanot(F) delivers training for her school's student council members and presents the Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP) club's mission and vision.

Parent Teacher Association Members, teachers, children and community members and CBOs have been trained on various issues to prevent, protect and respond to violence against children. Awareness raising and community sensitization events were conducted. The intervention has brought immense changes in attitude and practice of the teachers, parents and children themselves. W/ro Dume explains the change as follows:

"...I regret the way I brought up my older children. I used to beat them for every bit and piece of information they did. Thanks to the project, I have dropped the stick. I realize that children should be treated in a way that is not humiliating; through love, advice and guidance. I will never refrain from reporting to the concerned body whenever I see such harms happening to children from now onwards."

Ato Ayalew, the former Director of the Ethiopia Tikidem Primary school at a time, stated the change as: "I have got enough knowledge. I will never punish anyone, I dropped my whip. Every year the school community agreed to celebrate 'Day of the Whip'. This is the day that we will advocate against physical punishment."

Various clubs and student councils have been established, strengthened and children are taking active part. Henok and Haimanot Adane (aged 12 and grade 6) are members of the student council assuming the title of Communication Minister and Prime Minister respectively. They attended various trainings that are meant for empowering children. They are happy for the changes that they see in their school.

Haimanot explains the changes going around the schools as "...Thanks to Save the Children and ANPPCAN, we have been empowered, and teachers have changed their behavior. At present, I have not seen a child being beaten in school. I want to thank all teachers. They seem to understand our challenges. They love us and we respect them."

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Pushing the frontiers of girls' education through sponsorship

Montombougou is a typical rural Malian village of 850 people, located in the south of the country. Despite the heat, the children run, dance and jump up to greet us at the local school. One girl, Diamo Bengaly, stands out from the crowd. She is twelve, and attends Grade 6.

Besides irregular inspection visits, the school has had no support from the government. It was short of teachers, and those there had no training and felt demotivated about their jobs. There was a high rate of children dropping out of school. The lack of a proper toilet and hygiene facilities at the school put off many students, especially growing girls.

Save the Children's Sponsorship-funded Basic Education Program has been supporting Diamo's school for five years. The program trains teachers to deliver better education and empowers children, through child participatory activities, to advocate for their rights.

Save the Children raises awareness about the importance of education, especially for girls, and strengthens the capacity of the school management committee to develop effective and sustainable strategies for school management. The program also promotes hygiene and sanitation in both school settings and the larger community, so that their children can grow up healthy and learn better.

Today, Diamo and her native Montombougou are one of Save the Children girls' education success stories in Mali. The school proudly hosts 115 children, 57% of whom are girls including Diamo; and it has more girls than boys in each of its six grades. Famoussa, the school director who also teaches Grade 6, says "If having more girls than boys in my school is a mistake, then I am happy to make that mistake. I really like what's

If having more girls than boys in my school is a mistake, then I am happy to make that mistake. I really like what's happening in Montombougou in terms of girls' education, and I want it to be an example for all communities surrounding it.

—Famoussa, Director of Montombougou Primary School



Cherck Omar Ouattara

(Left) Diamo helps with household chores and (right) Diamo in math class.

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"Diamo has turned into a bright learner and hard-working girl; (she) participates in classes and asks questions," says Famoussa. She shows us the class results. Diamo scored second in her class during last school year's annual exam.

Perhaps, the best news for Diamo is that she is sure to complete her basic education, because her family and community now value girls' education more than ever before. Her father is determined to keep her in school. "Someday, I want to be a teacher and serve the same community that served me," says Diamo.

The school management committee has developed a communal farm, the revenue from which will enable them to complement teachers' salaries, purchase school furniture and build housing to retain teachers in the community. So the opportunity for children such as Diamo to attend school will not be discontinued when Save the Children shifts focus to a new area.

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The girls doing their 'journey of life'.

Empowering girls in Swaziland

Swaziland is a country hard hit by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Children are often left vulnerable as orphans with no access to the means to build a better life. With the help of the American Presidents Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), Save the Children is supporting 54 capable young girls to complete secondary school, by paying their education fees.

The initiative develops and empowers the girls through education. They hail from the four regions of the country (Hhohho, Manzini, Shiselweni and Lubombo), and attend schools in both rural and urban settings. They are all in Form three. Save the Children took over their sponsorships from another agency, Caritas, in 2010.

Each year, the girls attend a three-day training which aims to build their resilience through psychosocial support activities. The training is also aimed at building their knowledge on different issues like sexual reproductive health and rights, and life skills. This year, the training, which was facilitated by a Save the Children Field Officer, Mrs. Ncamsile Gwebu, was held on the weekend of the 5th of May and it touched on a number of topics which were helpful to the girls.

After the training, the girls got the opportunity to do a radio program, which is hosted by Save the Children, on one of the local Radio Stations. The four girls all talked about how delighted they were that Save the Children was taking over their scholarships, on air. They were also engaged in producing the programme—i.e. coming up with the content, completing the interviews—and hosting it.

Noncedo Dube, said it was a sad time when the girls learned that they no longer had a sponsor for their education. "During first term, we enrolled for our classes without knowing who would pay for us, but we were happy to hear from our teachers that Save the Children has indicated that from this year onwards (they) will sponsor us."

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Day of African Child | 16 June 2012

THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES:
THE DUTY TO PROTECT, RESPECT, PROMOTE AND FULFILL

This year the Day of African Child, June 16,
focuses on children with disabilities.

Out of the **72 million** primary school age children globally that do not attend school, **one third** are disabled. (DFID)

In the developing world, **98% of disabled children do not go to school**, though many have the ability and the desire to learn. (DFID)

Many factors prevent disabled children from gaining an education. A major barrier is the **inaccessibility of schools**, as there is not enough knowledge, funding or desire to **build the necessary facilities**.

Children with disabilities are **4 to 5 times** more likely to experience **violence and sexual abuse** than non-disabled children. (Five Years on:

A global update on violence against children, 2011; NGO Advisory Council for Follow-up to the UN)

Regardless of a household's income level, children with disabilities are not likely to attend school. They are **often looked at as a burden** and families do not see the point in educating them. (Save the Children)

Disabled children are generally **mistreated**. They **may be locked up in their homes** while their caretakers are away. Some are locked up for so long that they **develop sores or wounds**. (Save the Children)

impact

IMMEDIATE AND LASTING IMPROVEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN AFRICA

Impact is a magazine dedicated to highlighting the work of Save the Children programs in Africa. Save the Children undertakes or supports projects in education, health and nutrition, HIV and AIDS, child protection, child rights governance, and emergencies in nearly 40 African countries. Impact is published three times a year. It is available in electronic and print formats. This issue was edited by Madhuri Dass, Saad Bilal, Carol Miller, Brenda Kariuki, and Pia Brar. For more information on impact, please contact Brenda Kariuki at bkariuki@savechildren.org.



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