

CHILD VOICE



SPRING/SUMMER 2018

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leaders tackling
barriers to change**

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the driver's seat | **PAGE 5**

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Christian
**Children's
Fund**
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CEO's note

Why we're empowering children to raise their voices

This issue of *ChildVoice* is deeply personal for me. In addition to previewing our new four-year roadmap for change (page 5), we're introducing you to children and youth who are already great leaders.

I invite you to meet Digema, 17, president of the Girls' Network in Nicaragua (page 7). Not only has she made incredible contributions to advance child rights in her community, she shaped international policy as a youth representative at the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Summit in 2015.

You will also meet Yilikal, 15, an active member of a girls' club in Ethiopia that is challenging attitudes about ingrained cultural practices, such as child marriage (page 8). What may surprise you is that Yilikal is a young man.

Last December, I visited India and spoke with 16-year-old Muthulakshmi, a fiercely passionate youth (page 10). You can learn about the courageous action she took to eliminate discrimination in the classroom.

The stories of young people like Digema, Yilikal and Muthulakshmi teach us this: what does it matter if we build schools if children aren't able or welcome to attend because of early child marriage, caste, gender or some other perceived "difference?"

For this reason, our new strategy development plan continues our work in areas, including health, education

and water, but it also intensifies our efforts to tackle deeply rooted cultural attitudes and behaviours preventing children from realizing their basic needs, rights and full potential. Most importantly, it sets the voices of children at the centre of positive change.

You are empowering children to be leaders and change-makers

Your support is creating safe spaces and opportunities for children to express their views and develop the skills, experience and self-confidence to influence change. It's a tremendously powerful gift — thank you.

I feel proud of what we've achieved together, and I'm excited about what we will do with your continued commitment. I look forward to sharing more details about our strategy in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

Patrick Canagasingham, CEO
Christian Children's Fund of Canada
ceo-office@ccfcanada.ca

What's inside

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A few quotes that inspire our work ...



Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

— MARTIN LUTHER KING JR

Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.

— GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier.

— MOTHER TERESA



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- instagram.com/CCFCanada
- youtube.com/CCFCanada

On the cover

You can read about our youngest change-maker, Luz, on page 8. Photo by Javier Mendoza.

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A member of **ChildFund Alliance**

OUR VISION
We dream of a world where every child has a voice and the ability to achieve their full potential.

ACCESSIBILITY
We seek to recognize and remove the obstacles faced by persons with disabilities. All communications are available in alternative formats upon request.

What's happening

New partnership with Tata Trusts and Google India

We believe technology can be a catalyst for transformative change. To light a spark among rural women, we've joined the Internet Saathi (friend) project in India to fund an awareness campaign to help end early, forced marriages. Our efforts will support like-minded partners, Tata Trust and Google India, in bringing the Internet to 4,000 villages. More than one thousand women will learn how to use digital devices and the benefits

the Internet can bring to their day-to-day lives. Next, these "Internet Saathis" will share their knowledge with 700,000 more women! Participants will also learn the value of keeping girls in school. The result: a network of women empowered to be digital agents of change.



Let's celebrate!



We'd like to give a happy shout-out to one of our loyal donors, Isobel, 103, who has been a sponsor since 2003. She's made an incredible difference in many children's and families' lives. Our global community is made up of wonderful and caring people of all ages — we celebrate each and every one! We'd also like to give a cheer to our Ethiopia office. This March, the team marked their 30th anniversary serving children, families and communities.

Former sponsored child visits Canada

Your support truly inspires children to dream big! Last fall, Ángeles, 16, a former sponsored child from Paraguay, was one of 250 international participants in a violence prevention meeting in Ottawa hosted by the Government of Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada on behalf of the World Health Organization. She also journeyed earlier this year to the End Violence Solutions Summit in Stockholm, an event bringing together governments,



the United Nations, children and others to share solutions for preventing and responding to violence against boys and girls. Way to go, Ángeles!



Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

— Margaret Mead



A supporter's story

Jane Mundy

Describe yourself in three words.

Empathetic, daring, bossy

What inspires you to support CCFC?

My son died 20 years ago. By sponsoring a child, I hope to help someone carry on in this world. My greatest hope is that all children have the opportunity for a good education and health services.

What was it like visiting India in 2017?

I had no idea that the entire village was going to greet me, and I was overwhelmed with emotion. Thinking about it right now gets me teary-eyed.

What was the most memorable moment?

The moment I shook hands with (my sponsored child), Kavya. It was electrifying, and it was all I could do not to burst out crying. I found out later that Kavya felt the same way. We were both very nervous at first, but that didn't last long. Meeting her was one of the best experiences in my life.

What do you love about children?

Their honesty and curiosity about the world.

Our 4-year roadmap for change

TOGETHER, WE WILL DEEPEN OUR IMPACT

We believe setting the voices of children at the centre of change is the best hope for the future. Here's a look at what that means and **why it matters**.

By Vicki Quigley, managing editor, *ChildVoice* & CCFC brand stewardship manager, Canada

Looking forward

Children make up nearly a third of the world's population and potential, yet their experiences, insights and ideas are rarely heard.* Christian Children's Fund of Canada's new four-year strategy development plan seeks to change that. We want to empower children to use their voices and actions to create change.

We envision a global community where children and youth play an active role in tackling deep-rooted barriers to change and are empowered to raise their voices to realize their basic needs and rights, including gender

equality and freedom from violence.

Realizing this vision requires us to challenge the status quo, including the approach we take to our work. It demands us to be bold and brave in seeking new partnerships, innovations and improvements to make an even greater difference. And it requires the commitment and trust of caring supporters like you.

Children's voices at the centre of change

Here are four ways we're deepening our impact in the communities where we work.

1.

Ensure children and youth can realize their rights, including dignity, health, safety and a voice, within healthy communities that deliver quality services to all.

With your support, we're empowering communities to eliminate barriers preventing children, youth and families from achieving their full potential.

We will continue to support health, water and education programs, but we're also changing cultural attitudes and practices preventing children from benefiting from these resources. There's much work to be done to ensure children realize their basic needs and rights.

We are intensifying our efforts to promote gender equality through inclusivity and equal opportunities for all. Some areas that we are emphasizing include ending child marriage, improving maternal health and knocking down barriers to education for girls.

We also work with communities to create more safe spaces and opportunities for children and youth to be heard. All children have something valuable to say, and they must be given opportunities to express themselves through children's groups, community groups, public forums and other activities.

Equality for girls and women

*Source: UNGlobalCompact.org



Support opportunities for children and youth to meaningfully participate in decisions and actions that affect their well-being at family, community, national, regional and global levels.

Ensuring children and youth can express their views — and be actively involved in decision-making in matters that concern them — has tremendous benefits.

Legislation, policies and programs that take into account the views and insights of young people are more informed, effective and sustainable. Child participation also leads to more skilled, confident

and knowledgeable young citizens. It creates a positive circle: the more children participate, the greater their aspirations and contributions.

We're working closely with colleagues, partners and communities to create opportunities for children and youth to be involved in decisions at different levels, including planning, designing, monitoring and evaluating our programs; discussions at government meetings, councils and forums; and the development of our four-year roadmap for change.

Participation fosters engaged young citizens and informed decision-making



Contribute to achieving global goals to end all forms of violence, exploitation, discrimination and neglect of children and youth.

More than half of the world's children experience some form of emotional, physical or sexual violence and exploitation every year.* The cost is tremendous. Beyond the immediate fear and trauma, it extends through a child's life, affecting his or her education

and health — limiting future life opportunities. Our strategy development plan reaffirms and expands our commitment to embedding child protection in all we do. During the next four years, we're increasingly aligning our work to support the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (a set of global goals aimed to

end poverty and fight inequality), with an emphasis on child protection and participation. The voices of children are a powerful tool to challenge violence and abuse, and we will work to ensure children can express their views, exercise their rights and be taken seriously.

With your support, we are continuing to tackle systemic issues, which: prevent communities from ending exploitation and violence against children; impede children from realizing their right to a legal identity and safe public spaces; and institutionalize sexual exploitation, harmful practices and child labour.

One exciting initiative is the expansion of a pilot project that's helped children play an active role in improving the systems that are supposed to protect them (page 14).

Giving children tools to challenge abuse



Improve disaster-risk reduction and emergency responsiveness with a focus on child protection.

Floods, drought, hurricanes, earthquakes and typhoons can devastate a child's life in a moment, leaving them vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and illness. With your support, we are continuing to work with communities and other partners to help keep children safe in disaster situations. We support efforts to reduce the impact of disasters and ensure emergency plans are in place, so when disaster strikes, communities are better equipped to respond, recover and rebuild.

Together, we can do so much

Creating the will for change needs people, organizations and alliances working together across continents and social divides to achieve what is impossible alone. We're excited to share more details of our four-year roadmap for change in the year ahead. Thank you for taking this journey with children and communities as part of our caring and committed global community. Together we can achieve the extraordinary!

*Source: Global prevalence of past-year violence against children: a systematic review and minimum estimates. Hillis S, Mercy J, Amobi A, Kress H. Pediatrics 2016; 137(3): e20154079.

MEET 12 CHANGE-MAKERS

Why raising the voices of children is so important to tackling barriers to change

At first glance, Digema seems like a typical 17-year-old. She loves reading magazines, cooking and spending time with her friends. But, she's also one of thousands of children your support is inspiring to see new possibilities and drive extraordinary change. **Here's how they're busy making a difference in their world — and ours.**

▶ bit.ly/Meetthechangemakers



Emmanuel, 12
Class prefect
Ghana

Describe yourself in three words.

Smart, intelligent, humble

What change are you working to achieve?

I am passionate about getting the voices and opinions of children heard at home, school and in the nation. I've explained to community members that children have the right to take part in decision-making, and that they should not deny their children access to education. On weekends, my friends and I go to opinion leaders in the community to talk about child rights and share what we've learned in school and

the child-to-child club. I used to always be sad that my parents made decisions without talking to me. That's changed. Now I can contribute at home and in the community with ease.

What's inspired you?

I heard in the news that some parents marry off their children against their will. This was also emphasized at the child-to-child club. A CCFC training program helped me understand the people of this country need to uphold and respect the rights of all children, including girls.



Digema, 17
Girls' Network president
Nicaragua

Describe yourself in three words.

Helpful, optimistic, creative

What change are you working to achieve?

My biggest dream is a future where children's rights are respected and everyone is able to express themselves without fear of being discriminated against. I've spoken up for children's rights, particularly the rights of girls, and have had opportunities to influence policy at the local and national level. As the elected president of the Girls' Network in my community, I am the voice of girls too shy to speak. In 2015, I contributed to discussions around ending violence, abuse and discrimination against children as the female youth representative for Latin America at the UN Sustainable Development Goals Summit in New York.

What's inspired you?

I participated in a town hall meeting where children discussed their concerns with local authorities. Since then, I've been in many interest groups, workshops, trainings and other forums. These activities have strengthened my confidence and leadership in advocating for our rights. [Before] I was fearful. Now, I have the courage to express myself at school, in my community and in any other space.

“
I learned my voice must be heard.”



Luz, 8 School representative Paraguay

Describe yourself in three words.

Cheerful, talkative, studious

What change are you working to achieve?

I won a reading comprehension and writing contest in Guarani (a native, official language) at my school, and I reached the finals in the regional contest. I had to read a book and tell the story and write about something I like to do. I really like to be able to represent my school and my classmates. I want everyone to be encouraged [to participate].

What's inspired you?

In the community centre we always take part in activities that help us lose our shyness. We have school support with the [community centre] teacher, Gloria, and that helps us stand out in our studies. From all of my friends, only two of us chose to participate in the contest. [When our teacher asked], the boys said no. When the boys saw that we won the certificate, they wanted to win, so [next year] they will also participate.

Yilikal, 15 Gender-equality advocate Ethiopia

Describe yourself in three words.

Problem-solver, friendly and passionate

What change are you working to achieve?

I would like all children to learn and grow without facing gender discrimination. Girls in our community are vulnerable to harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, child marriage and sexual and emotional abuse. I've been vocal in teaching and changing attitudes of children in my school and community, as well as parents and elders.

What's inspired you?

I started going to the girls' club in my community. Now I better understand the burden of girls, including doing a lot of household work. But, more importantly, I came to understand how girls are vulnerable to sexual abuse. Me

and my friends now take active measures to inform other children about the dangers. Club members perform songs, dances and dramas to teach children and parents. When we perform, we often attract from 300 to 400 children.

“

I now understand the important role girls can play if given support and opportunities.

Our club has changed the attitudes of parents, children and elders in the community. Participating has built our self-esteem and self-worth, increased our understanding about social responsibilities and built our confidence to take an active role in seeking solutions.



Devi, 15 Sanitation for everyone India

Describe yourself in three words.

Trustworthy, hard-working, helpful

What change have you achieved?

I brought sanitation facilities to my community. I could not achieve the change immediately. First, I wanted to construct an individual toilet in

my home. It took six months to collect the resources. Though there is a government subsidy available you cannot get it until after completing the work. I began to raise the issue of sanitation facilities for other families at the Child Rights' Protection Forum (CRPF), which meets every month to discuss community issues and solutions. CRPF representatives took this issue to the Parents' Committee and Village Development Committee,

which helped in getting 12,000 rupees in support from the *panchayat* (government) by applying for each family. Now each family has a toilet in the community. It took a year for my dream to come true.

What's inspired you?

A sanitation-awareness program inspired me to make this change. I resolved to act to get the facilities to my community. Previously, people practised open defecation in an area around the village, finding a covered area either at dawn or twilight when it was dark. If they could not do it at this time, they'd hold it or skip meals, which leads to health issues.

“

This change will lead to a clean, disease-free community.

Apart from this, women felt unsafe to use the open space and found it very difficult during their menstrual time. The program helped me raise my voice to talk first to my parents and then others in the community. I would like to bring awareness to other children at school and explain in detail what I did in my village so they also can create change in their school, community or family.



Abdoul, 14 Promotes respect, Burkina Faso

Describe yourself in three words.

Wise, teenager, healthy

What change are you working to achieve?

I encourage my schoolmates to respect other people, to obey their parents and to respect their teachers.

What's inspired you?

I received training at the child-to-child club and I shared what I learned

with my friends and relatives. I was shocked by the bad behaviour of children at school, including myself. So I asked myself: what can I do to bring a solution? In the past, I loved to fight and quarrel with my friends and had difficulty forgiving. Now, I feel wiser. If I see my friends fighting, I separate them. When other children see I am respectful, they follow my example. I am also more respectful to my parents.



Harvin, 17
Child Council president
Nicaragua

Describe yourself in three words.

Friendly, supportive, dynamic

What change are you working to achieve?

As president of the Child Council in my community, I promote the importance of fulfilling the rights of children and adolescents. Children and adolescents meet regularly to agree on what we want to ask from our local authorities. Many times, I've represented girls and boys from my community in front of municipal authorities: the mayor, vice mayor, and councillors. Every two months, I meet with other Child Council leaders as the national vice president to plan future municipal activities.

What's inspired you?

I used to be very shy. I didn't talk to other children, and I didn't participate in any activities where I could assert my rights. During the time I've participated in CCFC's sponsorship program, I have grown up and acquired much knowledge. I've participated in many activities that have helped me know I have rights that must be fulfilled.



Muthulakshmi, 16
Against discrimination
India

Describe yourself in three words.

Good, disciplined, popular

What change have you achieved?

I've helped reduce discrimination among children in class and stopped a child marriage. My teachers only taught clever students and sent the others outside the classroom. Students abhorred the teachers, and many dropped out of school. Students did not have good friendships with each other. I informed my teachers I was going to call the child help line [to alert authorities]. They started teaching all students. I also stopped the child marriage of a sibling by calling the help line and having authorities intervene.



Children must be brave.

What's inspired you?

I'm a member of a child-protection group. I attended an awareness campaign on child rights and protection, and learned about a child help line. The project has motivated me to express myself in the meetings, and it's given me courage to raise my voice in school and at home.



Bereket, 16
HIV awareness
Ethiopia

Describe yourself in three words.

Thoughtful, kind, observant

What change are you working to achieve?

I wish to see all children in our community become aware about HIV, how it can be transmitted and how a person should live if they have the disease. I've been active in teaching children in my school about the disease through campaigns organized with the help of our teachers and through other activities, including a student radio program and dramas. Today, I can boldly say that, thanks to our efforts, many children are not engaging in unsafe acts that might expose them to the disease.

What's inspired you?

In the past, I was afraid to discuss sexual health, but my attitude has changed since participating in the HIV/AIDS awareness club CCFC supported through learning materials. We work to ensure children do not discriminate against any person who has the virus.



Blas, 17 Child-rights' advocate Paraguay

Describe yourself in three words.

Fighter, dreamer, change-maker

What change are you working to achieve?

I talk a lot about violence, abuse and the violation of child rights, including the causes and consequences. Children in my community now know their rights: that they must be protected against all forms of mistreatment, abuse and exploitation, and which entities they should appeal to if their rights are violated. I've also contributed to the education of my family and friends.

What's inspired you?

What motivated me to achieve change was seeing child victims of violence. I participated in a CCFC workshop on project development. I was in charge of talking to one school about the importance of child protection and child rights. Before doing so, I talked with children to learn how their rights were violated. I worked closely with educational institutions in my community, as well as the Municipal Council for

Children and Adolescent Rights. The fact that I participated in that workshop really changed the direction of my life and helped me change the reality of children in my community.

“
Children are the ones who will make a better country.”

Another activity that helped me achieve change was CCFC's [international] Free From Violence campaign (to help children's voices reach government and United Nations' decision-makers). I wrote a letter with other children that was presented to the foreign ministry. It asked the government to end all forms of violence against children and adolescents. Our request was presented to the foreign ministry by children and adolescents from different local areas and CCFC programs. It allowed us to represent the voices of children. We're all still friends.



Muniratu, 17 Personal hygiene and safety Ghana

Describe yourself in three words.

Obedient, fair, kind

What change have you achieved?

I've promoted good hygiene and a safe school environment. Before, when I had my period I was unhygienic. Now, I use a safe and sanitary method and advise girls to adopt healthy practices. I also advise friends to avoid quarrels and fights over class materials, like books and furniture, and to seek counsel from teachers so there can be peace. I've been trained to provide first aid to other children in the school. I've dressed many wounds, including a child cut on the shin during playtime. After I helped, he was happy.

“
I assure my friends change is important, but it is important to learn about the issues first.”

What's inspired you?

I was selected to be part of the child-to-child club in our school, and this inspired me. Our teachers taught us about personal hygiene, ending violence against girls and child protection. The program helped me be confident to discuss issues with my friends.



Saoudia, 14
Child-rights advocate
Burkina Faso

Describe yourself in three words.

Kind, hard-working, courageous

What change have you achieved?

I've helped my schoolmates learn more about children's rights. I also did the same in my family. In addition, I helped initiate group work at my school.

What's inspired you?

I would like all children to feel happy, free and better educated so girls will feel free to marry who they want. I also want all violence against children to be stopped. When I was in primary school, I did not belong to a children's club. At the time, I used to care only about myself. I was selfish. Now, I care about others. Program activities, including the children's club, and discussions in

“

I'm more confident to express my ideas without shyness and fear. This will help me be a leader. If all children follow my example, our country will develop better. We will have more food, and children will be wiser.

workshops have changed my attitude. They gave me confidence to convince my parents to let me take part in program activities, and other activities organized at the school. Now, I speak my mind in class. I can also speak to adults without fear.

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Meet inspiring children from around the world!



New ways we're empowering children to CHANGE THEIR WORLD



A program BY children, FOR children that will make communities and kids safer

By Enmanuel Castro, CCFC communications manager, Nicaragua

We're working with children and youth at risk of leaving home due to violence, unemployment and crime. Our goal is to boost employment skills and opportunities, improve child-protection services and foster young community leaders. Eddy's story shares why this project matters so much to so many people.

When Eddy (pictured) was 13, he walked from Nicaragua to Costa Rica. His family was searching for job opportunities and a better life. He knew he was lucky to be travelling with his parents and older brother when so many other children in Central America make the journey alone, but still he was afraid.

"We used a shortcut to cross the border," shares Eddy, 16.

“ I think this experience can be traumatizing for children.

“When we got to the other side, we were covered in mud from our feet to our knees. Our legs hurt because we had to walk fast, but our

shoes stuck to the mud and that made it hard. Then we took a taxi. My brother and I travelled hidden in the cab. We were nervous and scared.”

One of Eddy's greatest fears was that authorities would take his parents to prison for travelling with two minors without legal travel or work documents. Thankfully, they arrived safely. The family found work. Eddy was happy when the family returned to Nicaragua shortly after. In 2017, they travelled to Costa Rica again. This time, Eddy's brother decided to stay behind.

"I worked 12 hours every day in a restaurant," said Eddy. "I wanted to help my family. But, it was hard leaving my school, whole family and friends."

Every year, thousands of children in Central America leave home like Eddy in search of a better life. The journey is dangerous, especially for children and youth travelling alone who are at risk of being kidnapped, trafficked, assaulted and

killed. But, a special project is helping young people find reasons to stay home.

To help address the root causes of "irregular" child migration, Christian Children's Fund of Canada is leading a \$15.2 million regional project in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua. The project will develop opportunities for youth and their families to increase their involvement in income-generating activities and help them contribute directly to advocating for improvements in child-protection services. The Government of Canada is contributing \$12.6 million to the four-year project, called Preventing Irregular Child Migration in Central America. Our aim is to help prevent other children from experiencing the hardships Eddy has faced.

Today, Eddy is back in Nicaragua, but his parents remain in Costa Rica for work.

"I cried when I came home and saw my house dirty and all of our things full of dust," shared Eddy. "I cried when I thought of everything lost — the happiness of a family."

Still, Eddy dreams of a future in Nicaragua working in an office with a desk and computer of his own.

“ It was a very hard moment when I got to my house and I did not see my parents there.

OUR PARTNERS



A French translation is available upon request.

Giving children the skills and tools to champion their own rights

By Lavanya Kesavaraj, CCFC program manager, India

Last year, Christian Children’s Fund of Canada (CCFC) partnered with the ChildFund Alliance to launch pilot projects in India and Paraguay. The idea: to prevent violence, protect children and enable a new generation of change-makers.

It’s amazing what you can accomplish in eight to 12 weeks when you bring together a group of enthusiastic young people. As CCFC’s program manager in India, I worked closely on a pilot project that trained 40 children and youth in child rights, violence prevention and child protection. I was amazed by the progress I saw in such a short time.

At the beginning, children were hesitant to participate, did not know their rights and did not want to sit together with girls or with children from Dalit (the lowest caste or class) communities.

A huge unexpected outcome of the project was that it bridged gender and caste divisions among children.

DID YOU KNOW?

While India’s caste system was banned in 1950, those born at the bottom of the complex social ladder, called Dalits, continue to be

kept on the very margins of society, often living in segregated “colonies,” and forced to take dangerous, dirty and low paying jobs no one else wants. In government schools, Dalit children sit and eat separately from their classmates. For these people, speaking up for their rights can be a challenge, and their children are often destined for the same fate.



As children learned about policies and laws, discussed what prevented action, and spoke with key members of government, they showed an impressive amount of confidence, leadership and collaboration.

One of the most exciting activities I witnessed was children leading the meeting with government officials. The fact that adults were listening and respecting their concerns thrilled the children.

During the meeting, children’s body language changed, they spoke more confidently and there was increased respect and desire to work together to solve problems.

I remember the words of one girl: “I had a dream that I shared what I’ve learned in the process with my entire school. I made all children as empowered as I am.” Another child, on his own initiative, made posters on the dangers and laws of child labour and stuck them all over his village to spread awareness.

We’re excited about the results, and we’re exploring how we can apply the learnings to our child-sponsorship program as we deepen our focus on child participation and protection. We’re also considering differing needs around the globe. In India, children are being forced into child marriage; in Paraguay, violence against children is a serious problem.

Here, three children share what the pilot project has meant to them.





Chandrasekar, 13
India



Veronica, 17 : Gabriel, 14
Paraguay : Paraguay

Describe yourself in three words.

Confident, courageous, change-maker

What did you learn through the program?

I now know about my right to participation and protection, and about laws, including the Female Infanticide Act and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act. I am aware of the Child Marriage Restraint Act, and have the confidence to stop practices related to these laws.

How have you used your knowledge?

I encouraged several girls engaged in child labour to go to school. I also approached an NGO (non-government organization) to help a boy continue with his higher education. It helped me command more self-respect in my village.

What do you see for the future?

Now, I am in a position to stop child violence in our village. I will inform the concerned officials immediately. I am very determined and will even approach state-level authorities if proper actions are not taken by local authorities. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to learn many important and sensitive child-related issues.

Describe yourself in three words.

Gabriel: Supportive, honest, friendly

Veronica: Helpful, kind, responsible

What did you learn through the program?

G: The program helped me take a firmer stance with my family and friends about child rights, because we learned there are laws that protect children and adolescents.

Visiting an authority (local mayor) to speak and commit him to fulfil his obligation as a protector of children's rights was very important. We learned to be unafraid and that we can be agents of change.

V: We also learned about the agencies in charge of watching over and enforcing the rights of children. My greatest wish is young leaders created today can tomorrow occupy positions of power so they can watch over the most vulnerable and enforce our rights.

What would you like to say to other children?

G: Have perseverance through adversities. Participate in groups that fight for the rights of children.

V: Fight for your dreams and for your rights. If we do not start the change, people and entities will continue violating our rights.

In Paraguay, youth met with their mayor. He signed a commitment to address issues, such as installing an office for children's rights in the community.

Right now, an innocent child is travelling, scared and alone, in search of a better, safer life

Thousands of children and youth in Central America are threatened by poverty, violence and crime. They're leaving their homes — **alone** — in search of opportunity and a better life.



These children are **vulnerable**. Travelling alone, they're **in danger** of being kidnapped, trafficked, assaulted and even killed. That's the reality, but thankfully you can help bring positive change.

Give the gift of education, and make 5X the impact!

You can help a child gain the knowledge, skills and confidence to chase their dreams **at home**. Your generosity will support child-protection systems, skills-training, scholarships and more. Thanks to giving partners, **your donation will be multiplied for 5X the impact.**



The need is **urgent**, and the time to give is now. **Please help a child without hope see a future, bright with possibility.**

Visit ccfcanada.ca/power-of-education or call 1-800-263-5437.



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