

THE *Under the Same Sky* OBSERVER



SPECIAL REPORT ON CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION AT THE
UN DAY OF GENERAL DISCUSSION ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

A PUBLICATION ABOUT
CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT



READ ALL ABOUT IT!

Under the Same Sky creates an international buzz around children's rights and the environment!

Find out more about the amazing array of projects children used to explore their ideas. [Where in the world did the cookie challenge take place?](#) [Who said that people need to respect each other more?](#) [What will happen to the koalas and owls if more trees are cut down?](#) [Who is flooded out in the rainy season?](#) [Why did the murmurations of starlings disappear?](#) [Where is dust from a cement factory causing health problems?](#)



Out of this world!



This special edition Under the Same Sky newspaper reports on a constellation of children's projects from [Scotland](#), [Brazil](#), [Palestine](#), [Australia](#), [Zimbabwe](#) and [Mozambique](#).

The children in these countries worked creatively to re-imagine their local environments, thinking about what works, what doesn't, and how the environments they grow up in could be better now and in the future.

Internationally the results of the children's projects contributed to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 'Day of General Discussion' 2016 on Children's Rights and the Environment.

Locally, the projects prompted collaboration between adults and children, discussion in the community and a variety of activities which brought the children's ideas to a wider audience.

ALL THIS AND MORE IN THE *Under the Same Sky* NEWSPAPER!

BREAKING NEWS

Amal Aldoseri, United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child:
"I congratulate the children from Scotland, Palestine, Brazil, Mozambique, Australia and Zimbabwe who inspired us with their knowledge, commitment and ideas".





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Why a constellation?

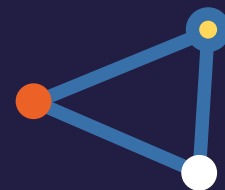
con-stell-ation:

in Astronomy a constellation is a grouping of stars

or a constellation is a gathering

and a constellation is a set or configuration of related items, properties, ideas

the Under The Same Sky Constellation is a gathering of children around the world, bringing their voices to the discussion about shaping our communities and the future of our planet.





UNDER THE SAME SKY

Every two years the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child organises a **“Day of General Discussion”**. Each time they choose a specific topic to help people understand it better. Government representatives, national and international organisations, experts and children from all over the world take part in Days of General Discussion.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child decided that the topic for 2016 should be Children’s Rights and the Environment.

There were two big aims for the day:

- to promote understanding of the relationship between children’s rights and the environment
- to work out what needs to be done so that children’s rights and environmental issues are linked up to make better laws and policies.

THIS WAS THE INSPIRATION FOR UNDER THE SAME SKY

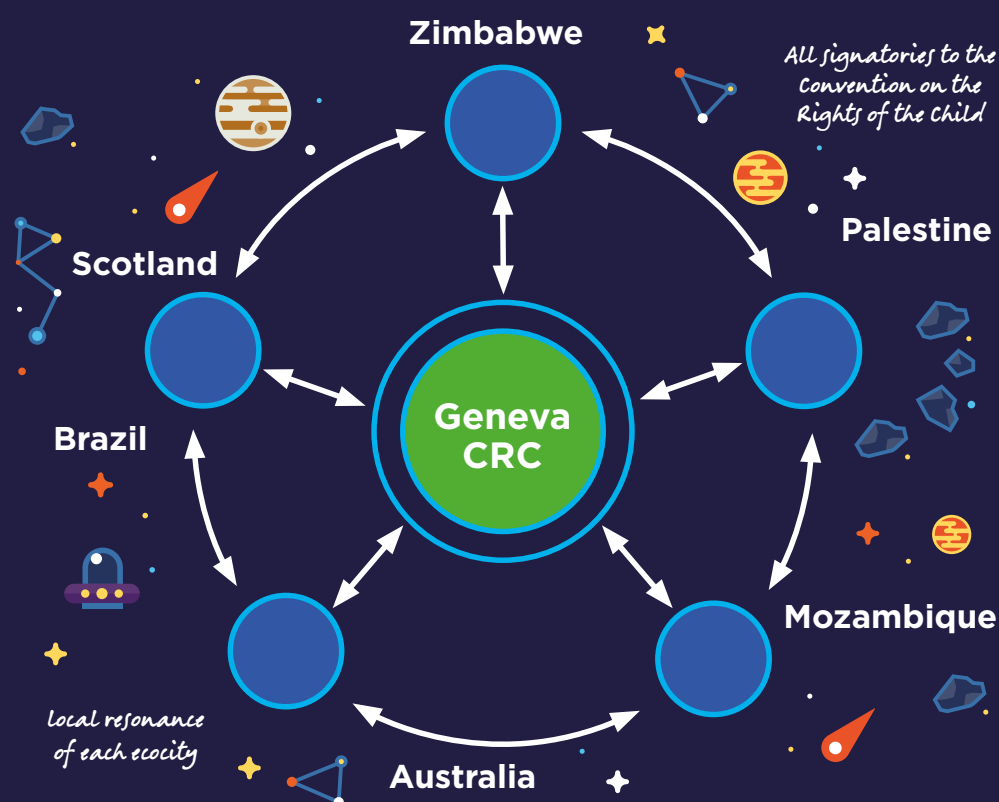
Children in six countries took part in creative activities to re-imagine their local environment and consider what messages they would like to share about it locally and internationally.

Under the Same Sky became a Side Event within the Day of General Discussion. It was a part of the formal programme and all participants in the Day were invited to take part. *Read all about it on pages 7 to 10.*

Under the Same Sky projects 2016 were organised by:

- Network of Community Activities, **Australia**
- Rede Brincar/International Play Association (IPA) **Brazil**
- Kanimambo, **Mozambique**
- Wi’am: The Palestinian Conflict Transformation Center, **Palestine**
- Children’s Parliament, **Scotland**
- Community Arts Projects (CAP), **Zimbabwe**

UNDER THE SAME SKY CONSTELLATION FOR THE UNCRC DAY OF DISCUSSION 2016



KEY MESSAGES FROM THE CONSTELLATION

Children from the Under the Same Sky projects live, play, go to school, work and relax in very different environments. Some of the children are growing up in the shadow of conflict, some live in rural settings and others in cities. Although they are all big cities, the experience of growing up in **Sydney, Australia**, **Harare, Zimbabwe** and **São Paulo, Brazil** isn't the same; living in a small town, such as **Tranent in Scotland** or a remote community like **Narrabri in Australia** is different too. Every child's experience is unique.

However, in different places on our planet, many miles apart whether that's **Palestine or Mozambique**, there are lots of things that the children said were important to them wherever they live.

The children show us that we really do all live under the same sky.

It's good to live in places where people know each other and are friends to each other.

We need to feel safe in the streets and neighbourhoods where we live. We should not be harassed or scared. We should have freedom to move around and play outside our homes.

Lack of security is a very important thing. If we can't go out independently, it means that we have no idea of how the world is outside.

Places to play are important to us. They shouldn't be filled with rubbish, used as dumping grounds or taken over by adults for other purposes. We need safe places to play.

Adults should put themselves in our shoes. If they tried to understand from our point of view they might do things differently.

Technology, pressure to fulfil responsibilities and meet expectations increases the distance we feel from each other.

What is good for children, is good for all. Adults should listen to the children; there is a lot to learn with us.

Nature makes us feel happy. Contact with nature should be a right of all children.

We worry about our natural environments and want them to be protected so that our children can enjoy them too. We want adults to take climate change and other issues seriously.

We want to feel connected - to people and places. Having safe and reliable transport is important for everyone so that they feel like they are a part of the community.



AUSTRALIA



PROJECT INFORMATION

Children in Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) services in **Narrabri**, **Redfern** and **Wyoming** in **New South Wales** (NSW) participated.

Narrabri is located in the North West of NSW, at least 1.5 hours drive from the nearest regional centre. Narrabri has 7,300 residents and is near to Mount Kaputar and Pilliga National Parks.

Redfern is an inner-city suburb of Sydney. It has a population of over 12,000 in high density living.

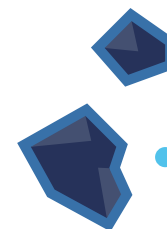
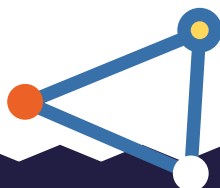
Wyoming is a suburb of the Central Coast region of New South Wales, 53 kilometres from Sydney. Its population is 9,900.

The children in Wyoming got together to talk in '*world café*' style and took part in interviews with the Network team.

The children in Narrabri and Redfern participated in a photography project to capture their views. 42 children aged from 5 to 14 years old took part. They worked in pairs to capture their environment through the lens of a camera.



www.networkofcommunityactivities.org.au





Best thing about where you live....
 “My friends and neighbours. I live straight down the road from my cousin, and my next door neighbour and I talk to each other and have fun.”

“I don’t want any more people to keep cutting down trees. I know wood is useful and all but they are hurting the habitat of koalas and owls.”

Sebastion, Age 8



“Being able to grow your own food is important for the environment and to be able to live. Some people think children should not play in dirt but if you do you learn how to use it to grow things.”

Jack, Age 9



“People reckon I am blind, just because I am deaf. In nature, it does not matter if you are deaf because you can still see beautiful things.”

Georgia, Age 7



“Nature is something not made by people, it is naturally there. Nature makes me feel very happy. You can do things with nature that you can’t do with unnatural things.”

“Plant more trees and plants to help the environment stay there and spend more money on education”.

Penelope, Age 8



“Adults sometimes go to our playground at night and leave needles and bottles and our teachers have to tidy up before we are allowed to play again. I hate that and so do my friends.”

Sara, Age 10



“Where I live they are going to chop down trees and drain the creek to make a road. I don’t like that they have to chop everything down to make new roads. It is kind of sad.”

Wyoming, Age 10



“Children need to have footpaths we can walk on and to feel safe when we go out alone. I don’t always feel safe when I have to go on a bus or have to walk on the road because there is no footpath.

If people listened to children’s ideas it would be better for everyone”.

Shah, Age 11

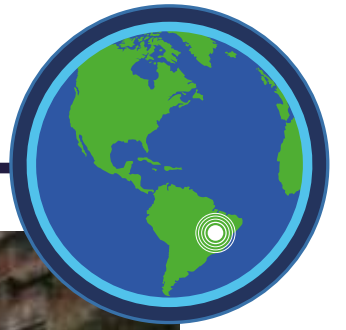
*Under the Same Sky
 Australia at the Royal
 Botanical Garden,
 Sydney, Australia.*

If you faced Sydney Harbour and turned left to walk through the Botanical Garden during Children’s Week 2016, you would have found Under the Same Sky Australia photos exhibited around the Children’s Fig (*Ficus macrophylla* f.*macrophylla*). This species grows as a strangler in rainforests and is pollinated by a small wasp.

It is known as the Children’s Fig because it is so popular with children. This tree is fenced now to preserve it for the future.

The Children’s Fig was a really special place to exhibit the Under the Same Sky photographs, giving hundreds of visitors to the Botanical Garden a chance to see and hear the children’s views about nature and the environments they are growing up in.

BRAZIL



© Diego Melo

PROJECT INFORMATION

Children aged between 6 and 14 years, living in different regions of **São Paulo** with different socio-economic levels took part in Under the Same Sky.

The first group of seven children met at IPA Brazil office in São Paulo. They were **Ana Clara, Eduarda, Enrico, Giovana, Maria Clara, Mariana, Natalia, Stefani, Stella and Stuart**. The children are from an upmarket neighbourhood and children living in Curruiras, a popular residential condominium inhabited by families who used to live in slums and were moved there by the City Government.

In the second day, six children – **Kathelin, Hillary, Ingrid, Ana Luiza, Emily (Mel), Laura** – took part in the activities conducted at CEDECA (Defense of Children and Adolescents Center), which is located at Rua Nova, a poor community (slum) in Sapopemba Neighborhood in São Paulo.

They made a film in which they spoke about problems in the environment, reflecting on their safety, sexual harassment and implications of playing in public places and in their own houses.



www.ipabrasil.org

Extracts from children's conversations on day one.

Mariana: I am 13 years old. Sometimes I am walking on the street and a man harasses me! And, like, this is not sometimes. Every day that I go out it happens to me. I think everybody should respect others.

Eduarda: I think what Mari said about respect is very important. We live in a very big city. And I like to play very much. When I was little, I always liked to play outside, go down in my building and walk, play with a ball outside of the building with my friends. But my mother, she does not let me walk outside alone, not even in my neighborhood. I think this lack of security in the city is a very important thing. It means that we also have no idea of how exactly the world is outside.

Maria Clara: Children are restricted at home and usually alone, or with a brother, or a friend of the neighborhood. In the apartment you cannot play everything you want to. You cannot play with a ball because it makes clatter to the neighbour. So, if you restrict yourself, you do a game that you can do, not games that you want to do.

Mariana: If you put yourself in someone else's shoes, things would be different.

Stefani: And another bad thing is the gate. We cannot play in the other block because we need the keys of the gate to go to the other block/side. We should open the wall and people could come and go to each block/side.

But no, there is a wall that stops you from going to the other block and you need to use the gate.

It is good for security and unknown people cannot come inside. But it is bad when we want to play with our friends from the other side and we cannot.



Second group: children who live in Sapopemba Neighborhood in São Paolo.

Anna: Do you feel safe here where you live?

Hillary: In the alley, yes! In the alley, no one gets hurt, in the "little street" we do! When it rains strong you hurt yourself in the "little street". And the water gets there [floods].

Belisa: What place do you like the most where you live?

Hillary: The alley and the little street.

Belisa: And what place do you like the least?

Hillary: Down there! Down there is dirty, you cannot play there! They are throwing garbage there!

Ingrid: What do I like here? Hum... We have a lot of space for us to play. There are a lot of children around and it is fun. We play at school, on the streets. Down there a hill fell apart. Because it fell, many people began to throw garbage there.

Belisa: What is good and what is bad about the environment?

Ingrid: The bad is that they take the garbage down there and start throwing it there. One day I went there to talk with my brother, Thiago, who was in the alley. There was a bunch of mud this high, then I slipped out and fell down. Then, I arrived home all scratched and my mom took me to the doctor because there was a huge scratch on my arm... the streets here were full of bushes, but people are ruining them. They discard clothes; throw garbage away on the streets. In the old days, we would play in the bushes, but they began to throw garbage there. The good thing is that here everyone lives together. Here, everyone is well. Everyone is friend of each other. It is good to live here.



Reporting back on Under the Same Sky in São Paolo.

The First International Seminar – The child and the new UN objectives for sustainable development.

Under the Same Sky Brazil gave a presentation of their experiences at The child and the new UN objectives for sustainable development, International seminar.

The main purpose of this meeting was to bring attention to the different possibilities for the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. With a focus on the child, play was presented as a catalyst.

Susana Sakamoto Machado presented her experience of participating in the Day of Discussion in Geneva. She remarked:

"The event was designed for the children to be spokespersons, because we believe that they are tomorrow's agents of transformation. The children made a plea to have opportunities to share what they see on a daily basis and have asked to have their voices heard."

Play was a focus because through playing the child develops creativity, the notion of space, of his own body, and society.

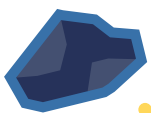
I was conscious of how important figures who are experts in the topics were willing to go across the world to be at the meeting.

We must listen to the children, we have a lot to learn with them!"

"What is good for them, it is good for all".

#IPABrazil
#sustainability
#childrensrights





REPORT FROM THE DAY OF GENERAL DISCUSSION

“If we do not address environmental issues, we will always fall short on children’s rights.”

Ignacio Packer, Terre des Hommes

The Committee on the Rights of the Child organised the Day of General Discussion so that people from different parts of the world could talk together, and exchange knowledge and experience. The aim is that Governments, organisations and individuals can understand and act on their roles and responsibilities better in relation to children’s rights and the environment.

The Committee reminded everyone: “Be bold!”

Many organisations, including UNICEF, Save the Children, Green Asia Network, Mekong Youth Assembly, Pensamiento Y Acción Social and Human Rights Watch were represented at the Day of General Discussion.

The Day began with presentations from children:

Ms. Ritu, Mr. Caleb Mulenga and Ms. Gina Marcela Parra Chiquillo

**“I am very happy to be in Geneva;
the air is clean and I can breathe easily
and I can drink tap water.”**

**“The city is expanding but space to breathe
is contracting.”**

“We run a lot of risks when we play.”

**“Toxic air has become an inseparable part
of our everyday lives.”**

**“Environmental rights are health rights but we
can’t play, we can’t drink, we can’t breathe, we
can’t live.”**

After the presentations, everyone split into two groups: Working Group One considered children’s exposure to environmental toxicants and Working Group Two discussed children and the effects of environmental degradation.

**“Human beings have always understood our
dependence on the environment but hadn’t
yet understood the harm. Environmental harm
interferes with human rights. No group is more
vulnerable to environmental harm than children.”**

*John Knox, Special Rapporteur on human rights
and the environment.*



Quoted by the Chair:

“We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.”



UNDER THE SAME SKY EVENT

The Under the Same Sky Side Event took place in the middle of the day in the main auditorium and was chaired by Ms. Amal Aldoserri, Vice Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.



THE Under the Same Sky Constellation

Committee on the Rights of the Child Day of General Discussion on Children's Rights and the Environment 23rd September 2016
SIDE EVENT 13.15 - 14.45 in Room XIX

INVITATION

The Committee and co-hosts invite you to join us and the children 'under the same sky'.

Under the Same Sky looks at the environments children live in, including urban areas, from their own point of view, expressed in their own words and images.

This short event will bring children's voices directly to the heart of the Day of Discussion. Children from six international locations have been using creative processes to think about the environments in which they grow up and play as the world changes around them.

Led by the children from Scotland and Brazil, participants are invited to view the children's work which includes a mural, films and photography and to join informal conversations with them. The invited panel will respond to questions posed by the children. Participants are also asked to join us in reflecting on the realisation of children's rights and the environment.

Under the Same Sky Programme

Welcome from Ms. Amal Aldoserri	Discussion	Dr. Wendy Russell, University of Gloucestershire/ IPA expert group
Overview of Under the Same Sky (film)	Closing remarks	Ms. Sharmila Bhagat, Ankur Society for Alternatives in Education
Exhibition tours led by the children (in two parts, groups allocated on arrival to the event)	Moderator: Ms. Amal Aldoserri Committee on the Rights of the Child	Exhibition guides: Children from Children's Parliament & IPA Brazil
Children's questions from all six countries to the panel	Panel: Ms. Joyati Das, Urban Programmes, World Vision International	

Logos: Terre des Hommes International Federation, Children's Parliament, ipa, Children & Young Peoples Scotland, World Vision, Children's Parliament & IPA Brazil



Our Under the Same Sky film represented all the constellation projects. It was shown to highlight the children's main concerns and ideas from all six countries.

View the film here: <https://vimeo.com/182962267>

Following the film, tours of the StreetsAhead mural were led by the children from Scotland along with Under the Same Sky friends from Brazil and Australia.

Breanna, Samoa: "In cyclones in Samoa, the first trees to go down are the invasive non-native ones; the ones that remain standing are the indigenous ones."



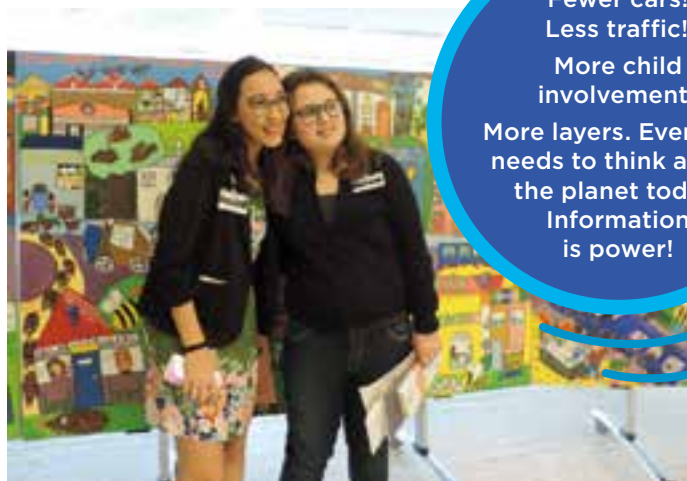
CHILDREN RAISE THEIR QUESTIONS

Each of the projects decided on a question to ask the panellists that reflected their views and concerns. The questions prompted a range of responses from the different perspectives of the panellists and also aimed to raise the issues in the minds of everyone in the room.

Here are the questions the children posed and a summary of responses made by the panel. **What would your response to the children's questions be?**

MOZAMBIQUE

In our residential areas we don't have a place to play safely. Our parents are worried if we play in the streets because of child-trafficking. In the rainy season the places we play are flooded. What the government can do, to ensure that we have safe space to play.



Fewer cars!
Less traffic!
More child involvement.
More layers. Everyone needs to think about the planet today.
Information is power!



We are recommending that the Committee encourage State parties (governments) to take the right to play into account when making policies about housing, employment, social protection and access to public space.

BRAZIL

I like São Paolo, but I wish there were more parks and grass and less cars. People don't always respect each other and only think about themselves. I would like to change that. What would you like to change about where you live?



Play can help children cope with crisis, either therapeutically or by providing brief respite from the terrors or boredoms of life. So, play is not an extra add-on once survival needs have been addressed, it is part of survival itself.

Research is needed looking at what happens to play in situations of crisis: how children cope, the responses of agencies trying to help and how we can help adults to understand the importance of playing in these situations.

PALESTINE

The situation of conflict in which we live causes many problems – being afraid of playing outside, lack of water to grow plants with and to make grass green and soft, not being able to enjoy the natural environment outside of the camp. What will be done to protect our right to play in a healthy environment, like many other children in the world can do?

UNICEF delegate: *“Not all groups are affected equally – for example girls are more likely to be taken out of school due to environmental harm.”*

Play as a right is completely mixed with all other rights, and none more so than the right to a healthy environment.

ZIMBABWE

An erratic supply of water for domestic use within our community creates an environment that infringes upon various children's rights and sometimes exposes us to abuse. How can this be addressed to free children from such an environment?

Zimbabwe

Child rights to play and environment

We as children we want safe and clean playing grounds so that we will be free from disease such as cholera because the playing grounds are dirty. As children in the community whether we are disabled or able it is good to have portable and adequate playing facilities that suits each and everyone and also the place must be clean so that the issue of disease that affects us are minimised or there will be no such cases.

Children are powerful actors to achieving change. To make informed decisions they need environmental education and information.

Whenever there is legislation, please enforce it. This is not just the work of one sector - multi-sectoral action needs to be promoted. Accountability is key to rights-based solutions.

SCOTLAND

In the future, global warming is really going to affect us. Why don't we have more things to protect our environment? And, how can our ideas be included more?

AUSTRALIA

How can children get their voices heard in their communities to help adults understand their rights and how can they influence the decision making of the UNCRC Committee?

We need to promote a continuous dialogue between children and government. Dialogue with mayors is critical. Creativity flourishes, problems are solved.

It is a problem that children who are concentrated in very fragile pockets of the city - informal settlements for example - are not included in planning; they may not even be registered.

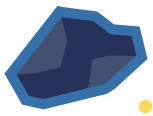
"We always ask: have you listened to the children in your countries? How?"
Chair of panel:
Amal Aldoseri,
Vice Chair of CRC

World Vision is co-chairing Children's Assembly which provides a platform for children to reflect on their experiences living in a city and discuss the city they need.

Children's stories tell us about the environments they live in. Your stories are not just about views and expectations but about experience.

Reflect your own knowledge. More stories make a better global understanding.

Invite adults into your conversation, with their stories. The changes they see in life will help them understand your stories. It's not about listening to the instructions of adults.



MOZAMBIQUE



PROJECT INFORMATION

Associação Kanimambo is a non-profit organization founded in 1984. It is based in **Maputo City** – Costa do Sol community, working for the improvement of living conditions of children in need and community development, with a special focus on promoting access to education.

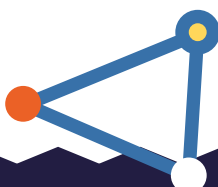
The partnership with terre des hommes Germany started in 1993 in implementation of projects of assistance of street children, orphans of HIV/AIDS. terre des hommes Germany is supporting Kanimambo projects for orphans and vulnerable children in its open centre, where children get educational support, life skills trainings and access to play and recreational opportunities.



Associação Kanimambo
ONG Moçambicana

Email: kanimambovc@hotmail.com

 **terre des hommes**
Help for Children in Need





My name is Palmira and I am 14 years old. In my residential area there is no space to play safely.



My name is Catarina and I am 11 years old. During school breaks I usually play in the Centre's playground. After school I go home and do my school homework and I play with my friends in the backyard.

My mother does not allow us to play in the streets because there are people who hijack children for trafficking.

I would love it if business people could support the government to create a safe playground there.



Daniel: After school I go home, I eat and go to play football with my friends in the playground available in the area. During the rainy session it is usually flooded.



Assucena: In my residential area there is no recreational space for children. For that reason I play with my friends at home.

There is space in which the playground can be built.



'I like to play 'Ntchuva!'



Explanation of the rights in the Convention on the Rights of the Child mentioned by the children in many of the Under the Same Sky projects.

Article 6

You have the right to be alive.

Article 7

You have the right to a name, and this should be officially recognized by the government. You have the right to a nationality (to belong to a country).

Article 24

You have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay well.

Article 27

You have the right to food, clothing, a safe place to live and to have your basic needs met. You should not be disadvantaged so that you can't do many of the things other kids can do.

Article 28

You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

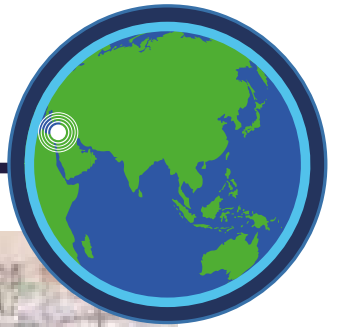
Article 29

Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.

Article 31

You have the right to rest, play and take part in cultural life and arts.

PALESTINE



PROJECT INFORMATION

Wi'am is a conflict resolution and transformation centre located in the heart of the conflict in **Bethlehem**, next to Rachel's Tomb and Aida Camp.

Wi'am's children's summer camp had approximately 120 children in 2016, with the youngest being three and oldest children 16 years old.

During the discussions and summer camp activities, the Wi'am team was able to understand and speak with the children about their biggest concerns with regards to their lives and their rights. Here is a short summary.



www.alaslah.org



Talking about what it means to be a Palestinian child and the rights they should have.

Our children, like many other children around the world, are quite resilient and have a beautiful and strong spirit.

The children felt that their rights to play and enjoy life were severely infringed upon due to the aggression they face from the Israeli occupation. There was mention of children prisoners, and restrictions on their ability to play outside, especially if they lived near the wall.

Younger children talked about their want for grass and to see the sea, and thought that those should stand as rights on their own. Some of them see the grass across the mountain in the settlements which they are not allowed to visit, while others saw bodies of water in cartoons and TV shows and wanted to see what a fish or whale looks like in the water.



Drawing something beautiful – a house with grass and a sun. “It is beautiful because there is no wall and that there is enough water for green grass to grow.”

Water and the right to a healthy life was another concern, as many of them did not have running water this summer, and others felt that they never had a chance to truly see their vegetables and fruits grow, as they did not have access to land.



Children learned how to plant lettuce, cabbage, parsley, and pepper in the Wi-am community garden.



We taught the children interested in planting how much water each tree needed. The Article 24 discussion continued with the focus being water accessibility, especially clean drinking water.



The children practiced their right to be heard and taken seriously and negotiated with the adults to be able to cool off with a water balloon game.



Education and not being heard was mentioned by the older children; they voiced concern regarding the expense of the educational system being far greater than their families could afford and that they felt the current system had no respect for their voices as people capable of producing their own thoughts and opinions.



After a discussion on the rights of children to education and Article 28, children go to a museum featuring historical highlights of Palestinian life. On the way to the museum, the children walk by the wall and sniper tower.

Many voiced that they felt that they were unable to be Palestinian and enjoy their culture, especially if they were ever allowed within Israeli borders, as they were told to act foreign by their parents and friends, so that they are not in danger in Israel.



Where do I come from and who am I? They chose to draw this eagle because it represents who they are and what they will become. We discussed Articles 6 and 7, and whether those rights are truly enjoyed and/or protected by the Palestinian children.



“Together we are responsible for creating the winds necessary to allow justice and peace to flow, like a dove flying through the wind.”



Playing the cookie challenge.

SCOTLAND



PROJECT INFORMATION

Tranent is a small town in **East Lothian, Scotland**. It is one of the oldest towns in the area and has a rich coal mining history, although the industry declined over the last half century, with the last mine closing in 2000.

Children's Parliament worked with 250 children aged 8 to 11 from five primary schools in the Tranent area on the StreetsAhead Tranent project.

This project explored the history and heritage of the town and outlined children's ideas for the future. It was part of the Scottish Government's Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design 2016 and the Festival of Architecture.



Mural youngsters meet minister

YOUNGSTERS who helped create the StreetsAhead Tranent mural took part in a Children's Parliament event this week when they had the chance to discuss their project with Mark McDonald MSP.

Mr McDonald, Minister for Childcare and Early Learning, attended the Under the Same Sky event at The Brunton, Musselburgh, on Tuesday, where children from the mural project talked about their trip to the United

Nations in Geneva last year, where they were asked to talk about their experiences and aspirations, portrayed in the work.

The mural was created by pupils from schools across Fife to encapsulate the past,

present and future hopes for Tranent.

Mr McDonald thanked the young representatives and said: "Thanks to [those] who shared their views on their community and experience addressing the UN with me."

www.childrensparliament.org.uk

Children participated in whole class, creative workshops with a strong emphasis on history, heritage, conservation and intergenerational discussion. These workshops included inputs from local community members, urban planners and architects, historians and archaeologists, and wildlife rangers.

Following nine workshops, a small group of 16 children engaged in an intensive creative process that included visits to historical sites and tours of the High Street. They worked with artists, drama facilitators and local professionals to create a mural reflecting the views of all 250 children who took part.

This project resulted in a huge mural and a series of films that showcase the StreetsAhead journey, from classroom workshops through creation of the mural to a series of exhibitions and events.

Local officials recognised the value of engaging directly with children and taking their ideas seriously. Children's ideas for the future of the town are now included in the Area Plan and money was earmarked to turn these ideas into a reality.

Children's voices can be included in local and global dialogue, if adults are willing to invest the time and resources needed to create appropriate and supportive opportunities to engage with children and to listen to and value their contributions.

Key messages from the children in this project

1. Importance of green spaces. The children emphasised the importance of nature and wildlife in their town. They want more green spaces to be created along the High Street in the town centre and for current green spaces to be taken care of so that they are safe, clean and accessible.

2. Preservation of history and heritage. The children enjoyed hearing stories about the history of their town – it helped them and their families feel more connected to and proud of where they lived. The children wanted the statues and monuments that depict key people and moments from Tranent's history to be given prominence in the town centre.

3. Improved transport. Tranent does not have a train station so to get around, residents are reliant upon cars or a few buses. The children want the transportation to and around the town to be improved so that people from outlying villages can get into the town centre more easily.

4. Value of the local community. The children frequently commented on all the good people that live in the town. They enjoyed getting to know people of different generations through working on the StreetsAhead Tranent project. They want spaces and opportunities for townspeople to come together, like a town market where families and community members can go to sell and buy local goods.

"Never doubt children because they could do something like this. We can be silly, but children have the potential to change the world." Child

"I'm proud of myself for painting the mural because we met new people and did it in a week. And I'm proud of speaking at the UN because not many people get to do it." Child

"We're not just planning for ourselves, we're planning for everyone in Tranent." Child

"East Lothian Council could come along and see our mural and think 'Oh, this would be a good thing to build in Tranent' and they could try to decide with other people, like a planner, and see if they want to do it and where to put it. This mural could help our dreams come true!" Child

"As a newcomer to Tranent and staying in a new build away from the high street, I never really feel part of this community or access any local facilities. Meeting up at Recharge Centre has made me more aware of how we should access and support local facilities and businesses to keep the community thriving for our children's future." Parent



CP-Group

Children as innovators and planners for a bright future in their town.



Night Market

The children want to create a market that is open in the evenings so they can go with their families after school/work.



Starlings

The murmurations of starlings that used to be seen in the skies around Tranent have all but disappeared. The children want to protect their natural environment and rebuild the population of starlings in the local area so the murmurations can be seen once more.



StreetsAhead Tranent mural

Part of the final mural which depicts the past, present and future of the town.

ZIMBABWE



PROJECT INFORMATION

Community Arts Projects (CAP) is a non-profit community based organisation (CBO), registered with the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe and founded in 1987. It is based in **Mabvuku** high density suburb, a working-class area of Greater Harare Metropolitan Province, working for the improvement of living conditions of children in need and community development in greater Harare Metro. The organisation uses theatre and sport for development empowering children, youth and communities for better protection of children with emphasis on active participation of children and youth as change agencies.

Partnership with terre des hommes Germany: Started in 2005, with tdh supporting interventions to empower children, youth and communities on child rights and protection issues. CAP activities are driven by child rights clubs in schools and communities. The organisation works with children and youth until the age of 24.

Under the sky project

Children aged 10 to 17 explored the connection between the environment and the right to play and produced a small video to highlight how their right to play is infringed upon by a non-supportive environment. The scarcity of potable water causes children to spend a lot of their play time fetching water. Furthermore, environment degradation and poor waste disposal makes play not safe in Mabvuku Community.



Email: mcdcart@gmail.com

 **terre des hommes**
Help for Children in Need

In Mabvuku, spaces that were once designated for play – playgrounds and sports fields – are no longer safe and accessible for children. The lack of adequate infrastructure in the region means that these spaces have not been properly maintained, with equipment falling into disrepair. Some spaces have been taken for other purposes, while others are now dumping ground for rubbish and human waste.

Children have found alternative places to play, for instance, roads or small open areas near their homes or schools. However, these spaces are not suitable for playing and come with their own risks and hazards. Many of the roads are riddled with potholes, which could cause injury, and children have to compete with traffic moving through the town.

In addition to having few safe places to play, children also felt like they didn't have enough time to play, with their spare time after school taken up with performing household chores, like fetching water from nearby boreholes.

They identified many ways in which poor conditions impact upon the health of children and adults living in the community. Pollution and dust from local cement factories have been reported to cause bronchitis and other diseases. Because playgrounds are now covered in litter and sewage, there is a risk of contaminating water supplies and spreading tetanus, cholera and diarrhoea. Broken glass, used needles and razors can cause injury and spread HIV.

“Damage to the environment affects children’s lives and hinders the right to play through water crisis. We end up fetching water at boreholes where there is a long queue and time to play will be lost. Also poor infrastructure affects us as we are in high risk of accidents because our roads are filled with potholes.

Another thing is there is no maintenance of playing grounds and even there are no playing

facilities and in this case, our rights are not fulfilled – the right to play. Also litter may cause diseases to us children which also contribute to hindering the right to play. Mostly it affects children who are under the age of 10 when there is pollution in the air and also more to those who are disabled because they do not have the ability to help themselves. We seek your help to provide us with adequate equipment so that we can play in a safe environment.”

Letter from Shingairai, age 17

“We, as children, are asking the government to take away all the rubbish so we can have a better place to play.” **Christian**

“We all know the more we play the more we get confidence.”

Lapita, age 11

“I ask the city council to take action by collecting garbage at times and to maintain our grounds so that we have time to play where it is safe and clean.” **Lesley, age 10**

“Disabled children are being affected more than able bodied children because facilities for disabled children are not being installed on playing grounds.”

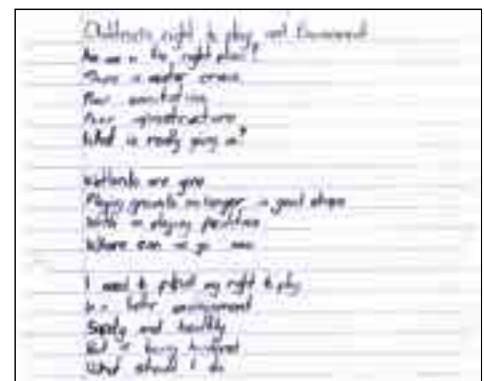
Mervin, age 17



Poem by Lesley, age 10



Children want parks to play in that are clean and free of rubbish.



Poem by Shingairai, age 17



Playing in the streets can be dangerous because of traffic and potholes.

Key messages

Safe spaces to play. Instead of playing in parks and sport centres, children play in roads that have potholes and open spaces are covered in litter and sewage. They would like spaces that are suitable for playing, clean and safe.

- Impact on health and wellbeing. Within their community, the children identified various ways that poor conditions can cause disease and poor health.

- Time to play. Due to water shortages and lack of adequate infrastructure, children often perform chores that prevent them from having adequate time to play.

"As we grow up, we start learning that the experiences lived in our childhood are the ones to support our lives, our understanding about the world and our decisions. It is with those experiences, whatever they may be, that we become citizens of this world and leave our legacy here."

Maria Clara, Under the Same Sky, Brazil

BREAKING NEWS

Kirsten Sandberg, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child:

"We need a global movement for children's rights and the environment."



Production of this newspaper was supported by



International Play Association:

Promoting the Child's Right to Play (IPA) is an international membership association.

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works for the rights of children and to promote equitable development without racial, religious, political, cultural or gender-based discrimination.

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