



Child Protection events tackle child labour, sexual abuse, violence and early marriages on November 20



Save the Children has held events in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Ivory Coast and Yemen to highlight important Child Protection issues on November 20th, when [Universal Children's Day](#) and the [Day of Prayer and Action for Children](#) are celebrated around the world.

The World Day of Prayer and Action for Children (DPAC) has brought people together to pray and take action for the well-being of children on Universal Children's Day every year since 2008. Save the Children is a member of the DPAC's Council. In 2011, the DPAC launched a three-year theme: Stop Violence Against Children.

"When does the hard labour end for us in this country? We don't want promises, we want change."

In Afghanistan, an event was organised by the Child Rights Advocacy Forum (CRAF), in which Save the Children is a founding member, on the theme of "Afghan Working Children: Enforcing Laws, Ensuring Their Rights." A documentary film on Child Labour was shown, highlighting the scale of the problem in the country and child rights as a whole.



Following this, a panel discussion took place involving Mr. Wasil Noor Mohammad, who is the Afghan Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs & Disabled, as well as representatives of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, the ILO, UNICEF, the CRAF and local civil society. Child rights issues, notably concerning working children were discussed based on questions from participants and children.

“Today is the day of prayer for our children’s wellbeing, and we have made the commitment that we will never abuse our children.”



Save the Children in Bangladesh partnered with Bangladeshi group Breaking the Silence (BTS), which works to combat sexual abuse of children, to celebrate the Day of Prayer and Action for Children (DPAC) and Universal Children’s Day on November 20. They held a day-long programme including religious leaders, 220 children and 175 accompanying adults, as well as members of civil society.

Following an opening address by religious leader Moulana Tajul Islam, a rally involving 450 participants was held, with as well as a drawing competition involving 87 children on the themes of child rights and child protection. Cultural activities, such as singing, dancing and plays, were followed by discussions involving children and members of civil society concerning community-based child protection systems, . A special prayer for children was conducted by Moulana Gaji Md. Sanaullah for the wellbeing of all the children around the world. Finally, prizes were handed out to children for their drawings and papers they had written concerning child rights and child protection.

“Rape, injuries, punishments, the heavy burdens we are made to carry, they destroy our lives – stop it.”

Save the Children in Ivory Coast organised activities involving children in Bouna, together with the Bouna Children Groups (Groupements d’Enfants de Bouna). Children were asked to provide information on the kinds of violence and abuse that take place where they live. They cited problems such as beatings, forced labour, early marriages and female genital mutilation. Activities included a play on early and forced marriages, the writing of poems on child rights and dancing.



Children address Prime Minister on early marriages and birth registration



Save the Children in Yemen held open day events in Hodeidah, Amran and Hajjah, which were attended by Governors, partners and other collaborators, to promote children's rights and bring additional awareness to the importance of protecting children from all forms of violence. Children from Save the Children Yemen's protection programs, along with their parents, also participated in the day's events. In Hodeidah alone, more than 400 people attended the day's celebration, including children, students, parents, media and representatives of government and civil society. In the capital Sana'a, the third annual Child Parliament of 2012 was held between November 17 and 21. The children walked to the office of the Prime Minister on November 20th and presented him with a letter they had written highlighting key issues such as early marriage and birth registration. A brief video concerning the Child Parliament can be seen [here](#).

Afghanistan

Universal Children's Day event in Afghanistan focusses on the rights of working children

Save the Children celebrated Universal Children's Day on November 20, 2012, in Kabul, Afghanistan. An event was organised by the Child Rights Advocacy Forum (CRAF), in which Save the Children is a founding member, on the theme of "Afghan Working Children: Enforcing Laws, Ensuring Their Rights." A documentary film on this subject was shown, highlighting the scale of the problem in the country and child rights as a whole.



Following this, a panel discussion took place involving Mr. Wasil Noor Mohammad, the Afghan Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs & Disabled, as

well as representatives of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, the ILO, UNICEF, the CRAF and local civil society. Child rights issues, notably concerning working children, were discussed based on questions from participants and children.



ILO representative, Mr. Harve Berger highlighted challenges related to the authorities' limited capacity to implement policies and the fact that child rights are not being sufficiently prioritised by the government and international community in the Afghan context. UNICEF's representative, Ms. Michaela Pasini spoke about the second phase of Child Act, which is in the drafting stage.

Parwana, a street working girl asked "When does the hard labour end for us in this country? We don't want promises, we want change."

CRAF members used this opportunity to urge donors and the government to invest in and prioritize child rights in their policies, to protect children's rights to make meaningful change for children. Over 100 people participated in the event, including around 25 children.

Bangladesh

Day of Prayer and Action for Children celebrated in Bangladesh on November 20, 2012

Save the Children in Bangladesh partnered with Bangladeshi group Breaking the Silence (BTS), which works to combat sexual abuse of children, to celebrate the DPAC and Universal Children's Day on November 20, 2012. They held a day-long programme including religious leaders, 220 children and 175 accompanying adults, as well as members of civil society.

Following an opening address by religious leader Moulana Tajul Islam, a rally involving 450 participants was held, with banners highlighting the Universal Children's Day and the DPAC, as well as messages concerning sexual and other forms of abuse against children.



Members of BTS' children group participated in cultural activities, such as singing, dancing and plays.

A drawing competition involving 87 children was held on the themes of child rights and child protection.



This was followed by discussions involving children and members of civil society concerning community-based child protection systems, during which the importance of children's voices and groups was underlined, as well as the need for proactive community leaders and local governments.

"Today, I am able to speak in front of everybody because BTS has empowered me to speak like that. I feel proud that now I am able to protect myself from any kind of abuse & also I can protect my peer and our community's children from any kind of abuse, especially sexual abuse." - Atique, a member of child group BTS.

Ms. Nayomi Kannangara, the Director of Save the Children's Child Protection Unit in Bangladesh, also addressed the participants, commenting on the positive role that religious

leaders can have in motivating and guiding communities, and praising the efforts by various groups to create a protective environment for children in their families and communities.

A special prayer for children was conducted by Moulana Gaji Md. Sanaullah for the wellbeing of all the children around the world. Finally, prizes were handed out to children for their drawings and papers they had written concerning child rights and child protection.



“Today is the day of prayer for our children’s wellbeing and also we have made commitment that we will never abuse our children.” - Moulana Tazul Islam, Religious Leader, Bauniabadh.]

“I feel proud that I have conducted a prayer for Bownibadh Community children, all children of Bangladesh and the whole world’s children by this program of Save the Children and BTS. It is our religious & social responsibility to protect children from all forms of abuse

including sexual abuse. Islam always encourages us to establish child rights equally.” - Moulana Sanaullah, Presenter, Desh TV.

“I have never seen such a prayer in the cultural program where every people jointly pray for child regardless race, sex and religion.” – Adult participant

Ivory Coast

Save the Children marks Universal Children's Day in Ivory Coast

In Ivory Coast, Save the Children organised activities to mark Universal Children's Day and the 23rd anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, notably in Bouna, where together with the Bouna Children Groups (Groupements d'Enfants de Bouna), activities involving children were held. Children were asked to provide information on the kinds of violence and abuse that take place where they live.

They cited problems such as beatings, forced labour, early marriages and female genital mutilation. Activities included a play on early and forced marriages, the writing of poems on child rights and dancing.



“November 20th is a good day for children because it is their day. Parents will get to know children's rights and the consequences of early and forced marriages.” Flora, 10 years old.

“We children are sick of all the violence.” Omar, Gbontchara Child Group.

“Rape, injuries, punishments, the heavy burdens we are made to carry, they destroy our lives – stop it.” Adeline, Gbontchara Child Group.

Yemen

Save the Children holds open days across Yemen on November 20, Universal Children's Day

To celebrate Universal Children's Day in Yemen, Save the Children held celebratory open day events in Hodeidah, Amran and Hajjah, which were attended by Governors, partners and other collaborators, to promote children's rights and bring additional awareness to the importance of protecting children from all forms of violence.



Children from Save the Children Yemen's protection programs, along with their parents, also participated in the day's events which included performing plays and singing expressive songs concerning the children's rights and the challenging situations they face.

In Hodeidah alone, more than 400 people attended the day's celebration which included children, university students, parents, media and representatives of Government and civil society. Advocacy was conducted with the Government about issues of low birth registration, street children, rehabilitation of children after release from jail, school dropout rates, physical abuse and punishment of children in school, limited capacity to handle large enrolments in schools and various other concerns children and parents have about their safety and future.



In the capital Sana'a, the third annual Child Parliament of 2012 was held between November 17 and 21. Children from various governorates gather to form this group every three months.

During this session the children wrote a letter to the Prime Minister highlighting key issues such as early marriage and birth registration.

The children then walked to the office of the Prime Minister on November 20th and were able to read the letter to him directly and hold a question and answer session.

A brief video concerning the Child Parliament can be seen [here](#).