

WORLD'S CHILDREN

SUPPORTER MAGAZINE – WINTER 2020

A PROGRAM WITH HEART

How healing and education starts with the arts. ■

FOUR-LEGGED LIBRARY

Camels are making very special deliveries. ■

PLAYING AND LEARNING ON COUNTRY

Transitioning playgroup for Indigenous children. ■



Save the Children

Spreading the **message** in Ethiopia

Meet Ekram, an immunisation health worker at a Save the Children Health Centre in the Somali region of Ethiopia. Thanks to support from people like you, Ekram and her colleagues are educating their community on how to stay safe from COVID-19.

“We will do whatever it takes to protect our community and ourselves but we do not have much. We are doing the best we can to deal with what could be a very bad situation but our resources are frighteningly limited,” she says.

“We continue to provide regular health education to our community about the pandemic and how they should protect themselves. We use high school students to reach the wider community with key messages. Through the volunteers, we also conduct regular disease surveillance activity to trace suspected cases and identify new visitors coming to the village.” The work isn’t without its challenges, but Ekram is committed to keeping the community protected.

Inside cover photo: Seifu Asseged/Save the Children
Cover photo: Oskar Kollberg/Save the Children



WORLD'S CHILDREN

The events of the past few months have meant we've all had to make big changes to the way we live. But they've also taught me the power of small, individual actions. How, for instance, the simple act of washing your hands for 20 seconds can save thousands of lives.

In this edition of World's Children, you'll see how your simple act of generosity is having a powerful impact in the world.

That impact can be seen in something as ordinary as a child drawing a picture, reading a book, or crafting a dollhouse. But when this activity takes place in one of our Child Friendly Spaces with a child traumatised by disaster or conflict, it can have untold benefits.

You are also supporting children to continue their learning despite the disruptions caused

by coronavirus restrictions, from Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory to the desert regions of Ethiopia, where camels deliver books to children in remote villages.

It's important you know that this is happening because of your support. You are making this possible, and I can't thank you enough for your help. Your act of generosity may be a simple act, but to the children who benefit from it, it can be a lifesaver.

I hope you enjoy these stories. You should feel proud to be part of them.

Stay well,

Paul Ronalds
Chief Executive Officer,
Save the Children

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A PROGRAM WITH H♥ART

How healing and education starts with the arts

When eight-year-old Shams picks up a pencil and begins to draw, something magical happens. Memories of the terrifying flight from home and the day-to-day hardships of life in the refugee camp fade away. On the page appears a house; a home, where her deep yearning for love and safety can live.

Shams* has had a life of turmoil and upheaval that's placed a heavy load on a little girl who is just eight years old. Her father died from cancer and her family was forced to flee their home in Syria due the brutal conflict there. She now lives in a refugee camp in Iraq.

However, her life has taken a turn for the better since she started attending the HEART program held in Save the Children's education centre in the camp.

With your support, Save the Children runs Healing and Education through the Arts (HEART) programs in many refugee camps. And they are making powerful change in the wellbeing of children like Shams.

The program encourages children to find new ways to share their experiences through painting, music, drama, and other art forms.

"I like the centre," says Shams. "I like my friends here and I love the HEART facilitators. I come to the centre because I love to draw and to learn, and I love all the colours."

HEART facilitator Amal says Shams loves to draw what she misses the most. "Shams loves to draw houses," she explains.

There's no doubt how much the HEART program means to Shams. "When I designed the book today, I felt very good, I don't know how to express how I felt, it was very nice", she says.

When children are affected by serious or chronic stress, a whole host of things can happen. Their anxiety levels increase, memory is affected and thinking skills can be impaired. Breaking the cycle of stress is critically important to enable children to grow into healthy, resilient adults.

Research shows artistic expression has a powerful effect on a child's social and emotional wellbeing. When a child shares their memories and feelings through artistic expression, they can feel less isolated, more connected and safer among the trusted adults and peers in their lives.

12-year-old Najma* also attends the HEART program. She's a talented artist and loves to draw and do crafts at the centre. Being there helps her forget the horrors she's been through in Syria; witnessing the constant shelling, her sister dying when she couldn't get medication, and her father's struggle with disability.



But at the HEART centre, she says she's happy again. "I felt brave and happy today during the activity, and while presenting what I'd made to the class," says Najma. Together, she and Shams created a book with English letters. "We had a nice feeling making the book and now we feel proud of it," she says.

"I see the reason behind Najma's love of the centre is because she was deprived of what she loves in the past," explains Amal. "But now when she attends the centre she does what she likes; she draws, she does handicrafts, she interacts with other children and engages with us."

A home, safe and full of love with family and friends is something every child wants and deserves. While we can't deliver it all for Shams and Najma, thanks to you, our HEART program can give them the chance to imagine and create a safe place for themselves in the world. ■

*Names changed to protect identity.
Photos: Claire Thomas/Save the Children



A PLACE OF CALM WITHIN THE CHAOS

Feeling like a child again, in the midst of disaster

“We play and sing a lot, and we draw, which I really like. I’m making new friends here,” says 11-year-old Joel.

From his description, you could be forgiven for thinking Joel had just started at a new school. Then you look around and see the wreckage of his whole community. After Cyclone Idai hit Mozambique, his hometown in Beira was flattened.

But the care and attention Joel is receiving at Save the Children’s Child Friendly Space is exactly what he needs right now.

Following a disaster or during conflict, children need a safe space to play, laugh and socialise. This helps them move from a state of stress and fear to one where they can begin to process their experiences.

When the cyclone came, Joel says he was scared. “In the middle of the night I woke up and saw the roof was gone, and that many houses were damaged. When I saw that I thought to myself: is this real?”



Joel attends a Child Friendly Space set up by Save the Children.

Photo: Rik Goverde/Save the Children

I thought I was going to die right then and there.”

His family escaped to a neighbour’s house, and from there to the roof of a mosque. They finally made it to the temporary accommodation centre, where Save the Children set up a Child Friendly Space and a Temporary Learning Space.

It’s made a world of difference to Joel and his siblings, says mum Madalena. “The kids are very sad, we lost everything, they’ve cried a lot. It has changed them a bit, they are more agitated. I do think the Child Friendly Space helps, it sets their minds on other things, helps them to relax.”

Joel is slowly returning to himself and learning how to have fun again. “I really like it here, there are many children to play with. We play and sing a lot, and we draw, which I really like. I’m making new friends here. Sometimes I go to school, sometimes I help my mother with the dishes. And sometimes my mother sends me to our teachers to ask something. Does it help to play with other friends? I think it does, yes. I have fun.”

Half a world away, another space to play

During Australia’s catastrophic bushfire season, Support Worker Gina saw the positive impact of Child Friendly Spaces firsthand. In Bairnsdale, she supported families through the initial recovery process. As parents dealt with insurance claims, their children were given a chance to draw, create and feel safe in the Child Friendly Space in an evacuation and recovery centre.

A safe place to share worries and experiences

Many of the children shared their worries and fears with her. “Some of the things children have seen have been really frightening. Some children have had to leave

their animals at home and didn’t know if they were coming back and if the animals would still be there. They’ve seen the military, fire and emergency services come in and set up in their towns and they have not known what the next day will bring.”

The Child Friendly Space in Bairnsdale provided a range of activities to cater for all children, from babies to teenagers, “They can play out some of their worries and their trauma,” explains Gina.

“We have lots of sensory items such as playdough and soft toys that children can feel and

ground themselves with to feel better. They can just sit on the mat with another child and they will say things like ‘did your house burn? Did you see fire?’ And having [their experiences] normalised and talking about it matter-of-factly with other children is really beneficial for them and to hear that other children have had the same experience.”

Whether in Beira or Bairnsdale, giving children the chance to play, sing, draw and make friends can give them calm among the chaos. ■



“They can play out some of their worries and their trauma,” says Support Worker, Gina.

Photo: Sacha Myers/Save the Children

HOW ART HEALS

Drawing can be therapeutic for children in crisis

Children can often feel complex emotions that can be difficult for them to articulate. That's where art helps. Putting pencil to paper is instrumental in letting kids express their emotions, lose their thoughts in new imaginary worlds, and start to process things they have experienced. Children's drawings express their fears, joys, dreams, hopes and nightmares, and give an insight into their personalities.

For vulnerable children who have been abused, neglected, or stressed due to conflict or disaster, art becomes even more important to their recovery. Without the words to explain how they feel, the process of drawing or crafting can be cathartic.

Children as young as two can benefit from engaging in art and craft, as they attempt to recreate on paper what they have seen. Older children may have more depth and realism in their drawings, and use words and symbols to explain their art.

Around the world, Save the Children is encouraging children to express their creativity and emotions through drawing. Your support gives children the chance to creatively express themselves and find the talented artist within. ■

Rania, Gaza

Rania's picture shows her growing up in conflict in Gaza. "I live in constant fear of losing my loved ones, friends and cousins," she says.

"The sound is so horrific, you see fires everywhere, you see your friends and loved ones destroyed in front of you and there is nothing you can do about it." Rania has been receiving individual counselling, as well as attending activities in Save the Children's community centre, such as group counselling sessions and recreational activities.



Nur, Bangladesh

Fleeing from violence in his home state in Myanmar, Nur has dealt with more than most kids his age. His mother killed; his father taken to prison. Now in the Cox's Bazar refugee camp for Rohingya refugees, Nur's time spent in Save the Children's Child Friendly Space drawing pictures has helped him process what he's experienced.



Joshua, Australia

As coronavirus precautions shuttered schools around Australia, five-year-old Joshua was devastated. He had just started school and was eager to keep learning and playing with his friends. Spending the days with his family at home, Joshua drew his experiences with help from his mum. They later talked about what the drawings meant. Joshua's drawing is a picture of himself learning to skip because that's what he did a lot at home with his sisters while he couldn't go to school.

Joshua drew pictures of his time in quarantine.



Peter, Uganda

Fourteen-year-old Peter fled his village in South Sudan when fighting broke out. Just ten at the time, he lost his mother and siblings in the ambush and lived in the bush with other escapees. By 13, he had been recruited into an armed group, forced to be a child soldier. At 15, he escaped.

He headed to Uganda, where now, he has his pigeons to look after and care for. He drew his picture of his most precious possession – a pigeon called 'Am'. "I named it 'Am' because I had lost everything. It was the only thing left for me."

Elina, Mozambique

Just four weeks after Cyclone Idai hit Mozambique in March 2019 came the full force of Cyclone Kenneth. Elina drew her picture at the Save the Children Child Friendly Space, remembering how it destroyed all the houses in her village. "There was a lot of wind. The houses in the village were totally destroyed. A lot of trees were on the ground and there was water flooding the roads.

"We later reconstructed the house with the same roof sheet that had been damaged. My parents also constructed a smaller house."





Nur, Bangladesh

Nur's picture shows his village under attack in Myanmar.



Rania, Gaza

Rania has depicted her experience of growing up in conflict in Gaza. "I live in constant fear of losing my loved ones, friends and cousins," she says.



Joshua, Australia

Joshua's drawing is a picture of himself learning to skip, during school closures in Australia due to COVID-19.



Elina, Mozambique

Elina illustrates her experience of cyclone Idai, showing heavy rain and trees falling.



Peter, Uganda

Peter draws his pet pigeon, that he's been looking after since it hatched, and he's incredibly proud. "I can handle with care."

RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY DURING A NDEMIC

When disaster strikes, the generosity of our supporters allows us to quickly help children whose lives have been turned upside down.

As COVID-19 forced countries around the world to close off borders and international travel was suspended, humanitarian agencies like Save the Children began to prepare contingency plans, should an emergency hit during this time. Unfortunately, we all knew that it was not a question of ‘if’ an emergency would occur, but ‘when’.

The answer came hurtling towards Vanuatu in the early hours on 1 April, at 270 kilometres per hour. Tropical Cyclone Harold bore down on the archipelago, destroying homes, public facilities like schools and health centres, and fields of crops.

In the ensuing days, the cyclone moved on to wreak havoc in neighbouring countries Fiji, the Solomon Islands, and Tonga, all of which saw widespread damage in vulnerable communities. And sadly, our supporters in Australia heard very little – if anything – of this tragic emergency,

as COVID-19 continued to monopolise news headlines.

Flora, a mother of three from Malo Island in Vanuatu, described that fearful night:

“It was really dark, we had to use the torch. I mean, you couldn’t see further than a metre in front of you.” She explained, “We gathered all the children and old people and went to a relative’s house which was the only cyclone-proof house in the village. Then we heard the deafening roar from the ocean making its way onto the island. Children were crying, and some of the mothers started crying too. I looked at my children and cried because I thought the cyclone was coming with tidal waves to swallow us.”

Tropical Cyclone Harold caused similar panic in Fiji, as described by mother of two Delana:

“The gale lasted for almost three hours and within that period there was a torrential downpour. The excessive rainwater burst the riverbanks, and the overflowing water flooded the low-lying houses. We clung tightly to bamboo stems for fear of being washed away.”

“Our house was completely destroyed by Tropical Cyclone Harold. Now we are wondering how we can rebuild given the fact that our main source of income – our farm – was also severely affected. Everything was destroyed. It will be time consuming for us to get back on our feet.”

Flora and Delana’s stories are sadly not unique. Families across the region have been left with next to nothing.

In any other year, Save the Children would send life-saving supplies and specialised emergency-response personnel to the affected countries to help families get back on their feet as soon as possible. However, this is 2020 – a year of unprecedented travel restrictions.

But with thanks to Save the Children’s dedicated supporters, we had skilled local staff and ongoing development programs in place in Fiji, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands. Our staff were able to quickly travel to the hardest hit communities to assess the needs of children and families.



Flora (left) sits with her family after receiving COVID-19 awareness training from Save the Children.

Photo: Nancy Lagdom/Save the Children

In the following weeks our teams on the ground were able to reach families with hygiene kits containing items such as soap, toothbrushes, and laundry detergent; kitchen sets and household items like blankets, mosquito nets, plastic sheeting, brooms, mattresses, candles; and tarpaulins and tents for shelter.

Save the Children is also conscious that we need to continue our vital work to stop the global spread of COVID-19, so we have been integrating important hygiene messaging into our response to Tropical Cyclone Harold.

Flora attended our COVID-19 awareness session. “We have

forgotten those messages about COVID-19 because right now we are trying to rebuild our lives and get over that experience of Tropical Cyclone Harold.” Flora said, “So it’s a good reminder especially, for our children. I will put this poster outside the toilet to remind my family.”

The response to COVID-19 in the Pacific is complicated. Aid agencies like Save the Children have attempted to get ahead of the curve by teaching communities about the threat of the virus as well as preventative measures families could take. Even in remote outer-islands,

news of COVID-19 had arrived and many parents were distressed as to when it might present itself. Yet there were very few cases in Fiji, and none in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, so when Tropical Cyclone Harold hit, any attention on COVID-19 was immediately lost.

It is only with the support of people like you that Save the Children was able to reach affected communities as quickly as we did, help families begin to rebuild their lives, and continue on with our vital work protecting children from the pandemic. ■



Save the Children is supporting cyclone-affected communities in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu with help from Disaster READY.

Disaster READY is supported by the Australian Government and implemented through the Australian Humanitarian Partnership.

DANA'S LEGACY FOR GIRLS

“Kids need the opportunity, because they are our future”

When she hears about a child graduating from school, Dana smiles. It's been her dream to give children a better education than she had herself.

For Dana, that opportunity has come through her support of Save the Children.

As a long-term supporter, Dana has seen the impact of her contribution so far and wants it to go even further into the future. That's why leaving a gift in her Will to Save the Children was a logical decision.

“About 12 years ago, I made my Will, and I thought, what am I going to do with my estate? This is my way of giving back. Because I think everybody needs to give back to the community.”

Save the Children's work to educate girls and give them a secure future holds special meaning for Dana. “When I got to Year 10 Dad said, ‘You've got to get a job next year’, whereas I wanted to get my HSC [Higher School Certificate]. He was the only one working in the family,

as a factory worker, so we didn't have much money, and so I went off to work. Because I'd took to shorthand and typing quickly at school, I walked straight into a job easily. I was lucky.”

Fortunately, Dana spent her career working as a secretary, in a series of jobs she enjoyed.

But she believes all children should have the benefit of education. “Kids need the opportunity, because they are our future. If you educate them, they will leverage that education and use it to get out of poverty and help their family and community. So many of them just don't get the opportunity, and it's a shame. It's a real pity.”

And every little bit adds up, says Dana, who encourages everyone to give as little or as much as they can. “We need to support children much more than we have been doing, especially in developing countries.”

Dana is pleased to know that she will be helping children long into the future. “I'm proud to be associated with a charity that's doing such positive work. It's really uplifting.”

And with a gift in her Will, Dana knows that she will continue to support this vital work beyond her lifetime leaving a legacy that creates opportunities for children well into the future. ■

If you would like more information about making a gift in your Will, or the impact your gift will have, please contact Martin Williams, our Gifts in Wills Manager.

You can call Martin on (03) 7002 1743 for a confidential discussion or email martin.williams@savethechildren.org.au.



THE FOUR-LEGGED LIBRARY

Camels are bringing books to children in the desert

The camels trudge through the arid desert sand, rocking from left to right as they have done for centuries. But today, they have a very special delivery.

In the Somali region of Ethiopia, where 13-year-old Mahadiya lives, camels are traditionally used to transport goods across the hot desert. There's often little other transportation in these remote regions. And for years now, the camels have also been performing an unusual role – as a mobile library. Each of the herd of 21 camels carries up to 200 books at a time in wooden boxes strapped to their back. These amazing animals travel vast distances to deliver their precious cargo of

learning to over 22,000 children in 33 inaccessible villages.

The camels are a rare lifeline for Mahadiya who has dreams of being an engineer. A dream that will only be achieved if she can continue learning. Thanks to generous supporters like you, she has that chance. Each week she eagerly awaits the arrival of the 'four-legged library' in her village.

Mahadiya is grateful for the camel library visits. "When schools were closed (due to COVID-19), I was very sad. However, the camel library continued to come to our village and supplied us with storybooks. I feel very happy and I am now



able to borrow and take home the storybook that I would like to read."

She's determined not to let her dream slip away. "Even at this time, I do not want to lose my hope of becoming an engineer" she says. And she wants all the children in Ethiopia to stay as determined and focused as she is. "My advice to all the people including children in the lockdown is not to be sad, to stay at home and to be patient until the situation improves. I hope the situation will soon improve and once again, you can enjoy the outdoors."

In the meantime, thanks to you, even in the remote regions of Ethiopia children can continue to read, learn and dream as they wait for better days. ■



PLAYING AND LEARNING ON COUNTRY

Your support for Indigenous children is giving them a better start in life



Helping children develop fine motor skills through drawing and painting is an important part of preparing for school, pictured here from another Save the Children program in Queensland.

Photo: Robert McKechnie/Save the Children

As the world shut down with the threat of coronavirus, a whole new world opened up for a group of indigenous children, as they returned to traditional homelands to discover the joys of cultural activities and collecting bush tucker for healthy eating. Thanks to your support, they are learning about their past, and that will help them achieve the future they deserve.

When social distancing restrictions due to COVID-19 came into action in Australia, Save the Children had to find new ways to adapt and deliver programs such as Play2Learn, our free intensive supported playgroups that have helped kids prepare for school for more than 30 years. It was important to continue these programs, as we know that when children play, learn and socialise in their early years, they are better prepared for school and less likely to drop out in their later years or need further support.

In some areas, we were able to move the Play2Learn program online, connecting mums and

kids in isolation through virtual playgroups. In other remote areas, like the Northern Territory, we found even more innovative ways to keep the program running.

In March, many indigenous family groups in the NT moved to remote sites in traditional homelands to reduce the risk of contracting coronavirus. In Wadeye, a remote community five hours south of Darwin, Gwendoline, one of our early childhood workers, was determined to find a way to continue to deliver Play2Learn safely for children in her extended family who would otherwise miss out on critical weeks of learning.

She attended a community meeting conducted in the local language, where NT health professionals outlined the precautions she would need to take. She was provided

with health awareness resources to share with the group and additional soap and a basin, so the kids could wash their hands regularly during the Play2Learn sessions.

Turning threat into opportunity

Three times a week Gwendoline conducted playgroup sessions in the isolated community to help the children develop fine motor skills through drawing and writing. She encouraged their language skills in both English and Murrinhpatha through rhymes, counting and games. She also taught the children about their Indigenous heritage, giving them cultural experiences such as taking them on bushwalks and fishing trips, and showing them how to collect bush tucker for healthy eating.

Every fortnight Gwendoline received an updated pack of resources to keep the materials fresh and engaging for the

children. The packs include information on COVID-19 hygiene, as well as worksheets which focus on numeracy and literacy activities, notebooks, colouring books, pencils, erasers, rulers, books and local language songs and stories.

Gwendoline is appreciative of the support she gets from people like you. “I want to thank you mob for helping me to teach the kids here so they can keep learning,” she says “It’s so important for these kids to learn where they come from and how to live on country. That’s their culture and their heritage, and it’s a proud one. We don’t want them to lose it.”

Your support is giving these kids the chance they deserve

“We are in a remote area with extremely high poverty and most families we work with require a lot of support,” says Chelsea, the Play2Learn Team Leader in Wadeye. “Our work, which is supported by so many generous fellow Australians from around the country, provides these vulnerable children with a chance. From the early years your support gives them the chance to play, learn, be nourished and cared for, so that they can have the future they deserve.” ■



Gwendoline teaches three-year-old Keisha about healthy eating.

Photo: Save the Children

SAVE WITH STORIES

**Have you seen Save with Stories?
It's a new way we're reaching kids
to keep them engaged with learning
and promote a love of reading.**

Check out Save the Children Australia on Facebook or Instagram to watch celebrities, including actor Stephen Curry, actor and Save the Children ambassador Luke Arnold, singer Dannii Minogue, MasterChef contestant Alice Zaslavsky and author Rebecca McGregor read some of their favourite books for kids of all ages. The storytime sessions provide fun and education for kids and parents stuck at home and remind us just how important a good book is for us all. ■

#SaveWithStories




LIBRARY FOR ALL

Save the Children's recent merger with Library for All is bringing reading to children around the world. In communities where history, poverty or remoteness are everyday barriers to accessing knowledge, we send digital books on tablets and paperback books, so that every child has the chance to learn, imagine, and lose themselves in a good book. So far over a quarter of a million children have received books through the program, and thanks to your support, we'll reach millions more. ■

Rohingya refugee children learn, play, paint, dance and sing as part of a collaboration between Save the Children and Artolution. In a refugee camp, lifesaving measures come in many different forms, and education, especially arts education, is one of them.

Photo: Kristiana Marton/Save the Children





**THANK YOU FOR ALL THAT
YOU DO FOR CHILDREN**

As the world grapples with the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, now more than ever it is vital that we continue Save the Children's life-saving work. And that is something that you, our caring and generous supporters, help make happen. By working together, we can ensure children continue to survive, learn and stay safe.



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