

CHILDREN UNITE

ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS 2021-2022



dignity | rights | influence

Directors' Report



During the globally challenging pandemic period, this financial year 2021/22 has seen Children Unite provide expertise to a range of organisations on a variety of topics relating to the exploitation of children. This has included working with funding organisations, research institutions, UN bodies and non-governmental organisations on topics ranging from the sexual

violence of children, child domestic work, feminist and survivor-informed safeguarding and the ethics of research with children and youth at risk of exploitation and violence. More detail on our activities this year can be found below.

During this period, we also undertook a refresh of our website (www.childrenunite.org.uk) and began the process of changing our bank account to facilitate easier international payments. The wider focus of Children Unite's activities in this period resulted from the expansion of Children Unite's charitable remit in 2019/20 from child domestic work to include other victims of child exploitation (by Special Resolution 10 December 2019, accepted by the Charity Commission on 7 January 2020). The purpose of updating our charitable objects was to more accurately reflect the interconnectedness of child domestic work with other forms of child exploitation and consequently Children Unite's wider interests in the situation of all young people in exploitative situations, including street-connected children and children who have been sexually exploited.

This widening of our remit has meant that we have increased the range of our Technical Advice Service and we are now working closely with our Associates: Rabia Gungor is involved in the work on safeguarding, Alphonce Omolo is the lead researcher in Kenya for the ETHYCS project with London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and we welcome Kirsche Walker as the newest Associate who is supporting Helen and Rabia on work to develop a model of survivor-informed safeguarding.

Despite the pandemic, the work of Children Unite is flourishing and we want to thank our trustees for their continued commitment to Children Unite throughout the year: Gillian Harrow our Chair, Toral Shah our Treasurer as well as Audrey Guichon and Beth Herzfeld who have helped us to, very smoothly, restructure our activities by building on our strengths and focusing on our values.

Helen Veitch and Jonathan Blagbrough, Co-Directors



Children Unite

Mission: Children Unite promotes participatory approaches to working with exploited children. Through consultancy and by delivering research and advocacy projects we support child domestic workers, street connected children and sexually exploited children to claim their rights.

Consultancy: Through our Technical Advice Service we work with NGOs and donors that support exploited children and young people. Our advice service builds organisations' capacity to integrate children's participation into organisational policy and structure, and helps to develop programmes that are based on needs identified by children themselves.

Projects: Through our projects we facilitate children's activism and advocacy in order to influence national and international policy and practice. We design and co-ordinate participatory research and projects that empower exploited children.

Since 2010 we have worked in over 20 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America with children's rights agencies and donors that are supporting exploited children and young people.

Summary of Activities

Feminist Safeguarding: Children Unite was commissioned in March 2021 to undertake a consultancy for Womankind International to develop a training package for the Advancing Women's Engagement: Strengthening Opportunities to Mobilise for Equality (AWESOME) programme. Helen Veitch (Director) worked with Rabia Gungor (Associate) and trained (virtually) Womankind programme staff and programme partners in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda responsible for safeguarding women from diverse groups, including women with disabilities. Helen was also a guest blogger for the Rejuvenate initiative - a project that recognises the value that children and young people can bring when they are given the space and support to do so. Read the blog post here: [Safeguarding for youth activism: taking a feminist approach](#)

Discussion Paper: Understanding Child Sexual Abuse as a Human Rights Violation: Helen Veitch was commissioned by Ignite Philanthropy in April 2022 to write a discussion paper to complement a scoping paper on 'Understanding the conditions that contribute to sexual violence against children'. The discussion paper aimed to inform the Out of the Shadows Index, hosted by Ignite Philanthropy and to promote discussion by key stakeholders working on sexual violence to challenge assumptions and highlight areas for action. Helen co-authored the discussion paper with Dr Claire Cody from the Safer Young Lives Research Centre at the University of Bedfordshire.

Review of Sexual Violence Against Children Sector: Helen Veitch was commissioned by Ignite Philanthropy in April 2021 to undertake a literature review of the sexual violence against children sector to grasp progress in the field and establish a baseline for advocacy activities.

Research on ethical and safeguarding approaches to co-produced research with youth in risk situations (October 2021 –): The focus of this on-going research project, led by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) with Children Unite as its international project partner, has been to identify ethical challenges and practices in co-

produced research with youth (aged 15-24) about young people (10-24 years) in risk situations (such as those who are working, trafficked, and/or living outside of family care). The plan is to prepare guidance on conducting safe, ethical and collaborative research, as well as to show how co-production methods can empower young people.

Children Unite's principal role in this project has been to engage with children and young people in risk situations through field partners in four locations (ChildLink, Guyana; SAN, Nepal; Kita Sahabat, Indonesia; and Blue Cross, Kenya) to gather experience and evidence on a range of ethics issues, including confidentiality, consent, anonymity, disclosures, participation and compensation. This evidence will form the basis for the research ethics guidance document.

Technical advice on child domestic work (CDW): Jonathan Blagbrough provided technical advice to The Freedom Fund, supporting and helping to frame their plans for: (1) developing a new programme of work on child domestic work in East Africa; (2) scoping for a potential new 'hotspot' on child domestic work in West Africa; and (3) support to a second phase of work on CDW in Ethiopia, focused around advocacy with the children of employers. A key deliverable from this work was *Child Domestic Work: A summary framing paper*, written by Jonathan Blagbrough and published by The Freedom Fund in November 2021 (https://freedomfund.org/wp-content/uploads/ChildDomesticWork_2021_11.pdf)

Children Serving Children: Jonathan produced a policy brief outlining the key findings and implications for policy and practice from his doctoral thesis and exploring relations between child domestic workers and the children of employing families in Mwanza, Tanzania.

In addition, Jonathan produced a children-friendly (cartoon) version of his PhD thesis in Swahili that was circulated to the children and young people who acted as research participants and advisors to his field work in Tanzania.

See the news section of the Children Unite website



Survivor-informed Safeguarding: in October 2021 Children Unite was commissioned by Oak Foundation to undertake a consultancy to review safeguarding policies and procedures for campaigning. Helen Veitch worked with Children Unite Associates Rabia Gungor and Kirshe Walker on this project, undertaking a policy review and key informant interviews and developing a new approach to safeguarding of children and young people who are undertaking advocacy, campaigning or activism on sexual violence known as 'survivor-informed safeguarding'. This approach consists of three continuous elements that provide a 'safe space' for survivors to campaign:

- Trauma-informed: Making use of trauma-informed approaches which enables organisations to mitigate and respond to trauma when it arises.
- Risk-informed: risk assessment and mitigation strategies are informed by survivor campaigners and their support networks and are regularly re-visited.
- Informed consent: 'consent' is a continuous conversation with survivor campaigners where an understanding of the risks involved informs decision-making on their engagement.

**Registration**

Children Unite is a company limited by guarantee: 07032485

Children Unite is a registered UK charity: 1136614

Registered address: 33 Skipworth Road, London E9 7JR

Founders and Directors: Helen Veitch and Jonathan Blagbrough

Company Secretary: Jonathan Blagbrough

Non-share holding Directors:

Toral Shah (Treasurer) (resigned September 2022)

Gillian Harrow (Chair)

Beth Herzfeld

Audrey Guichon

Adrian Storey (joined September 2022)


Contact us:

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www.childrenunite.org.uk

Accounts

Children Unite							
Statement of Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2022							
I&E	21/22				20/21		
	Restricted		Unrestricted		Restricted		Unrestricted
Income							
Donations			900				1,200
Gift Aid			-				407
TAS Fees	51,634				3,692		
Grants	21,000				-		
Bank Interest			6				4
Sundry	-	72,634		906	3,692	30	1,641
Expenses							
Project Costs	64,013				3,760		
Staff Costs			-				-
Administration			100				807
Bank Charges		64,013	122	221	3,760	4	811
Surplus / (Deficit)		8,621		684	-	68	830

Children Unite				
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2022				
<u>Balance Sheet</u>	21/22		20/21	
Current Assets		16,984		7,678
Cash at Bank	16,984		7,678	
Debtors	-		-	
Prepayments	-		-	
Current Liabilities		-		-
Pending disbursements	-		-	
Accruals	-		-	
Net Current Assets		16,984		7,678
Funds		16,984		7,678
Balance brought forward	7,678		6,916	
Surplus / (Deficit)	9,306		762	
Reserves carried forward		16,984		7,678
Restricted funds		8,622		0
Unrestricted funds		8,362		7,678
For the year ended 31 March 2022 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies				
Director's responsibilities:				
The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with Section 478.				
The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.				
These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the Companies Act 2006.				
These accounts have been delivered in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.				
The accounts were approved by the directors and signed on their behalf by:				
Director:			Date:	
			21/12/2022	