



CHILDREN UNITE

ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS 2022-2023



dignity | rights | influence

Directors' Report



The year 2022-23 has seen Children Unite deepen and expand our work on ethics and safeguarding for campaigning and research by children with lived experiences of exploitation. We have explored the key ethical issues for participatory research with children and young people and deepened our understanding of 'safeguarding' by applying it to the youth activism and campaigning environment. In so doing we are learning about the overlap between what is traditionally thought of as 'child protection' 'safeguarding' or 'ethics' and the concept of 'meaningful engagement' with young people.

This work has enabled us to deepen our solidarity and strengthen our partnerships with colleagues working at the 'coalface' in Guyana (ChildLink), Indonesia (Kita Sahabat), Kenya (Lensthru Consultants) and Nepal (Swatantrata Abihyan Nepal) and from research institutes such as the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and the Safer Young Lives Centre at the University of Bedfordshire. And it has been fantastic to be working more closely this year with all our Associates – Silvie Bovarnick, Alphonse Omolo, Rabia Gungor and Kirsche Walker. In the aftermath of the pandemic, we undertook a lot of travel this year – connecting with our partners and our associates – and we want to thank all those who welcomed us into their organisations, their hearts and their lives – we feel enriched and re-motivated from these experiences to continue our work with Children Unite.

Our work on safeguarding prompted us to get our house in order and, with the help of Rabia Gungor (our resident safeguarding expert) we reviewed and revised our safeguarding policy and procedures to be more aligned with the principles of 'survivor-informed' safeguarding that we have been working on over the past two years.

For Helen, the publishing of her discussion paper on re-framing sexual violence against children as a rights violation was a long awaited personal goal. Especially as it was launched through a community conversation with key donors, achieving its aim of prompting discussion and debate – as is evident from the title of the paper!

Our Trustees have provided great advice and support to us over the year – and a good deal of laughter and fun at our meetings. We want to wholeheartedly thank Toral Shah for her valuable contribution as a trustee and treasurer of Children Unite for five years and welcome back Adrian Storey to fill Toral's big shoes. And, of course, to thank the remaining trustees, Audrey Guichon, Beth Herzfeld and Gillian Harrow (our Chair), for continuing to support us to work with integrity and purpose.

More detail on our activities this year can be found below.

Helen Veitch and Jonathan Blagbrough, Co-Directors

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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.

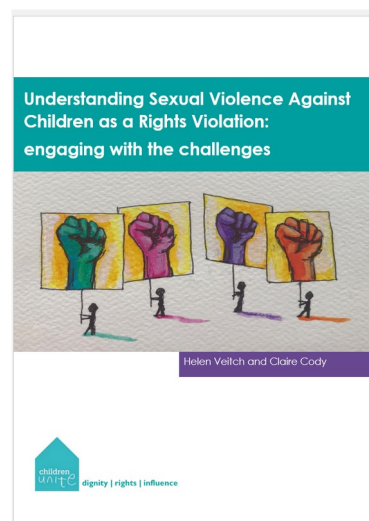
Consultancy: Through our Technical Advice Service we work with NGOs and donors that support exploited children and young people. Our advice service builds organisations' capacity to integrate children's participation into organisational policy and structure, and helps to develop programmes that are based 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 25 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

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In September, Children Unite sub-contracted, Rabia Gungor to develop tools for the 'Survivor Informed Safeguarding for Campaigning' approach that were used in campaigning activities on the sexual abuse of boys by national NGOs Projeto Legal in Brazil and Taller de Vida in Colombia.

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Over the course of the year, we supported the Kenyan team to obtain ethics approval and prepare child researchers for the pilot (which took place in August 2023). In November 2022, we worked with LSHTM to support the team at ChildLink Guyana to undertake focus group discussions in Georgetown with youth researchers. In December, the team from Kitah Sahabat undertook focus group discussions in Semarang with young women working in karaoke bars and their employers. In January 2023, Swatantrata Abhiyan Nepal undertook focus group discussions with sexually exploited young women in Kathmandu.



Two examples of the 'flower exercise' which collated data on support networks from youth researchers in Guyana.

Collaboration with Safer Young Lives Research Centre: In March 2023, Children Unite started collaborating with the Safer Young Lives Research Centre at the University of Bedfordshire to sub-contract Silvie Bovarnick, Children Unite Associate, to undertake work on a project called Learning Together, which supports researchers to safely and ethically involve children and young people in sexual abuse research and explore what the support needs of researchers are to help them to do this.

Pro-bono support to Wotesawa, Tanzania: Children Unite supported Wotesawa (a local Mwanza-based NGO working with young domestic workers: <https://wotesawa.or.tz/>) with editing their Annual Report 2022, their key annual publication to inform supporters and funders of their activities. Jonathan also acted as a referee for Wotesawa's successful application to the Freedom Fund-Survivor Leadership Fund, which awarded the organisation 20,000 USD.

Updated Safeguarding Policy: Children Unite's safeguarding policy and procedures have been reviewed and updated by Rabia Gungor, (Children Unite Associate and safeguarding expert) to better reflect the participatory and child-led principles in the 'survivor-informed safeguarding' approach

that Children Unite has been developing over the past year. An extraordinary trustee meeting is planned for June 2023 to brief trustees on the policy and procedures in preparation for adoption by trustees at the 2023 AGM.

Publications: Jonathan authored an article for peer review journal Children's Geographies entitled '[Not-Quite-Friendship: exploring social relations between child domestic workers and the children of employing families](#)'.

Governance & Finances

Finances: Children Unite moved our bank account from Triodos Bank to Starling Bank in August 2022 in order to cope with increasing income from international sources, which Triodos, as a local UK bank, was not set up to do.

Governance: in September 2022 Children Unite held its AGM where Toral Shah resigned from the Board as Treasurer and Adrian Storey joined to replace Toral. Beth Herzfeld, Gillian Harrow and Audrey Guichon were reappointed for a further 1 year.

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: Helen Veitch

Non-share holding Directors:

Adrian Storey (Treasurer)

Gillian Harrow (Chair)

Beth Herzfeld

Audrey Guichon

Contact us:

helen@childrenunite.org.uk

www.childrenunite.org.uk



Children Unite				
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2023				
<u>Balance Sheet</u>	22/23		21/22	
Current Assets		19,729		16,984
Cash at Bank	19,729		16,984	
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Reserves carried forward		19,729		16,984
Restricted funds		6,100		8,622
Unrestricted funds		13,629		8,362
For the year ended 31 March 2023 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:	
A.J.S.			15/12/2023	



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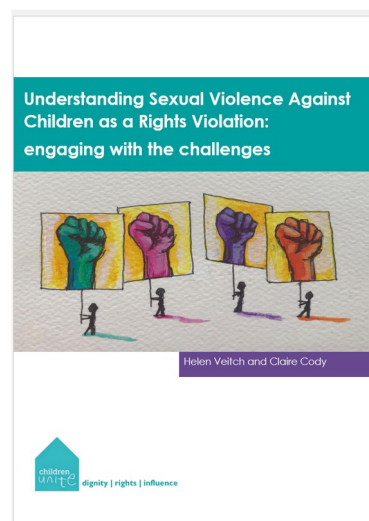
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The accounts were approved by the directors and signed on their behalf by:				
Director:			Date:	
A.J.S			15/12/2023	

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Children Unite

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Children Unite (the Charity) for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Charity you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed by examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or*
- 2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or*
- 3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.*

Recommendations:

I have recommendations for the Children Unite on the internal control enhancement to consider:

- 1. To have an approved financial policy and procedures manual*
- 2. Documentation: Proper documentation of financial transactions, receipts, and expenditures is crucial. This not only aids in the preparation of accounts but also ensures transparency and accountability.*

Signed: Shabnam Sadaat (Signed Electronically)

Name: Shabnam Sadaat

Relevant professional qualification or membership of professional bodies (if any):

Address: 25 Brompton Court, Brompton Grove, Hendon Central NW44AJ

Date: 31/01/2024