



CHILDREN  
UNITE

ANNUAL  
REPORT &  
ACCOUNTS  
2023-2024



dignity | rights | influence

# Directors' Report



In 2023-2024 Children Unite has continued to explore the relationship between safeguarding, ethics and the meaningful engagement of exploited children and young people in decision-making. This included exploring how a survivor-informed approach to safeguarding affects those with lived experience of sexual violence who are undertaking grant-making for donors. It also included revising our policy and procedures on safeguarding to incorporate the key principles of survivor-informed safeguarding – being trauma-informed and linking participatory risk assessments to a process of informed consent.

This year, we officially welcomed Claire Cody into our team of Associates to start work on a participatory advocacy toolkit. We continue to work with Rabia Gungor and Kirsche Walker on safeguarding and Alphonse Omolo on research ethics.

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 wholeheartedly thank Audrey Guichon, Gillian Harrow and Beth Herzfeld for their continuing support while we look for new trustees to onboard. Our thanks also go to Adrian Storey, our Treasurer who found the wonderful Ania Dylewska who acted as an Independent Examiner for Children Unite.

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 2023-2024**

### **Ethics for participatory research**

Field work in Kenya, Indonesia, Guyana and Nepal came to an end in 2023 for a collaborative project with London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) on research ethics. Children Unite, in collaboration with field work partners, analysed data from focus group discussions in Indonesia and Nepal that explored how to create a conducive environment for data collection with sexually exploited children and young people. Data on research ethics was also analysed for two pilots of participatory research in Guyana and Kenya – where youth researchers with lived experience of sexual violence and/or street connections undertook interviews with their peers and analysed data. The team at LSHTM will be using this data to develop guidelines for ethics committees to better consider applications for ethics approval for participatory research with children and young people in 'risk' situations. Partners in this three year project are:

[ChildLink Guyana](#) [Blue Cross Kenya](#) [Swatantrata Abhiyan Nepal](#) [Kita Sahabat Indonesia](#)

### **Safeguarding for participatory grant-making**

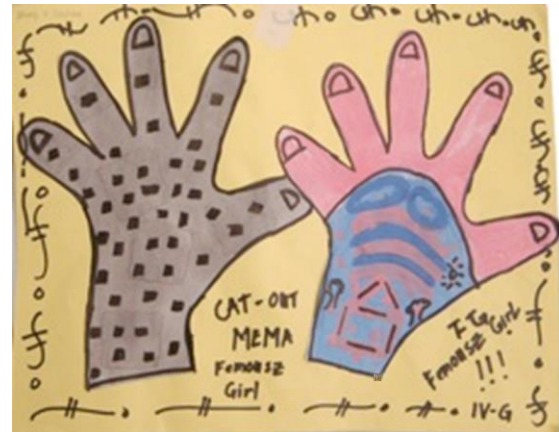
In August, Children Unite was commissioned by Ignite Philanthropy to pilot 'survivor-informed safeguarding for campaigning' through their participatory grants programme for survivor groups - [Thrive Together](#). Associates, Rabia Gungor and Kirsche Walker along with Helen Veitch subsequently delivered a programme of workshops and developed a suite of safeguarding tools for members of the Lived Experience Advisory Panel (LEAP), who were tasked with assessing applications and selecting 14 grantees to receive funding for their work with survivors. Children Unite has contributed to a revision of Ignite Philanthropy's safeguarding policy and procedures through discussions with the team at the Funders Safeguarding Collaborative who are currently reviewing policy for the organisation.

### **Participatory advocacy toolkit**

In February, Children Unite was commissioned by ECPAT International to undertake a literature review and develop a toolkit on participatory advocacy. Helen Veitch, working with Claire Cody - who has now become an Associate of Children Unite - are developing a document that outlines different approaches ECPAT groups can undertake to facilitate youth-led or youth-driven advocacy on sexual violence. A suite of resources are being produced to support [ECPAT International](#)'s new strategy on child and youth participation.

## 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 two years. An extraordinary trustee meeting took place in June 2023 to brief trustees on the policy and procedures and receive their comments and input. The new safeguarding policy and procedures were subsequently revised and adopted by trustees at Children Unite's AGM in October.



## Governance & Finances

**Governance:** In October 2023 Children Unite held its AGM where Beth Herzfeld was reappointed for a further year and Gillian Harrow and Audrey Guichon reappointed for six months in order to recruit new trustees. By February 2024 three new trustees had been identified and two of these observed the February trustee meeting (all three have subsequently become trustees).

**Finances:** new financial procedures were adopted in February 2024 that align with the structures of the new bank being used by Children Unite, Starling Bank.

### 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-shareholding Directors/Trustees:

Adrian Storey (Treasurer)

Gillian Harrow (Chair)

Beth Herzfeld

Audrey Guichon

Contact us: [helen@childrenunite.org.uk](mailto:helen@childrenunite.org.uk)

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**Children Unite**  
**Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024**

<b><u>Balance Sheet</u></b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>22/23</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>	<b>18,439</b>	<b>19,729</b>
Cash at Bank	18,439	19,729
Debtors	-	-
Prepayments	-	-
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Pending disbursements	-	-
Accruals	-	-
Net Current Assets	<b><u>18,439</u></b>	<b><u>19,729</u></b>
Funds	18,439	19,729
Balance brought forward	19,729	16,984
	-	
Surplus / (Deficit)	1,289	2,745
Reserves carried forward	<b><u>18,439</u></b>	<b><u>19,729</u></b>
Restricted/consultancy funds	10,922	6,100
Unrestricted funds	7,518	13,629

For the year ended 31 March 2024 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.

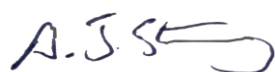
These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the Companies Act 2006.

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: Adrian Storey

Date:



18/10/2024



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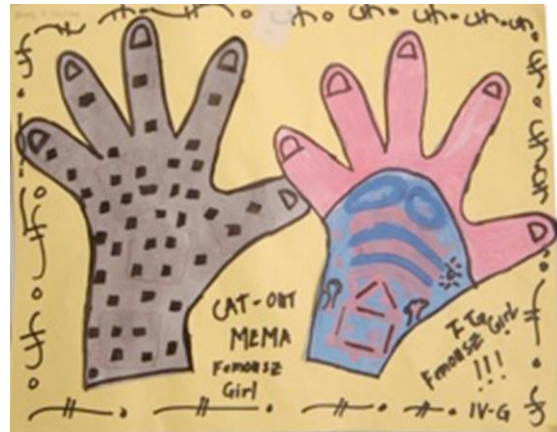
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Director: Adrian Storey

Date:



18/10/2024

## **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 2024.

### **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 Trust'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 my 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 Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: Anna Dylewska (Signed Electronically)

Name: Anna Dylewska

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

Address: 15 Fry Road, Stevenage, SG2 0QG

Date: 24/10/2024