



Backgrounder

Save the Children Australia is a member of the International Save the Children Alliance, the world's leading child rights organisation. It is an international network of 30 organisations that carry out national and overseas programs for children in over 120 countries.

Save the Children works to provide both emergency relief and long term development assistance in order to help provide children with the best possible start in life.

Save the Children is not a single issue charity. It aims to transform children's lives in many different ways. It involves children in what it does and it believes in listening and learning from them.

Every day, thousands of children go hungry or sick. They are denied schooling and health care, abused and exploited, blown up by landmines, and are brutalized by conflict and violence of all kinds. Because poverty and inequality are the root causes of many of the obstacles preventing the fulfillment of children's rights, their elimination is the fundamental aim of Save the Children's programs. It also runs major programs of work to secure the rights of children by bringing about sustainable and equitable development.

Through its programs, Save the Children tackles key children's rights issues—health, education, nutrition and food security, gender discrimination, disability and early childhood development. It also provides expertise in more specialised fields such as family tracing and unification, the rehabilitation of child ex-combatants, and alternatives to institutional care and support for working children.

In recent years, Save the Children has also responded to the emergence of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and has developed a range of innovative programs designed to increase the protection of children from the virus itself and from the impact of the loss of parents or other care-givers.

Equally important, Save the Children also focuses on research and advocacy, which brings the lack of recognition of children's rights to the attention of decision-makers, politicians and opinion formers across the world. In addition, Save the Children also works to build local, regional and global partnerships to establish a broader movement to support and implement children's rights.

Save the Children Australia works on four important principles: non-discrimination, best interests of the child, participation and survival and development. The Save the Children Vision works for a world which respects the values of each child, which listens to children and learns, and where all children have hope and opportunity.

It has never seen its work as an act of charity, and rather, believe that children have the right to be healthy and well educated. They believe that children have the right to be protected from violence and abuse, have the right to join in the decisions made about their own futures, and have the right to speak out and say what they want and expect from Save the Children.

The International Save the Children Mission is to fight for children's rights and deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide.

Save the Children Australia continues to pursue its founder's concepts of children's rights and aims to ensure that all children, regardless of gender, race, country of origin or religious belief have the means for survival, receive protection and have access to nutrition, primary health and basic education.

Getting Involved

There are many ways to become involved with Save the Children Australia's work.

Currently, Save the Children Australia's programs receive funding from the community, the Australian government, through AusAID, and other sources.

The most effective sources of funding is via the community, through its two present committed giving programs—ChildLink and Global Neighbors.

The ChildLink Program is a way for an individual in the community, as a supporter, to change the future of children caught in the cycle of conflict and poverty. With this program, one can choose which community they would like to support. A 'child representative' is then carefully selected by community members to represent all children in that community. One's donations are then used to support health, education and economic opportunity programs in the community selected.

The other committed giving program is Global Neighbours. As a 'Global Neighbour' one's donations enable Save the Children Australia to provide positive, lasting change to children living in poverty. Donations are used to support practical projects that involve children and their families in improving day-to-day lives. Save the Children uses its global experience and research to lobby for changes that will be beneficial to all children, including future generations.

Both of these committed giving programs provide Save the Children with the opportunity to plan long term and find the best ways to address the underlying causes of inequality and poverty, which together deny children a chance to develop.

History

On May 19, 1919, Save the Children was founded by Eglantyne Jebb, who was driven by the appalling plight of Europe's starving troubles following the First World War. She was determined to champion their rights, and began to raise funds to send them food and medicine.

Save the Children's philosophy, which is based upon the belief that children have rights which should be upheld and respected, rapidly spread and was soon adopted by like-minded people in many different countries where organisations bearing the same name were formed.

Jebb drafted the Declaration of Rights of the Child in 1923, which was adopted by the then League of Nations in 1924 and subsequently ratified by the United Nations in 1959 as part of its Charter. An in depth review of its articles was prompted by 1979's

International Year of the Child and in November, 1989, the final draft was adopted by the UN General Assembly.

Save the Children Australia's branches were established in Australia over 50 years ago. They remain a non-government, non-secretarian organisation and now uphold the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) through support for development assistance programs in Australia and overseas.

Save the Children Australia operates in more than 30 programs in 8 countries including Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Australia.

In 2000/2001, the Save the Children global network raised more than US\$430 million, developing quality programs and raising money to turn them into reality. At a time when 600 million children worldwide live in absolute poverty, without even the barest essentials of life, Save the Children works to make a reality of children's rights to survival, development, protection and participation.

For Further Information:

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