



WHEN DANGER  
BECOMES THE  
SAFEST ROUTE

CHILD 10 STOCKHOLM 2017

FOUNDERS



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“WHEN DANGER  
BECOMES THE  
SAFEST ROUTE”



The number of children fleeing their home countries due to war and conflict have continuously increased in the past few years. In 2017, more than 50 million children have been forcibly displaced from their homes. These children are vulnerable to human exploitation, yet they have no choice other than to flee, as it is safer to be on the run than to stay in their place of birth. Child 10 2017 invites ten inspiring children's rights activists and social entrepreneurs, determined to eradicate the inequality and human rights violation many children face today.

Photo: Romano

# “WHEN DANGER BECOMES THE SAFEST ROUTE”

More than 50 million children around the world are fleeing their homes due to war and conflict in pursuit of a better life. In the search for safety, these children face the harsh reality of living as child refugees; constantly exposed to the dangers of exploitation, violence and abuse. Children and their families are driven to make the difficult choice of deciding to stay in their unstable home countries or face danger in making their way to a safer alternative. After all opportunities and resources are depleted at home, **danger becomes the safest route.**

The Child 10 Awardees work tirelessly to bring justice to these marginalised children and strives to ensure a brighter future for all children. This year’s Awardees work across three continents, providing mental, physical, social and legal support, education, and most importantly – a childhood for uprooted children who need the love and warmth of adults the most. The ten grassroots children’s rights activists are determined to eradicate the inequality and human rights violation many children face today.

This booklet aims at highlighting the Awardees’ work and we are honoured to introduce them to you.



SOFIA BREITHOLTZ  
*Reach for Change*



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SARA DAMBER  
*Co-founder Child 10  
& Reach for Change*



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*ECPAT Sweden*



#### WORK IN SHORT



In Greece, there are refugees from nearly ten different countries living alongside one another in refugee camps. There is one thing these multinational refugees have in common: trauma. Belle Sweeney founded The Schoolbox Project to provide trauma-informed education, art and play in mobile schoolhouses made out of converted shipping containers, for traumatized children in need.

# BELLE SWEENEY THE SCHOOLBOX PROJECT GREECE



The migrant crisis is one of humanity's most pressing issue today. Belle Sweeney has been assisting in the refugee crisis since 2015 as a volunteer worker at a refugee camp in the Port of Piraeus, Greece. During her time in the camp, she saw a great lack of safety, inclusivity and understanding of traumatized children, as many of them displayed anger and fear but went unnoticed by the adults around them. Refugee camps are unpredictable and chaotic, with a multitude of risks for harm and retraumatization.

The Schoolbox Project was born by chance. During her time at the refugee camp, Belle noticed punitive methods were used by volunteers and childcare workers on children that had just lost everything. However, it is crucial to recognize and understand the cause of these children's behavioral patterns: trauma. She founded The Schoolbox Project to provide a safe space for child refugees, free from punitive methods. Instead, children receive intimate one to one support from well-trained volunteers who know how to support children suffering from trauma.

Unlike most of the refugee camps, The Schoolbox Project has a low turnover rate. The school

has the same operating hours everyday, providing continuity and trust among the traumatized children. They also have an outreach program to identify vulnerable or unaccompanied children and refer them to the safeguarding team, who provides special care for fragile children.

“EVERYONE HAS  
A ROLE TO PLAY  
IN A CRISIS THIS BIG  
– CHOOSE YOUR  
PIECE AND THROW  
YOURSELF  
INTO IT.”

The Schoolbox Project currently operates four mobile schools that can be set up and relocated in as little as one day.

In less than two years, they have supported over 2,000 children, trained 500 volunteers, and continue to provide safety with warmth and love for vulnerable children.



#### WORK IN SHORT

Right To Play Palestine (RTP) strives to ensure quality and equal educational opportunities for all children. By providing teacher training and capacity building programs, RTP builds the capacity of school staff to implement and integrate child-centered, play-based approach to education, that makes students more engaged. Not only do Jamil Sawalma and RTP offer an opportunity for attractive and enjoyable and engaging education; they provide a childhood for children who need it the most.

# JAMIL SAWALMA

## RIGHT TO PLAY PALESTINE

### PALESTINE



Born and raised in a refugee camp in Palestine, Jamil Sawalma knows what it means to live in hardship, in constant fear and anxiety, and he believes that education is the only way forward for children living in these conditions. Jamil has always enjoyed working with children, particularly in regards to children's rights and education: "I would like to send out a message that due to the nature of the conflict that the Palestinians are living, we have come to learn that education is the way forward. Education is key. It gives children an opportunity to become better citizens and we need a stronger and united intervention for education. By properly educating leaders of the future, the risk of conflicts continues to decrease."

**"EDUCATION IS  
THE WAY FORWARD.  
EDUCATION  
IS KEY."**

Jamil strongly believes that his past has shaped who he is today. The opportunity and access

to a proper education broadened his worldview and empowered him to change his life. He is determined to help children suffering in the same situation as he was once in.

Today, RTP has a proven track record of addressing the country's critical issues through its persistent social work. They have successfully impacted the teachers to change their approach to education and student discipline, as they found that the majority of trained teachers are now employing child-centered, play-based approaches in the classrooms. As a result, 92 percent of students say that they enjoy school, 71 percent say that their teachers are supportive and child-friendly, and 73 percent feel safe at school. In 2017, the program will reach more than 10,000 students, 320 teachers and 1,500 parents with a minimum of 50 percent female participation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. RTP provides a safe space for conflict-affected children to have a normal childhood. It is through playing that children cultivate strong bonds with each other, and actively learn together. By using the benefits of play, RTP and Jamil have opened the door to new possibilities for children.



#### WORK IN SHORT

Habibi is a Swedish organisation founded by Sooi Schneider and Tobias Glad as a result of the migration situation during the fall of 2015. Unaccompanied North African child refugees are the ones that struggle the most for inclusion into Swedish society, as they lack access to information and education, and often have their asylum visas revoked. Habibi helps them with information and provides mental support as a first step to social integration.

# SOOI SCHNEIDER & TOBIAS GLAD HABIBI SWEDEN



More than 30,000 unaccompanied children have taken refuge in Sweden throughout the past two years. A large portion of these child refugees, particularly from Northern Africa, often lack access to formal education and have low chances of receiving a permanent residency permit. Many of these youth have criminal records and have been victims of human trafficking and drug addiction before finding refuge in Sweden, where they struggle to adapt to their new lives.

Habibi was founded in the fall of 2015, and in less than two years, it has grown into an organization with a board of professionals, working to get to the roots of the social issues surrounding child refugees. Despite Habibi's success, difficulties with social inclusion persist: "These kids have basically lost everything, and the fact that they don't have any papers makes their situation even more difficult ... it's easy for them to fall back into an environment characterized by drugs and crime again", Sooi says.

Unaccompanied youth are living in highly vulnerable situations and in order to prevent them from falling behind, Tobias says it is important for them to develop a genuine trust: "Habibi is there

to help, not to judge. It does not matter what they have done, or how bad it is. This is something that we are constantly trying to prove to the boys, and also one of our main difficulties."

**“ALL KIDS HAVE  
THE RIGHT TO BE KIDS  
– REGARDLESS  
OF WHERE THEY  
COME FROM.”**

Sooi and Tobias' vision is to make sure that unaccompanied adolescents who come to seek refuge in Sweden are safe. Through constructive work, motivational conversations, and by providing social activities and information, they want to help these youth to create contacts with society so that they can build a better future for themselves. Today, Habibi supports nearly 200 unaccompanied North African youth, striving to give these children the support they need and make them a part of something bigger: a community where they belong.



#### WORK IN SHORT

In Northern Uganda, 60,000 children have been abducted and forcibly militarized, and a large number of young girls suffer from sexual assault and unwanted pregnancy. Ricky Richard Anywar founded Friends of Orphans in 1999, to provide self-employment based vocational training for former child soldiers, underaged mothers, and other vulnerable children. For over seventeen years, the organisation has been at the forefront to fight for the rights of conflict-affected children through the power of education.

# RICKY RICHARD ANYWAR FRIENDS OF ORPHANS UGANDA



In Northern Uganda, thousands of war-affected children and youth have been victims of violence, abuse, neglect and stigma. For 23 years during the war, an entire generation of Northern Ugandan children grew up knowing only war and violence, and living in constant fear of being displaced in disease-ridden, bare, and crowded refugee camps.

As a former child soldier abducted at the age of 14, Ricky Richard Anywar became a passionate human rights and peacebuilding activist, educator, and administrator. He argues that the forced military work has left deep scars in these children, and FRO helps them through rehabilitation, reintegration, and empowerment programs.

The overall goal of FRO is to give these youths the life and vocational skills they need to become self-employed and employers. FRO teaches youth to combat unemployment within the Northern Uganda communities, by addressing the challenges and harshness of reality these children will face later in life. The programs support adolescent children by giving them the tools and skills to earn an income with respect and dignity and without being further exploited, abuses and discriminated. FRO helps them

to become productive members and leaders in their communities.

Ricky Richard and FRO have received many awards and acclamation for their incredible work all over the world. However, they still face critical challenges in the field: “The biggest challenge is that we have many war victims who still need help, yet our capacity cannot allow us to help all of them. These children grew up illiterate in violent situations and with ignorance, knowing only how to operate guns ... They have no employable skills, but FRO, helps them get back on their feet and on the road to self sufficiency and success,” says Ricky Richard. Today, FRO has positively impacted more than 50,000 children in Northern Uganda and continues to strive as one of the best performing NGO’s in the district, and ceaselessly fights for the basic human rights of children in need.

**“I DEDICATE MY LIFE TO GIVING VOICE, OPPORTUNITY AND HOPE TO THOSE AFFLICTED BY WAR IN NORTHERN UGANDA AS CHILD SOLDIERS AND ABDUCTEES.”**



**WORK IN SHORT**

Nearly 10 percent of Cambodian children are exposed to sexual abuse or exploitation before the age of 18. Since 2005, Seila Samleang has led Action Pour Les Enfants (APLE), partnering up with the local police to help them with child-focused investigation processes. He and his organisation also offer legal and social support to affected children.

# SEILA SAMLEANG ACTION POUR LES ENFANTS CAMBODIA



Cambodia has a long history of sexual abuse and exploitation of children. For more than 13 years, APLE Cambodia has been protecting, supporting, and responding to the needs of these children with great success. Seila Samleang joined APLE in 2005, mainly due to his concern and frustration over the hopeless plight of these children.

“EACH AND EVERY  
ACHIEVEMENT OF SOCIAL  
AND LEGAL JUSTICE  
FOR THE POWERLESS  
CHILDREN AFFECTED BY  
ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION  
IS WHAT DRIVES ME TO  
CONTINUE THE FIGHT.”

Seila’s own journey, growing up in the aftermath of the Pol Pot regime, has inspired and helped him in his struggles to protect Cambodian children from sexual exploitation and abuse. His valuable contribution is widely acknowledged, not only in Cambodia but around the world. He says that:

“Our generation must take all the legitimate and possible steps to prevent abuse and exploitation of our younger generation regardless of who they are, where they live and whatever societal problem we’ve created. It’s not their fault.” After years of work promoting children’s rights, Seila has become a powerful voice for these young victims and is often invited to speak at conferences and forums around the world on the children’s behalf. He has also worked with many international institutions which promote, implement and lobby for criminal justice and the rights of victims.

APLE plays a vital role in care and social support arrangements by giving immediate psychological and social services during crisis interventions. APLE also works to coordinate further care and recovery with other organizations within its network which provide services to children who are affected by or at risk of sexual abuse and exploitation. By 2016, APLE had rescued 767 victims of sexual exploitation, raised awareness and trained 12,286 individuals, and assisted in 268 successful convictions. Today, APLE is a well trusted organization and a leading institution in child protection services in Cambodia.



#### WORK IN SHORT

Never ending conflicts in the Great Lakes Region of Africa have separated thousands of children from their families, and forced them into a cycle of continuous relocation. Murhabazi Namegabe helps unaccompanied minors find refuge at BVES's homes and centers, assisting with family reunification, education and healthcare, while providing a safe environment.



# MURHABAZI NAMEGABE BVES CHILD SUPPORT DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



Born in the middle of a war, Murhabazi Namegabe was named “the one who helps”. Early in life, he had to learn to take care of himself and support people around him in equally vulnerable situations. He later founded BVES and dedicated his life to protecting children’s rights who were separated from their loved ones. While his job requires a lot of hard work and determination, he keeps a positive mind set which allows him to continue his important work.

Murhabazi focuses a lot on the organizational growth of BVES, something that he believes is vital for the future of the organization: “Armed conflicts are endless, and in order for us to thrive in this complex environment we must build a strong and sustainable organisation”, he says. As the Director of BVES, Murhabazi works to

strengthen the leadership of the BVES; invest in impact and sustainable development; and stimulate innovation.

Today, BVES has provided transitional protection for 236 lonely and displaced children separated from their families. Each year, over 15,000 children affected by armed conflicts are helped by BVES’ programs. In total, they have educated 1,800 leaders of rebel groups and trained 3,400 senior military officers on how to prevent children from being separated from their families and how they can assist with family reunification. They have also supported 165,000 civilian parents and children who live in conflict zones, educating them on how to avoid being separated and to further protect children from abduction and exploitation.

“PROTECTION AND SUPPORT  
OF CHILDREN IN VULNERABLE  
SITUATIONS AND CONFLICTS  
SHOULD BE THE PRIORITY  
OF ALL NATIONS.”



#### WORK IN SHORT

CIYOTA offers primary school education for child refugees in Uganda, providing them with accommodation, medical care, and schooling. The organization was founded by Benson Wereje and his friends, who as children were forced to flee and later served in the rebel movement as child soldiers to fight for justice. His work with CIYOTA led him to be selected as one of the 24 most promising rising leaders in Africa by Archbishop Desmond Tutu Leadership Fellow for his hard and passionate work for these children.

# BENSON WEREJE CIYOTA UGANDA & DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



Education is a human right, essential to every child's upbringing and future. Benson Wereje, the co-founder of CIYOTA draws inspiration from his own past as a refugee; his history is tough, but he finds motivation in his past. In Uganda, there are only 46 primary schools available to the thousands of child refugees searching for safety in the country. These schools particularly struggle with the lack of classroom facilities, shortage of teachers, and textbooks. In 2008, Benson chose to dedicate his life to changing the circumstances of these children and built a school to ensure the right to education for child refugees.

CIYOTA is a community built and led by local members who erected the facilities and provide food to the children. This enables people from many different tribes to work and thrive together, despite the histories of conflict they grew up in. It also enables the youth in the community with

the agency to determine their own destiny by teaching entrepreneurial leadership to solve community challenges.

Today, CIYOTA focuses on vulnerable children who are at risk of not attaining an education. CIYOTA's primary school offers innovative and cost efficient nursery and primary education for over 400 children each year. Their education programs have enabled over 1,000 child refugees to attend primary schools, and has later been replicated by over 1,000 children who have gone through their education programs. Their programs are unique and innovative in that children receive meals along with psychological, social, and medical support. Children are also able to engage in extra-curricular activities like sports, farming, music, and community service. CIYOTA empowers a new generation of entrepreneurial leadership to solve community challenges.

**“I HAVE TWO OPTIONS IN MY LIFE:  
ACHIEVING THE MISSION OR  
DYING ACHIEVING THE VISION.”**



#### WORK IN SHORT

While most NGOs assist conflict-affected children at refugee camps in Jordan, 87 percent of the children actually live outside of these camps without any educational guidance or psychological support. Amanda Lane leads Collateral Repair Project (CRP), an NGO that offers educational and financial aid to urban child refugees.

# AMANDA LANE COLLATERAL REPAIR PROJECT (CRP) JORDAN



When Amanda Lane moved to Jordan in 2011, she was eager to find ways to help refugees in Amman. As a US citizen, she was outraged at the actions her government had taken in Iraq and the impact it had on so many innocent civilians. She soon joined the board of Collateral Repair Project and eventually became Executive Director.

CRP assists Iraqi and Syrian refugees living in the Hashemi Shamali neighborhood of Amman. When children and families arrive to the community center, CRP assesses the family's need and provides them with essentials, such as food vouchers, hygiene kits, and heating supplies. Once their basic needs have been met, the children are enrolled in the Back-to-School Program and receive uniforms, school supplies, and tuition (applicable to Iraqis), so that they aren't deprived of educational opportunities due to economic circumstances.

In Jordan, over 320,000 refugee children lack the means to attend school due to the displacement caused by the conflicts of Syria and Iraq. Only 17 percent of refugees live in camps in Jordan, while the vast majority live in impoverished urban settings, with Amman

being the largest area. Prohibited from working by Jordanian law, families are invited to take part in and run the community center where they use their skills and talents to provide for one another. CRP offers a variety of programs including English and computer classes, youth leadership programs, and after-school clubs. Many of the children arrive at the CRP center shy, reserved, and reluctant to participate, but with the strength of the community supporting them, they find belonging. In 2016, CRP helped 1,548 students return to school, about 40 children attend the After-School Club each day and hundreds of food vouchers are given to families each month.

“YOU CAN TRULY  
FEEL THE EXCITEMENT  
AND ENERGY AT OUR CENTRE.  
HERE THEY ARE NOT JUST  
SEEN AS REFUGEES.”



#### WORK IN SHORT

Due to socio-economic instability in Thailand and Cambodia, nearly 25 unaccompanied children cross the border each day in search of a better life. These children are often victims of extreme violence and abuse. At Damnok Toek, Sam Sovannarith's aim is to prevent child trafficking and sexual exploitation, to rehabilitate traumatized youth and guide them to social inclusion.

# SAM SOVANNARITH DAMNOK TOEK CAMBODIA



Despite its recent economic growth, Cambodia remains a hotbed for human trafficking, with street children being the most vulnerable group. Based on a 2013 survey conducted on street children by Damnok Toek, the three main causes why they are living on the streets, are abuse at home, neglect, and general instability from a migratory lifestyle. Many of these children have also been repeatedly trafficked between Cambodia and Thailand. While official statistics are limited, an estimated 250 undocumented migrants return to Cambodia daily, and up to 10 percent of these individuals are children.

Damnok Toek gives practical solutions for vulnerable children who have been impoverished, exploited or abused, providing first point reception, immediate help, family tracing and reunification. Based on this mission and model, Damnok Toek launched a “Safe Migration” program, in 2016 in Poipet, for unaccompanied children deported from Thailand. Since no other organization serves this group, traffickers use these locations to target children who are alone. To ensure that these children are not further exploited, Damnok Toek recently established

an office on the border. Staff are trained to locate children traveling alone, giving them a safe haven by introducing them to Damnok Toek. After recent approval from authorities, these children can come to Damnok Toek’s office to apply for long term care.

“WE TREAT  
THESE CHILDREN  
AS IF THEY WERE  
OUR OWN.”

Damnok Toek helps all unaccompanied children deported from Thailand, and nearly 250 children have been assessed at Damnok Toek’s “Safe Migration” site. Damnok Toek plans to serve 400 children at this location, annually, and also pursues justice for child victims of abuse. Since 2012, they have assisted the government in regularly prosecuting offenders. In a criminal justice system plagued by inefficiency, this is an ongoing and notable win for children’s rights.



#### WORK IN SHORT

Over the past few years, thousands of child refugees have fled to Sweden to seek asylum in hope for a better future. For some, these experiences have led to psychiatric problems such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). If left untreated, this trauma can turn into a chronic condition. Save the Children TF-CBT has collaborated with medical professionals, acclaimed researchers, and local NGOs to reach out and help child refugees with mental disorders and spread awareness of childhood trauma in Sweden.

# ERICA MATTELIN & JANNES GRUDIN

## SAVE THE CHILDREN TF-CBT SWEDEN



Before initiating the trauma-focused cognitive behavior therapy (TF-CBT) project within Save the Children, Erica Mattelin and Jannes Grudin discovered that large numbers of children were being denied access to psychological treatment from mental health clinics, due to a lack of properly trained therapists with education in trauma.

Since 2015 the two psychologists have been the driving force behind Save the Children TF-CBT project, at their clinic in Stockholm, where they work with children who suffer from trauma. In 2015, over 70,000 children applied for asylum in Sweden, and since then, Save the Children has focused to help conflict-affected child refugees, as they are especially vulnerable to PTSD.

**“NOBODY REALLY DID ANYTHING ABOUT THE PROBLEM; EVEN THOUGH THE SOLUTION WAS RIGHT THERE. IT SEEMED IT HAD FALLEN UPON US TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.”**

Erica and Jannes have been working towards the goal that all traumatized children should have easy access to mental healthcare and rehabilitation, regardless of age, gender, origin or type of trauma. To achieve this goal, they have collaborated with acclaimed researchers, clinicians, authorities and non-profit organizations. By engaging in media platforms, writing handbooks and giving lectures, they have raised general awareness of PTSD and the urgency of the issue. Since 2015, they had participated in the successful training of 100 therapists in the TF-CBT treatment model, enabling Save the Children to reach and impact traumatized youth on a larger scale. The founders credit the stories of impact and progress as their inspiration for the project: “You want to reach as many children as possible, but it’s the individual meetings that we experience every day that keep you moving forward.”

By taking immediate action, being innovative, and using a broad spectrum of scientific methods, they have managed to have an impact on a large number of children in need, and established themselves as a central driving force behind an increased awareness about child trauma in Sweden.



Photo: Tommy Jansson

"NO ONE PUTS  
THEIR CHILDREN  
IN A BOAT UNLESS  
THE WATER IS SAFER  
THAN THE LAND"

BY MICHAEL WILSON

## ABOUT CHILD 10

Sophie Stenbeck Family Foundation and Reach for Change have founded the Child 10 Award to recognize, support and connect bold leaders of grassroots organizations that work with innovative solutions to address urgent and pressing issues for children. Every year, the Child 10 Awardees meet in Stockholm for the Child 10, an exceptional opportunity for them to share best practices and to build on collective knowledge and experience to continue and scale their work for children.

For its *fourth* edition, the Child 10 Award honors the work of ten remarkable individuals who, across the world, make a fantastic and inspiring work for the protection of some of the children who are the most vulnerable to abuse and trafficking: Children on the Run *from war an conflict*.

CHILD10.ORG



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