

A fair deal for children

Working to end child poverty in Scotland by 2020

2011

Save the Children in Scotland

240,000 children in Scotland live in poverty – that's one in four young people whose parents struggle to get by every day. 95,000 of these children live in the most severe poverty when there simply isn't enough money to pay for essential items. Families that we work with tell us that this is impossible and that even the basics, such as winter coats, decent food and back-to-school costs, can be crippling for families on such a low income. Poverty also affects future life chances, with children in low income households more likely to have poorer health, lower educational qualifications and reduced life expectancy. As we're one of the richest countries in the world, this is an injustice that we want to change.

Save the Children has been championing the rights of the child and achieving breakthroughs for children in Scotland for more than 40 years. In recent years we have pressed for all major political parties across Scotland to sign up to end child poverty by 2020 - a target that is now enshrined in law within the Child Poverty Act. We helped to strengthen this landmark legislation to ensure that future governments will meet promises to make child poverty history in Scotland.

Today in Scotland our approach is to work directly with local communities where poverty levels are at their highest. We work with schools and community groups to help children, young people and parents make changes in their own lives and the areas where they live. We also encourage young people to speak to the government, letting them know what needs to change.

We are working to secure a fair deal for children and to end child poverty in Scotland by 2020. In order that we set the foundations for achieving this, by 2013 we will have:

Directly improved the life chances of children growing up in poverty in Scotland

Influenced policy in Holyrood, Westminster and local authorities

Engaged thousands of campaigners across Scotland

Tackling child poverty in Scotland

Our Scotland programmes are working to address the shocking levels of poverty in five of Scotland's most vulnerable regions – Glasgow, West Dunbartonshire, Inverclyde, Dundee and North Ayrshire. We are calling on the Scottish Government, local authorities and community planning partnerships to:

- Remove barriers to parental employment
- Make sure the poorest don't pay the price for the economic crisis
- Make the tax and benefit system work for the poorest families
- Support families to reduce their expenditure
- Break the link between poverty and educational achievement

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In 2010 we made some important breakthroughs for our priority communities. We have successfully campaigned for the Scottish Government to develop its three-year child poverty strategy whilst ensuring that poverty became one of the key issues in the Glasgow North by-election. Our work in the media is highlighting the effects of poverty on children and our advocacy work with local authorities is creating new partnerships to transform the life chances of the region's poorest children. Our Museum of Poverty project received a fantastic response from the communities that it visited on its tour of the country. Across Scotland we are delivering our key programmes – In My Back Yard and FAST - which are explored in greater detail below.



Our Museum of Poverty exhibition and tour was created in partnership with children and parents from vulnerable communities in Glasgow to mark the European Year for Combating Poverty.

Participants were asked to imagine a Scotland without poverty and to identify symbolic items that they would consign to history, explaining the idea to future generations. The exhibition launched at the Scottish Parliament in March 2010 and is now touring.

1. Families and Schools Together (FAST)

“An exemplary evidence-based prevention programme”
World Health Organisation (2010), United Nations - UNODC (2009).

We are outraged that the education gap between richer and poorer children is evident from as young as 19 months and that children living in poverty are four times more likely to leave school with inadequate qualifications. In Scotland today many of the poorest children will never catch up with their peers from wealthier families. With fewer qualifications, children brought up in poverty face a future of low-paid jobs and are more likely to face unemployment.

FAST (Families and Schools Together) is an award-winning, UN endorsed prevention and early intervention programme, designed to enable parents to better support their children's education, take a more active role in their child's school, and play a greater role in their local community.

By participating in FAST children will:

- Succeed in school because of improved educational attainment in reading, writing and maths, improved behaviour and better home-school relationships
- Live in supported and strengthened families because of improved parent-child bonds, parental confidence and parental self-esteem
- Live in stronger communities with increased trust, community participation and reduced social isolation

Each FAST group brings together 40 parents and 80 children aged between three and five for eight FAST sessions. Each session is facilitated by up to 20 FAST practitioners. The sessions aim to strengthen families, build positive relationships between schools, families and local communities and improve early learning and attainment among children aged three to five years. Our intention for 2011 is to initiate at least five new FAST groups in schools in Scotland and to therefore directly benefit at least 200 parents, 400 children and 100 community-based practitioners.

Case Study: FAST in West Dunbartonshire

We are working to improve the quality of life for children in West Dunbartonshire, an area of high unemployment, single parent families, incidents of domestic abuse, and people seeking support because of drug and alcohol dependency. From April to June 2010, we reached 31 children and 29 parents at Linnvale primary school, a 20-minute drive from Glasgow in the heart of our target communities.



Dean is ten years older than his little sister Lori, who has Aspergers and ADHD. "The programme is one of the best things that have ever happened to my family. Things are much better at home. Lori could be quite difficult before, but she is better at expressing herself now and we still use the FAST feeling cards at home, which helps her let us know how she feels without getting really frustrated and angry."

"I think they should have more of this in all communities around the UK. The whole concept of FAST was to bring families and the kids together, to ensure that you have a greater community."

A parent participating in the FAST programme

"FAST was a terrific success. It was great to see the enjoyment on the children's faces during children's time and to be part of the relaxed, informal gathering at meal time. It really did bring families and school together and the pupils involved could not fail to benefit from that."

Doreen Phillips, Head Teacher at Linnvale primary school



2. In My Back Yard

Poverty destroys childhoods and children's futures. A pupil eligible for free school meals is only a third as likely to succeed at every key stage at school as their better-off peers. Save the Children believes that, by giving children and families living in poverty a powerful voice, we can create the political momentum to end child poverty and improve children's life chances.

Our In My Back Yard programme empowers children and young people living in poverty to bring about the positive changes they want to see in their community, and to develop their personal skills. Through training in campaigning skills and a greater awareness of the effects of poverty on their community, we support participants to develop and deliver a plan for change. This plan challenges one effect of poverty on their community – from gang violence to a lack of social space. Using evidence of these successful projects, we then campaign to national and local governments for change. Two such projects are highlighted below.

Across the UK, we have established 38 In My Back Yard groups to date. In Scotland, we have worked with a total of nine groups in North Ayrshire and the East End of Glasgow and, at the start of 2011, an additional two groups will be established in our target communities.

In My Back Yard - Glasgow

Case Study 1: Rosemount Young Parents - East End, Glasgow

"The biggest barrier just now is finding a babysitter so you can go to your interviews. You can't really take a kid along to go to the interviews with you...its difficult to get to an interview if no-one can watch your child."

A 25 year old single mother, Rosemount, East End, Glasgow



A lack of childcare and parental support in Glasgow's East End inspired the Rosemount Young Parents group to develop their own pilot drop-in crèche in Glasgow. The project has directly impacted the young parents and their children, with participants and staff reporting that young children under five are more sociable, and a rise in parental confidence. The group are now working towards being constituted as an organisation and applying for funding to create a permanent child care facility for their community. The project's success has fed into Save the Children's wider policy work, and will inform future campaigning around childcare provision for those living in poverty.

Case Study 2: Fathers United FC - Ardrossan, North Ayrshire

"Sitting in a café all day isn't an option, I'm in a homeless unit at the moment, they cannae go there, what are you meant to do all day on a Saturday with two weans under 8?"

A father, separated from his partner, expresses the isolation and frustration felt by many fathers in deprived areas

'Fathers United for Chances' is a project designed by fathers in deprived areas of Ardrossan that connects them with their children and other fathers from the local community through an activity and social support network. The project ultimately aims to provide low-cost activities through which relationships develop between children and fathers, increasing their confidence as parents and providing the opportunity for fun with their children. Central to this is the creation of a safe space for fathers and children to meet. The fathers are undertaking a make-over of a room in a tired community centre. Once the make-over is completed they will run a 'DadsDay' to reach out to

fathers not already involved in the project. Low cost activities include traditional board games and cooking together. Fathers United FC is giving children back their role models and is supported by our In My Back Yard programme.

Why support Save the Children's work?

While the government has committed to end child poverty by 2020, it is falling short of making the investment necessary to achieve this goal and action must be taken now on a local level. By providing services and working with communities to show the government how to transform lives, we can bring about massive change and help break the cycle of educational and social inequality in Scotland.

Furthermore, findings from Save the Children's projects are then directly fed into our national advocacy and campaigning work, which has an even further reaching affect on families living in poverty. Our campaigning with the UK Government and other decision makers is informed by solutions that we have found have worked. Campaigns are strengthened by the stories and experiences of children and families living in poverty today.

Working with our supporters in Scotland

Engaging communities and supporters in our work is key to our success. As part of any partnership – private or corporate - we offer **volunteering opportunities** to work with FAST and In My Back Yard programmes in Scotland, bringing our donors and partners closer to the work they are enabling and the people they are helping. Volunteering provides a great opportunity to engage with participants and learn about our work to end child poverty.

Case Study: FirstGroup in Glasgow

"FirstGroup adopted Save the Children in 2007 as our first national charity partner. We have been continually impressed with the level of professionalism and enthusiasm of Save the Children and, as a partner, they have repeatedly delivered over and above to support our partnership..."

Sir Moir Lockhead - Chief Executive of FirstGroup; supporters of Save the Children in Scotland

We have been working together with FirstGroup in Scotland since 2007 to deliver our In My Back Yard programme. To ensure their engagement with delivery of the projects at community level, two members of FirstGroup's charity committee were offered volunteer placements with the pilot project in Glasgow. The volunteers built strong relationships with the participants very quickly, helping the Rosemount Young Parents to realise their vision for a drop-in crèche in the East End.

Thank you for your interest in Save the Children's work in Scotland.

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