

**BRINGING
OUR HISTORY
IN WALES RIGHT
UP TO DATE**

**A CENTURY OF CHANGE
FOR CHILDREN**





Save the Children
Achub y Plant

Every child has the right to a future. Save the Children works in Wales and around the world to give children a healthy start in life, and the chance to learn and be safe. We do whatever it takes to get children the things they need – every day and in times of crisis.

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Eglantyne Jebb writing by her desk

In her own words....

“Humanity owes the child the best it has to give.”

“The only international language in the world is a child’s cry.”

“Every generation of children offers mankind the possibility of rebuilding his ruin of a world.”

“I believe we should claim certain rights for the children and labour for their universal recognition.”

Eglantyne Jebb died in 1928, aged 52, leaving behind a powerful vision of ending the cycle of poverty that blighted so many children’s lives.

“If we accept our premise, that the Save the Children Fund must work for its own extinction, it must seek to abolish, for good and for all, the poverty which makes children suffer and stunts the race of which they are the parents. It must not be content to save children from the hardships of life - it must abolish these hardships; nor think it suffices to save them from immediate menace - it must place in their hands the means of saving themselves and so of saving the world.”

This booklet is a thank you and a tribute; from the Save the Children team in Wales to everyone who has given time, money, commitment and for some, devotion, to the children that our charity serves.

We have attempted to celebrate many of the charity's achievements in Wales of the past 100 years through the words of those who have been instrumental in bringing about change for children. From our founder Eglantyne to Asha, a Year 9 pupil from Merthyr who has taken on the mission '*to work together for the benefit of all children around the world*'.

You will discover how rich the history of the charity's work is in Wales, how generous the Welsh have been in their support, and sadly, how many children here still need this.

We hope after reading this that you will draw even closer to us and our work and join us in standing side by side with children doing whatever it takes to ensure they can fulfil their potential.

Louise Davies
Head of Save the Children, Wales

Chapter 1

Eglantyne and Wales

*No Mountain High Enough: How Save the Children's founder,
Eglantyne Jebb, found inspiration in the Welsh mountains*

by Clare Mulley

'I tell you, deliverance will not come from the rushing, noisy centres of civilisation,' the famous arctic-explorer turned humanitarian, Fridtjof Nansen, once told Eglantyne Jebb, founder of Save the Children. 'It will come from the lonely places'.

Eglantyne had a life-long love of 'the lonely places', from the wild landscapes of Wales to the mountains of Switzerland. It was there she found a sense of perspective when events threatened to overwhelm her, and inspiration when she was at her most creative.

This year marks a century since Eglantyne and her sister, Dorothy Buxton, launched Save the Children, yet while the charity is now valued across the world for its life-saving work, Eglantyne's name, and the inspiration that lay behind her achievements, are all but forgotten.

Born in Shropshire in 1876, Eglantyne grew up in a large house in Ellesmere, but her family also owned neighbouring estates in Wales. Her father was a barrister, and socially conscientious country gentleman, who taught his children, 'of those who live in fine houses, much is expected'. He refused to raise rents on his estates in bad years, and often returned from rent collecting in Wales with game, or even poems, in his pocket, in place of cash.

His six children spent many joy-filled holidays at the family's stone farmhouse Tydraw, in the old Denbighshire. Here they indulged in a romantic,

Chapter 1: Eglantyne and Wales

simple life, as demarcated by only two maids and an ‘absence of puddings’, despite a larder well stocked with hares, rabbits, pheasants, grouse and partridge. From early on, Eglantyne loved the wide landscapes of Wales, which inspired her poems and stories, and provided the thinking space it was often hard to find with her two younger siblings, Dorothy and their brother Gamul, almost constantly in tow.

Thirty years later, the close of the First World War found Eglantyne living in London. The strong sense of social justice she had inherited from both parents, and the childhood death from pneumonia of her beloved brother Gamul, had inspired her to dedicate herself to social work. She had distributed aid in the Balkans just before the outbreak of war and campaigned to end the blockade to Europe after the conflict, when many of the most vulnerable in the defeated nations were starving in the peace.

When Eglantyne was arrested in Trafalgar Square for distributing leaflets criticising government policy, and featuring photographs of starving Austrian children, she insisted on conducting her own defence in court. Focusing on the moral case, she gave the court reporters plenty to fill their columns.

Building on this publicity, Eglantyne and her sister Dorothy launched Save the Children at the Royal Albert Hall a few weeks later. One of the speakers they invited to share their platform was the heavily-moustached miners’ leader, Robert Smillie, who brought with him the support of the Welsh mining communities for the starving children of Vienna. In 1926 the city of Vienna would remember their debt and raise money to help feed the children of Welsh miners during the general strike. This ideal, of communities and nations giving reciprocally, remains fundamental to the international Save the Children community, which still supports programmes in the UK as well as overseas.

When Save the Children developed into an international federation, Eglantyne moved to Geneva in Switzerland, where the International Women’s League was already based. Here again she could hike in the mountains to clear her mind, as she had once done as a child in Wales. One sunny summer Sunday, she set off in her long skirts and tightly laced boots and climbed to the summit of Mont Salève. Settling down on the crisp turf, her hair catching in the breeze, Eglantyne looked down over Lake Geneva, then full of barges carrying construction materials for the new League of Nations building on the far bank. It was here that Eglantyne came up with the then revolutionary concept that all children, everywhere, should have the same universal human rights.

The modern UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989) that evolved directly from Eglantyne’s pioneering statement in 1924, is now the most universally accepted human rights instrument in the world. Together with

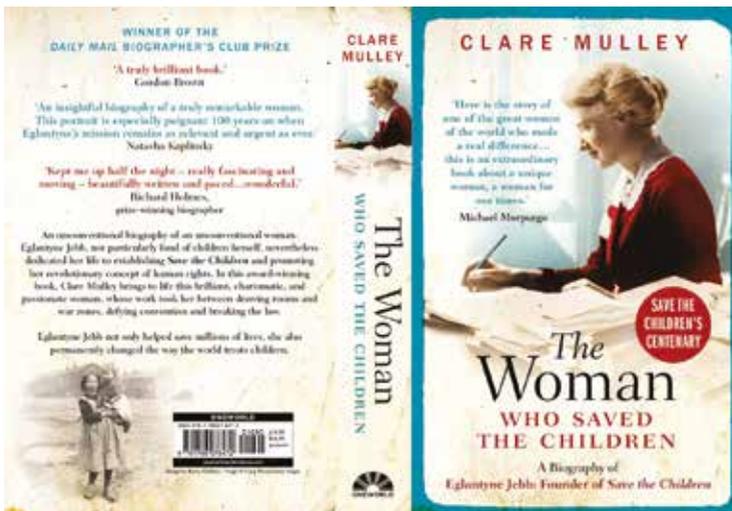
the Save the Children movement, it is one of the crucial tools employed by the international community for the promotion, support and well-being of children around the globe.

Eglantyne Jebb was just fifty-two when she died in 1928. She was buried in Geneva and, pleasingly, Mont Salève is visible from her grave. Yet part of Eglantyne was always anchored in the landscapes of her childhood, in Shropshire and in Wales. Her father and brother, both seminal forces in her life, are buried in the cemetery of Rhiwlas Church near Tydraw.



Clare Mulley

*Clare Mulley is the award-winning author of **The Woman Who Saved the Children, A Biography of Eglantyne Jebb, Founder of Save the Children** (Oneworld Publications, 2019) £10.99 with all author royalties donated to Save the Children.*



*Book cover: **The Woman Who Saved the Children, A Biography of Eglantyne Jebb, Founder of Save the Children** (Oneworld Publications, 2019)*

Chapter 2

Our Early history in Wales

Our co-founder Eglantyne Jebb believed that every country should take care of its own children, as well as helping those overseas. Since the 1920s there has always been a role for Save the Children to play in supporting children in the UK to have the best start in life and grow up to fulfil their potential in life.

Our early history in Wales demonstrates how Save the Children and local authorities, parents, the educational sector, volunteers and politicians worked in partnership to deliver a service to benefit the child. This continues to be the foundations of our work in Wales to this current day.

Children during the Depression

In the 1930's during the Great Depression – a period following the first world war and leading to the second when there was global poverty, high unemployment, and high unrest around the world - Save the Children supplied free meals and clothing to children in the worst hit areas.

Even then the early years were seen as the most critical and that intervening during a child's earliest developmental stages could influence their future and their contribution to society. During the 1930s the Save the Children Open-Air Nursery Committee was founded to parachute nursery schools into communities as pioneering models of intervention. The nursery schools that the charity provided during the 1930's became models of planning and design providing simple shelter, playgrounds, fresh air and rest. At one time Save the Children provided ten per cent of the UK's nursery facilities.

Emergency open-air nurseries

Under the umbrella of the Quaker Settlement, Save the Children Fund opened one of the first UK open-air nursery schools in Dowlais in Merthyr in 1933 and another in Brynmawr in 1934 to help some of the poorest families so that the parents could find employment and the children could develop social skills and life skills.

Emphasis was placed on the value of open-air activity with the nurseries resembling simple wooden chalets with furniture, art and craft facilities, sand pits, play areas and a swimming pool produced and paid by the Quakers.

Save the Children insisted that those employed at the nurseries, as matrons or as teaching staff were qualified professionals, trained either at the Froebel Institute or at the McMillan Training College in London.

Free Milk in schools

At the time of the general strike in 1926 Save the Children started providing free milk in schools through the “Milk in Schools Scheme’ which was first carried out in Monmouthshire. Six years later in 1933 when the Great Depression was at its worst, a Save the Children report ‘Unemployment and the Child: An enquiry’ indicated that mass unemployment affects children’s nutrition and called on local authorities to provide school meals for children in most need. We campaigned for children’s right to adequate nutrition until the Education Act of 1944 provided school meals and milk throughout the UK. Today in Wales the Welsh Government ensures that children from low income families are still eligible for free school meals and fund free milk for all children up to the age of seven.

Post war: Junior clubs

Following the Second World War the major activity for Save the Children had become the provision of junior clubs for school age children. They were created to provide children with a safe place to play, away from the bombsites and the dangers on the streets. By 1947 there were six clubs in London, one in Plymouth, one in Cardiff and one in Barry Dock. Grant aid from Glamorgan County Council to fund these clubs shows how they were valued by the authorities and the communities they served.

In these clubs the children were taught drama, sewing, woodwork, painting, pottery and reading and most of the clubs had small libraries. Outdoor activities such as cricket, swimming, football and visits to the cinema, theatre

and circus were also enjoyed. The Barry Dock club which they called 'The Domino Club' had a garden, allowing children to grow plants and keep pets. Some members of the Barry Dock club also visited children in Belgium in 1948 as an expression of war-time comradeship. The Domino Club at Barry Dock was also very active organising concerts and entertainments which became well known in the district.

Sponsoring a Child

As early as 1936 Save the Children sought to provide financial grant to aid the development of the child primarily focusing on the impoverished communities of South Wales and the North of England. Children were chosen by qualified social workers and through them, the grants would be administered; an idea still adopted by Save the Children's programme work to this day. Sometimes children would be orphans in the care of grandparents or the children of widows or whose fathers could not work. The grants helped to provide the families with clothing, household utilities, books, toys and presents at birthdays and Christmas. The charity also helped families to access statutory grants such as the state's Family Allowance.

Post-war money was raised to fund relief teams which were sent to Holland, Germany and Greece and in 1945 there is a reference in the Urdd Gobaith Cymru archive to how the Urdd members campaigned with Save the Children Fund and raised £3,924 in 3 months towards the homeless children in Europe. In addition, 6 large vehicles of food, clothing and medical supplies were sent to Poland, Belgium, Hungary and Yugoslavia.

In May 1948, the charity started a new fundraising venture, the National Penny-a-Week appeal by which mainly industrial employees were asked to contribute a penny a week deducted from their wages. The support of the Unions also played a big part in the appeal's success. After just 1 month more than 1,000 factories had signed up. Within 4 months, 1,500 organisations were taking part, including many of the miners' associations and Unions in South Wales, and workers in Denbighshire and Flintshire.

First fundraising branches in Wales

During the late 1940s and early 1950s branches were beginning to form to raise funds and awareness of the charity's work. The Cardiff, Port Talbot and Aberdare branches were founded during this era. The Aberdare branch in Wales was established on 21st January, 1954 under the Chairmanship of Rev.

Clifford Evans. During the meeting there was an address by Col. Idris Evans the Organiser of the Fund in Wales who said in the meeting that he was appealing to the Aberdare area because “he felt it had the right point of view with regard to charitable organisations.” His words definitely resonated as the branch grew from strength to strength and is still active to this day. One of the branch’s first members, the late Mrs Valeda May Rees was awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) for her services volunteering for nearly seventy years collecting on the streets, around the estates and standing in front of factories and the local cinema and shops, come rain or shine.

Branches blossomed all over Wales and between the 1960s until the last couple of decades there were 22 active branches in Wales raising crucial funds and awareness of the needs of children in all corners of the worlds including partaking in grass-roots community-led projects on their own doorsteps.

Royal connections

The Royal family often expressed their approval of Save the Children’s work with her Royal Highness Princess Elizabeth donating money collected at exhibitions of her wedding dress to the charity. Later in November 1952 after becoming Queen she granted patronage to the Fund. In 1970 her daughter HRH the Princess Royal became the President of Save the Children and later became Patron in 2016.

The Hon. Dame Shân Legge-Bourke

The Hon. Dame Shân Legge-Bourke DCVO was appointed Lady in Waiting to HRH Princess Anne in 1978 and for the next fifteen years she accompanied the Princess Royal around the globe visiting Save the Children projects. On each trip she picked up a hat which, upon her return to her home at the Glanus Estate in Crickhowell, she would use as part of her famous ‘Hat Chat’ to raise awareness and funds for the charity. The Hon. Dame Shân Legge-Bourke and former Lord Lieutenant of Powys also served for over twenty years as Chair of the Women in Wales committee and she is still President of Save the Children in Wales and Patron of the Women in Wales Charity.

In 1980, a couple of years after I started my job, the Princess was asked if she would visit a Save the Children project in Africa, and from then on, she went out to visit, sometimes twice

a year in October and February. For the next 15 years I was lucky enough to go with her to some of the most outlandish places that you would not dream to visit as a tourist, out in the jungle, or out in the desert or up a mountain where you see hardship and severe poverty.

It's all been amazing and given me particular insight into what the charity is so good at doing, which is helping children throughout the world and here in Wales. We had many projects running here during the 1970s and 1980s, most of them run by our volunteers who are so vital to our work. As the Princess Royal always says, 'without our volunteers Save the Children would not exist.'



Open-air nursery such as the one which was opened in the south Wales mining communities in the 1930s. Picture: Save the Children



Children from Merthyr making bread as one of the activities carried out in the emergency nurseries. Picture: Save the Children



*Save the Children started providing free milk in schools in 1926
Picture: Save the Children*



Shân Legge-Bourke wearing a hat she collected in Ouagadougou in the former Republic of Upper Volta, West Africa in 1984. Credit: Shân Legge-Bourke

MONTHLY
News Sheet
OF THE

Save the Children Fund

National Penny-a-Week Appeal

PATRON
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

11 UPPER BELGRAVE STREET,
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November 1955

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THE NEWS IN PICTURES

Whilst not fully accepting the slogan of "one picture is worth a million words" we believe that pictures are an attractive form of presenting news. Hence the decision to include pictures in our Monthly News Sheet. This month's photo is of our President, Countess Mountbatten, joining children at Hill House in a see-saw on her recent visit to this SCF Holiday Home (referred to in the October News Sheet).

The next group of children to spend a period of seven or eight weeks at this House will come from Cardiff and will be chosen by the Local Authority as being those most in need of the physical and mental stimulus that Hill House has provided for so many children already, both British and foreign.



FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS

One of the happiest features of the work of the Save the Children Fund is that of its close association with many other charitable and social service organisations who not only co-operate in our great common task but provide tangible and material help - as well as sympathy. Organisations such as Red Cross, St. John Ambulance Association, National Council of Social Service, United Nations Association. Not least is the substantial support of the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief whose work on behalf of distressed people of both adults and children in all countries is well known. During the past three months this active organisation has contributed to the SCF from its collection of clothing, 5½ tons for the children of Yugoslavia, 9½ tons for Greece, 8 tons Korea, 9½ tons Germany, 9½ tons Austria, 3½ tons Italy, ½ ton Jordan and ½ ton for Great Britain. All this in addition to cash donations amounting to £9,000 within a six-month period. The Manchester and Salford Famine Relief Committee, although not such a large organisation, has also contributed generously to the needs of distressed children through the S.C.F.

PLEASE DISPLAY ON YOUR NOTICE BOARD - OR PRINT IN YOUR JOURNAL

In 1955 children from deprived communities in Cardiff visited Hill House, a country retreat in Essex run by Save the Children with funds raised by the National Penny-a-Week fund. Picture: Save the Children



*Shân Legge-Bourke with HRH The Princess Royal on a visit to Khartoum, the capital of Sudan in December 1985.
Picture: Fritz Curzon/Save the Children*

Chapter 3

Establishing the Wales programme

The Save the Children Programme in Wales was set up in March 1988 to help children and families living in the most disadvantaged communities bring about change in their lives and to be aware of their basic rights. Our work in advocating and campaigning on these issues led to important political changes and ground-breaking developments in Wales helping to develop the umbrella body Children in Wales and creating the post of the Children's Commissioner for Wales and Youth Assembly (Funky Dragon).

Since Eglantyne Jebb wrote the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1924 which inspired the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, children's rights have always been a fundamental part of Save the Children's work in the UK.

In Wales we chaired the UNCRC Monitoring Group bringing together academics, practitioners and legal experts from across Wales to report back to the UN Committee on how child rights are being upheld and promoted by the Government. Alongside this Group our campaigning and advocacy helped secure legislation that ensured children's rights was made part of our domestic law in the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011.

Richard Powell

Richard Powell from Glanamau in Carmarthenshire has worked on children's issues for over forty years. He joined Save the Children in 1998 as Director of the Wales Programme before taking up post as Director of Global Child Protection in 2006 travelling to all four corners of the world to help children in need.

When I was appointed in February 1998 the political landscape was changing in Wales. The National Assembly for Wales was about to be formed following the referendum and the focus of our work was all about giving children and young people a voice on issues that affected them most.

We had a great programme called 'Saying Power' which we set up in north, west and south Wales and also set up community-led programmes in areas in the valleys which had the highest rate of youth unemployment. Young people often felt marginalised, disempowered and left behind. They had no access to services and job opportunities were scarce. Yet, it was apparent that they had the skills and aspiration. They just needed to be given the chance to grow their ideas and help bring about change, not only in their own lives but on the political front as Wales became the first country in the UK to enshrine children's rights in domestic law.

Our work in Wales learnt a lot from our global work and vice versa. A project for Under 5s that we ran in some of the most rural and cut-off communities in Powys derived from a similar scheme in Portugal. We funded a bus to travel around Powys lending educational toys and books to families. I also travelled a lot to Eastern Europe, to Serbia and learnt a lot from their programme work.

On Boxing Day morning, 2004 when the news broke about the devastating tsunami in South Asia, I can remember listening to the radio announcements and thinking that this was a huge disaster. As the day wore on and more heart-wrenching images were shown on television we started talking as a family of donating money to help these people. By the second day we had plans to organise a fundraising event in my home village of Glanamau. On the fifth day I was on a flight to Sri Lanka with a camera crew to report back on the response to the tsunami. My intention was to

stay for two days and I e-mailed my colleagues at the Wales Save the Children office to say that I would be back by the end of the week. They didn't see me again for nearly six weeks! I felt I had no choice. Save the Children responded immediately in the countries hardest hit and there was a real need for more aid in some of the more remote areas.

For the next twenty years Save the Children became my life; an added family member. I feel privileged to have been given the opportunity to help children have their voices heard here in Wales and in all four corners of the world.

Work with the Gypsy Traveller community

In the 1980s Save the Children worked with Gypsy and Travellers' children and families across the UK to help them access their basic rights to education and health. Many traveller families in Wales did not have an official site and were forced to live by the roadside, often being denied access to adequate health, welfare and education services. The Wales programme established the 'Getting Involved' project in the early 80s in order to engage with the Gypsy Traveller community which eventually led to the formation of the 'Travelling Ahead' programme in 2010 to support Gypsy Traveller children and young people across Wales to access their rights.

Our Community Projects and programme work

Save the Children has always believed in listening to a community's needs and encouraging and supporting local people to take action to access and develop the services they need and also in bringing partners and local agencies together to deliver that need in the most effective way.

The Cynon Valley Project

In the 1990's our work focused on the housing estates of Perthcelyn and Fernhill. Perched on top of the mountain the 331 dwelling estate of Perthcelyn had been nicknamed 'The Lost City' locally due to its sense of isolation and feeling of alienation from local services. Save the Children ran 'drop-in' sessions in the Community Centre on the estate providing parents with the support they needed and their children with an area to play and access educational toys and books.

The Fernhill project which supported a housing estate of nearly 500 flats

Chapter 3: Establishing the Wales programme

situated between Mountain Ash and Abercwmboi used two adjoining flats above the Community Centre to provide families with drop-in sessions and nursery facilities. The Fernhill Youth Project in 2002 offered training and opportunities for young people living in one of the areas with the highest levels of youth unemployment in Wales. It was largely run by the young people themselves who were responsible for organising training, preparing a monthly newsletter, running a cybercafé as a place for children to go and do their homework and planned fundraisers for educational and recreational trips.

The Powys Project

A study of the childcare needs of families living in rural Powys in 1992 identified lack of transport, playgroups and childminders as barriers. The report 'Swings and Roundabouts' recommended ways in which access to services could be improved and made more accessible. A Toy Library was funded when a bus travelled to the most remote areas to provide families with access to educational toys and books and Save the Children also worked closely with Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin and Powys Pre-School Playgroup Association to help them extend their services.

Other projects

In the 1990s other community-based projects saw the charity working in north Wales to develop services for children and young people in Wrexham and Conwy and the St Mellons Project in Cardiff which worked with local residents to develop amenities for children and young people in the area. A research project into the experiences of families in the Somali community in Cardiff aimed to help them access the services they needed, and projects were also carried out in partnership with Welsh Women's Aid on domestic violence and South Glamorgan's Social Services Department to produce a childcare plan.

Our policy, campaigning and advocacy work

Our work in Wales after 2000 continued to focus on Article 12 of the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) supporting children and young people in their right to have a say in decisions about their future. Projects such the Participation Unit, turn on the Rights, The Gilfach Crew, Young Asylum Seekers Advocacy Group, In My backyard and Young Ambassadors worked in communities across Wales. The participants in these projects raised issues important to children and young people, including having a Living Wage,

feeling safe in your community and raising awareness of the impact of poverty on young lives.

The Participation Unit (2004 – 2013)

The Unit was set up in 2004 to champion the rights of all children and young people, especially the most vulnerable to have a voice and have a choice. The team worked on a variety of projects with children and young people involving them in research, policy and campaigning work and making significant advances towards the implementation of Article 12 of the UNCRC in Welsh policy-making. The projects included developing the National Children and Young People's Standards for Wales with Funky Dragon (Welsh Youth Assembly) and launching a National kite-mark in 2010 to develop teams of Young Inspectors across Wales to assess how organisations involve children's rights in their day-to-day business. The Unit also acknowledged that young people are experts on their own lives and published reports. The Small Voice, Big Story report on poverty and education was researched and written by a group of young people from the south Wales valleys experiencing poverty themselves. It was launched at an event in the Senedd in February 2013 and received great media response.

Young Asylum Seekers Advocacy Group

Between 2006–2008 we ran award winning project that supported young asylum seekers and refugees living in South Wales to be young campaigners. They successfully campaigned on several issues that affected their day to day life's often focusing on education. The Refugee Week Wales Art Competition funded by Save the Children in Wales invited young people across Wales to design an image which represented refugee issues and reflected the ways that different people and communities can come together positively.

In My Backyard

This project aimed to support children and young people to tackle issues around child poverty in their local communities. In a series of workshops which ran throughout 2011 the children discussed topics such as education, housing, health and their local environment and said what they would like to change. They also learnt about children's rights. We worked with two groups of primary aged children from the areas of Ely and Splott in Cardiff who wanted to encourage people to keep their local parks secure and clean so that they felt safe when playing in them. They also highlighted that the level of noise sometimes made

by adults when leaving the pubs frightened them or disturbed their sleep and wanted to ask people to be considerate of their needs. The children designed posters to be displayed in public parks around Cardiff and in pubs around South Wales. Another group decided to look at child poverty and the impact on health and produced an animation called 'Smoke Free Spaces' to illustrate the messages that smoking is bad for your health, is expensive and can cause accidents in the home.

Young Ambassadors

In 2010 the UK programme set up a Young Ambassadors project as part of our participation strategy. The project in Wales engaged with children and young people from communities in Cardiff to give children and families living in poverty a voice and to try and change public opinion in relation to child poverty. The Young Ambassadors organised and hosted a national child poverty summit at Cardiff City Stadium targeting decision-makers from all parts of Wales with ideas and solutions on how their local communities and lives can be improved. They also launched a campaign asking the Welsh Government to deliver on a Living Wage for Wales and handed in a petition signed by hundreds of supporters. As a result, Cardiff and Swansea local authorities promised to pay all their staff a living wage.

Eisteddfodau

For over twenty years the Wales programme has identified events, and especially the National Eisteddfod of Wales and the Urdd Eisteddfod as an excellent shop window to showcase our work to the public and stakeholders. It has provided us with a platform to engage people in our international and domestic campaigns ranging from creating kites for the children in Afghanistan to talking about our early years campaign in Wales.



Richard Powell was Director of the Save the Children Wales programme between 1998-2006. Picture: Save the Children



Young Ambassadors project/Save the Children



Participation Unit National kite-mark/Save the Children





Saying Power/Save the Children



Our stall at the National Eisteddfod of Wales, Cardiff Bay, 2018/Save the Children

Chapter 4

The voices of our volunteers

Our volunteers and supporters in Wales need no introduction. Every time they donate money, volunteer their time or campaign for change they are transforming the lives of millions of children by helping to fund our work globally and here on the ground in Wales.

Our brilliant branches

Since the early 1950s groups of volunteers, called branches have been meeting on a regular basis to organise fundraising events in their local communities and at one time there were over 20 branches dotted around Wales. Inevitably, the number has declined over recent years due to the social, cultural and technological changes in our society and the way people choose to donate money. In Wales there are currently eight branches with the Aberdare, Port Talbot, Swansea and Caerphilly active for over sixty years. The Anglesey, Penarth, Tenby and Cardiff branches are also working tirelessly all year round and it is encouraging that new branches are also emerging with the newly formed Swansea Literary Lunch branch having been set up to mark the centenary and celebrate and encourage children's creative skills.

Women in Wales

The first Women in Wales Luncheon was held in 1992. Organised by a committee of dedicated volunteers, the luncheon has been attended by over 400 ladies every year since its inception, and is still going strong today, raising thousands of pounds for our work in Wales.

Speaking Out

Volunteers who have got involved in the ‘Speaking Out’ project over the years have helped raise awareness of the charity’s campaigns and emergency response appeals by delivering powerful talks for schools, businesses, clubs, universities, societies, faith groups and organised events.

Public and corporate support

The Welsh public have always been generous when it comes to donating to an emergency appeal or raising funds for our flagship fundraisers such as Christmas Jumper Day, Peppa Pig’s Muddy Puddle Walks and Den Day. Families, schools, businesses, artists and high-profile supporters are always creative in their support and our Christmas Jumper Day has seen dogs, cats, sheep and horses donning wacky woollies for the cause and we even managed to bring a taste of Christmas to our Welsh beaches in 2018.

Over the years we have also been fortunate to have been chosen as Charity of the year by various corporates and organisations. In 2008 our Wales programme was chosen as Charity of the Year by the Mayor of Caerphilly and in 2011 over a thousand boxes containing clothing such as polo shirts, skirts, vests and socks were delivered to a Cardiff school by Morrisons, one of our corporate partners who helped us run our Families and Schools Together (FAST) projects in Wales.

The amazing steps taken to raise money for our cause also included the ‘Stories from the Sole’ appeal launched by Merched y Wawr, Save the Children and the National Eisteddfod of Wales in 2011. Nearly 3000 shoes donated by Merched y Wawr members and their friends were sold at the Save the Children stand at the National Eisteddfod in Wrexham and shoes donated by leading Welsh names such as Cerys Matthews, Alex Jones, TV weather-girl Siân Lloyd, TV presenters Angharad Mair and Heledd Cynwal, writers, artists and politicians were also auctioned during the week. The partnerships raised over £10,000 to support the charity’s ‘No Child Born To Die’ campaign and their projects in Wales.

Our Ambassadors

The incredible support we have received from our ambassadors and high-profile supporters has been invaluable in helping us to raise awareness of our work and in raising money to fund our projects on the ground. Whether they supported our disaster and emergency work, local campaigns or key fundraisers such as

Christmas Jumper Day by helping us with our PR work or attended one of our events or sang their hearts out in concerts, we thank them for their continued commitment to children. Just a few highlights include Welsh and Hollywood actor and Save the Children Ambassador Luke Evans visiting a school in Merthyr to see for himself how our parental engagement programme FAST helped families. To launch our centenary celebrations in Wales our ambassadors and opera singers Gwyn Hughes Jones and Stacey Wheeler raised the roof of Bangor Cathedral in a magical and memorable concert.

Our shops

We rely on the goodwill, generosity, hard work and retail expertise of staff and volunteers who run our shops and we currently have shops in Aberystwyth, Mold and Machynlleth. As well as being able to find a few designer items among the fashion donations and bargain-buys burrowed in the bric-and-brac, the shops also act as a hub for the local community with volunteers organising craft groups and events to raise awareness of the charity's work and its campaigns.

“WHY WE DO IT....”

Valeda May Rees

Mrs Valeda Rees, fondly known by everyone as Val, would have celebrated her centenary this September, in the same year as her beloved Save the Children. Among the first members of the Aberdare branch established in 1954 – one of the oldest of our UK branches. She volunteered for nearly seventy years collecting on the streets, around the estates and standing in front of factories and the local cinema and shops, come rain or shine. She was awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) in 1991 for her volunteering services.

In a special interview we managed to film with her in December 2018 before she passed away in the spring of 2019 she fondly recalled: *“When I first started collecting it was halfpennies, pennies, sixpences – and if someone put in a shilling, well you knew you’d done a good day’s work.”* And when asked why Save the Children was so close to her heart her answer spoke volumes: *“I’ve lived it and loved it.”*

Olive Midha

In 2000, Mrs Olive Midha, a long-standing member of the Swansea branch since 1959, was awarded an MBE for her tireless work with Save the Children serving as chairwoman of the branch and a trustee of the parent organisation. She remains a loyal and active member and holds the charity close to her heart.

“I have lots of fond fundraising memories, but I think the ones that stand out is when we invited the then local actress Catherine Zeta Jones for lunch but didn’t actually give her anything to eat just a glass of water! It was part of the ‘Skip Lunch Campaign in 1991, the idea being that people would skip lunch and give whatever their lunch would have cost as a contribution to Save the Children. I also remember the lovely birthday party that we organised to celebrate the 75th anniversary of Save the Children in 1994. We gathered as volunteers around the Mumbles lighthouse for a publicity stunt for the South Wales Evening Post, and the lighthouse itself was the candle on the cake. I hope that Save the Children goes on for ever and ever. There is always a need in this world.”

Alison Wood

Former teacher Mrs Alison Wood has been a member of the Anglesey Branch for over a quarter of a century and a ‘Speaking Out’ volunteer. The branch was established in 1991 and its members has raised hundreds of thousands of pounds locally by organising annual auctions, craft fairs and rallying local people and businesses to get involved in Christmas Jumper Day every year. In 2017 the branch sold handbags and accessories on their stall at the Anglesey National Eisteddfod and even persuaded Santa to visit riding on a tractor during a scorching summer day to raise awareness of Christmas Jumper Day!

I was persuaded to attend a Save the Children meeting by my sister-in-law and I was so impressed by the charity’s can-do attitude and how much fun people were having volunteering that I just sort of stayed.

I was lucky enough to be able to go out with four others to Rwanda in 2016 to see the charity’s programme work and there really wasn’t an unmemorable moment during the whole week. It

really made you proud to be a part of the charity and to be able to see the end result of all the fundraising work that we do and the professionalism of the people delivering on education, children's rights and health on the ground.

It's hugely important for us as a branch that Save the Children also works in Wales who are also children of the world. There are pockets of real deprivation that need addressing and as part of our fundraising efforts we make sure that some of that money is earmarked each year to support the work going on the ground here in Wales.

Anglesey people are a generous lot and every year we do a pub collection and manage to raise hundreds of pounds in a matter of hours with people literally rushing up to us to stuff money in the buckets. The whole of Menai Bridge – locals shops and businesses, residents and members of the Rownd a Rownd cast which is filmed in the village – are hugely supportive to Christmas Jumper Day every year It's so much fun working for Save the Children and our committee all get along together, we all work very well together and enjoy each other's company.

John Roberts

Mr John Roberts from Northop in Flintshire has been volunteering since 2007. He is a 'Speaking Out' Volunteer and also organises and supports local fundraisers in north Wales and works in the Mold Save the Children shop.

There have been so many memorable moments but the National Eisteddfod in Wrexham in 2011 where we sold nearly 3,000 pairs of shoes on the Save the Children stall in partnership with Merched y Wawr stands out. The previous year in 2010 I was also very privileged to be able to see for myself the work that the charity does during an overseas visit to Mozambique.

When organising fundraisers, I think the first important step is letting people know what Save the Children does and I do quite a lot of 'Speaking Out' talks, going around various groups and schools. I think once people understand what we do and the affect we have then the support is very forthcoming.

It is very important that we work in Wales as it's one of the standard questions you get when you go out to speak to groups

and raise money: what are you doing to help children living here in Wales?

Save the Children has become a major part of my life. There is barely a day that goes by that I'm not doing something, however small for the organisation.

Caroline Williams

When she lived in Penarth, Mrs Caroline Williams was inspired to set up the branch in 2005 following the aftermath of the devastating Indian Ocean tsunami that struck on 26 December 2004, causing massive destruction. In 2013 when she moved to live in Tenby, she set out to establish a new branch in the seaside town.

It was awful, hearing stories of children and families having to sit on rooftops and seeing and hearing the waves crash around them. I felt I had to give something back and I started the committee in 2005 and decided to organise a ball on July 1st, 2005. And from then on, the Penarth branch went from strength to strength organising fundraisers such as the 'swishing' event, auction of promises and lunches and I'm very glad that the branch is still going strong to this day.

I then moved back to my hometown of Tenby in 2013 and started a branch there with an event called 'Tell the Tale of Tenby'. It all began because we were renovating our house and all the local builders told us stories and we also uncovered bits of local history around our house. We've also held a ball and recently a lunch to celebrate the contribution of the suffragettes and we've held various concerts and invited all the local schools along to sing.

For Eglantyne Jebb it was all about feeding starving children after the First World War and making sure every child has rights. Today the charity is also about giving children a healthy start and education and ambition in life.

Shirley Fleming

Mrs Shirley Fleming has been volunteering for over sixty years and is a former Chair and still an active member of the Aberdare Branch and has received the Princess Anne Award for her work.

The charity is very close to my heart and I have lots of fond memories, ranging from the dancing in the market hall and in the market square in Aberdare to organising the ball we held at Cyfarthfa Castle to celebrate Save the Children's 75th birthday in 1994.

We made the buffet ourselves and all our committee members worked well into the night before, cleaning vegetables, making sauces, poaching salmon and roasting chicken. We all borrowed our best silver and antique china to display the food and I remember using some very valuable and precious family Victorian pieces, including a large goose dish. It's hard to imagine how we pulled it off but we did, and it was a roaring success. I was also very pleased to be involved with the Women in Wales committee for many years.

Pam Muirhead

Dr Pam Muirhead is a longstanding volunteer for the charity with over forty years' service and is a current member of the Swansea Branch and the founder and chair of the newly formed Swansea Literary Lunch committee. She is also a 'Speaking Out' volunteer and sits on the UK Volunteering Board and played a pivotal role in the development of Save the Children's annual flagship fundraiser Christmas Jumper Day. She is also a former member of the Women in Wales committee.

As a teenage Girl Guide every Saturday I volunteered at a local children's home and saw first-hand what life was like for children in care. This experience made a lasting impression on me. As a young woman I spent eleven years as a secondary school teacher and saw again how deprivation can affect children's lives. It became obvious to me that children do not have a choice; where they are born or to whom. They have very little control over their lives. Children have Rights and I wanted to fight for these rights on their behalf. I was determined that I would do my best to help them.

In 1989, as part of the charity's 70th anniversary the Swansea branch organised a wonderful party for children living in some of the most deprived communities in Swansea. The Children's World's store in Parc Tawe hosted a party and provided food, toys and goodies for each child. South Wales Transport provided the buses. The children had great fun being entertained by Kevin the Clown and, much to the children's delight, Paul Thorburn, the former Wales international rugby Captain, also came along. A great time was had by all.

I've also loved visiting schools and various groups as a 'Speaking Out' volunteer and campaigning on both international and domestic campaigns. It's a totally worthwhile experience which makes me feel needed. It gives me the motivation to carry on trying to make a difference to children's lives.

Tina Leahy

A former primary schoolteacher in Townhill, Mrs Tina Leahy, has been a member of the Swansea branch for 46 years and is the current chair.

I think if you have children of your own you realise what you have in comparison. And we saw images of children suffering back then in countries such as Ethiopia like we still do today in Syria and in Yemen and all over the world – and it makes you want to do something to help. I remember saying to my husband many years ago, 'I need Save the Children as much as it needs me' because it has given me something worthwhile to do.

When I first joined we used to have meetings in London once a year and all the volunteers from around the UK used to meet up in places such as the Albert Hall and you'd have speakers and be there with all these people from other parts of the country. And you'd come out all fired up thinking, right what can I do next!

What I feel most proud of is that the branch managed to raise funds to help build a school in the rural township of Kingsville in Liberia, helping children there achieve their dreams and in 2008 to mark the Swansea branch's 50th anniversary we held a Ball in the Liberty Stadium and raised over £20,000 towards building the new school.

Ann Jackson

Mrs Ann Jackson is currently co-chair of Caerphilly Branch alongside Mrs Dorothy (Dot) Phillips. Ann's mother, Betty Addicts was a leading light in the branch in the 80s, alongside Haf Fussell who was there when the branch was established in 1962, and whose daughter Liz Davidson has also been a member for many years. *Save the Children is probably in my DNA, if it's been in your family you continue with it.* Says Ann.

There's been many activities over the years which stay in the mind, but one of the proudest moments for the branch is probably when Anne Collins, then chair of the branch and mayor of Caerphilly led a campaign which raised £16,000 in 2008 in order to fund the pilot programme of Families and Schools Together (FAST) in Wales, which was run in the Upper Rhymney Primary School." FAST went on to be run in schools across Wales and informed Save the Children's brand-new parental engagement programme Families Connect.

For an area like Caerphilly, which is not very affluent, we have had fantastic support over the years. We've run everything from garden parties in Coedrhdyglyn to a concert in St Helen's Church, the popular Haf's Faggots and Peas nights to quizzes, coffee mornings and even knitting groups to create blankets for babies in Africa! After all these years, I would say that my centenary wish for Save the Children is to eradicate poverty in the UK, and especially in Wales. Hopefully we can help a little in that mission.

Cerris Lewis

Mrs Cerris Lewis, the current chair of the Port Talbot branch joined because she felt inspired by the help and support the charity offered to vulnerable children around the globe and here in Wales. The Port Talbot branch was established in 1953 by the Mayor, local councillors and local dignitaries and the highlights over the years include the concert at Brangwyn Hall in Swansea in 1985 attended by HRH, the fashion show in 1980 and events to mark the 75th anniversary of Save the Children which included a picnic and a fundraising event in Margam Park.

In looking back over all the years, my fondest memories

of fundraising for the charity is the 75th Save the Children Anniversary event we organised at The Orangery at Margam Park. Our Speaker was The Hon. Dame Shân Legge-Bourke and we raised over £12,000.

Christine Stinchcombe-Brown

Mrs Christine Stinchcombe-Brown attended her first meeting of the Cardiff branch in 1979 when she was invited along by the founder Mrs Chamberlin who set up the branch in the late 1940s. She became the branch secretary, participated in the 'Speaking Out' programme and volunteered for the charity until 2010 and is still very supportive of its work.

When I first joined my daughter was only a few months old and needed breast feeding during the meeting! Many of us had young children and they grew up helping us with fundraising events and one of my sons went on to volunteer in both of the Cardiff shops for many years as there used to be one opposite the castle and one in Albany Road.

Everyone got on well and we had lots of fun. There was coffee mornings galore, gift stalls at fairs, concerts with Japanese Bell-ringers, an Icelandic Choir, Tannau Taf and local choirs. One of our members, Dilys Smith, a champion of Welsh and bi-lingual Christmas cards, was a long time, dedicated member of our branch. She even producing a bi-lingual calendar one year and also got 'Clecs' as our Welsh newsletter name.

We were also mobilised by the Disasters and Emergencies Committee (DEC) appeals to collect donations at short notices and I struggled under the bucket weight of the public's generosity!

We all got to meet HRH The Princess Royal when she came to open the first Cardiff shop and it was evident that the charity was very close to her heart and that she works hard for the cause. My wish for the centenary is that every child in the world should have a secure, healthy, happy and stress-free childhood.

Jenny Ogwen

Former HTV Cymru and S4C presenter Jenny Ogwen has been involved with Save the Children for over twenty years and was a member of the Women in Wales Committee for many years. She is currently an ambassador for the charity's work in Wales.

My mother always supported Save the Children and so I feel I'm carrying on the tradition and I am extremely proud to be able to help raise money and awareness of the charity's work.

When it comes to Save the Children it's important for people to know that there are thousands of children living under the headline here and that the charity is carrying out work on the ground to help them.

Some children don't have enough food to eat, a proper bed to sleep in or warm clothes to wear during winter and in this day and age that it simply not right.

Gwyn Hughes Jones and Stacey Wheeler

Husband and wife and professional opera singers Gwyn Hughes Jones and Stacey Wheeler became Wales Ambassadors for Save the Children in 2012. They have performed in various concerts to raise fund for the charity and raised the roof of Bangor Cathedral on 18th May 1919 to launch the centenary celebrations alongside artists Annette Bryn Parri, Trio and Ysgol Gymuned Penisarwaun Choir. The concert included a performance of the Song 'Mae 'Na Obaith' / 'There is Hope' composed to mark the occasion by Annette Bryn Parri and her husband Gwyn Parri.

***Gwyn Hughes Jones:** It is part of one's social conscience to want as many children and young people as possible to have the opportunity to grow up happy, healthy and safe. And it is important that we realise our responsibility to be part of the answer to make this world a better place for them to live in.*

***Stacey Wheeler:** I have seen the great work the charity does here in Wales when I worked for the Wales team as a Families and Schools Together (FAST) Trainer and I was able to see the wonderful work that the charity does to help families and children in Wales and I was really inspired. It is lovely to be able to use our voices as singers and Ambassadors to raise money and awareness*

Chapter 4: The voices of our volunteers

of the opportunities Save the Children gives children here in Wales and abroad to reach their full potential.



Dr Pamela Muirhead, Samantha Cameron and singer Duffy at Downing Street at the launch of the 'Born To' campaign on 28th March 2011. Pam was one of two volunteers asked to speak at the event. Picture: Save the Children



The Women in Wales committee pictured with HRH The Princess Royal in 2009 during the Save the Children's 90th anniversary Women in Wales Luncheon. Picture: Save the Children



*In 2016 our Christmas Jumper Day campaign was supported by signer and presenter Shan Cothi who launched an appeal on her radio programme 'Bore Cothi' for the public to knit a woolly wonder for her beloved horse, Caio.
Picture: Keith Morris/Save the Children*



*Our Ambassadors in Wales, Stacey Wheeler, Gwyn Hughes Jones, Heledd Cynwal and Jenny Ogwen supporting our Christmas Jumper Day campaign in 2015.
Picture: Huw John/Save the Children*



Welsh actor Luke Evans, an Ambassador for the Save the Children and Bulgari global partnership, visited one of Save the Children's Families and Schools Together (FAST) projects at Troedyrhiw Primary School in Merthyr Tydfil in Wales in 2015. Picture: Charlie Forgham-Bailey/Save the Children



The thousands of shoes collected by the members of Merched y Wawr in 2011 when we were chosen as their charity of the year. Picture: Merched y Wawr



*Christmas Jumper Day Beach Art project, December 2017.
Picture: Keith Morris/Save the Children*



*Mrs Valeda May Rees pictured with Shirley Fleming from the Aberdare Branch and Rhian Brewster and Eurgain Haf from from Save the Children in December 2018.
Picture: Save the Children*



Actress Catherine Zeta Jones takes part in the 'Skip Lunch Campaign' with Welsh international rugby player Bleddyn Bowen in 1991. Mrs Olive Midha is pictured second from the right. Picture: Olive Midha



Mrs Alison Wood (on the left) pictured at the MAHAMA Camp in Rwanda during her visit in 2017. Picture: Save the Children



Dr Pam Muirhead (left), then secretary and Tina Leahy (right), Chair of the Swansea Branch receiving a donation for the Save the Children Fund by the Top Rank Swansea Club who organised a Balloon Race in 1987.

Picture: Pam Muirhead



Former HTV Wales and S4C weather presenter and Save the Children Ambassador in Wales, Jenny Ogwen raising awareness of our Go Tea-Potty campaign with BBC weatherman Derek Brockway in 2009. Picture: Huw John/Save the Children





Our Ambassadors in Wales and opera singers Gwyn Hughes Jones and his wife Stacey Wheeler launching our centenary celebrations in Wales on May 18th 2019 in a concert at Bangor Cathedral with Ysgol Gymuned Penisarwain. Picture: Save the Children

Chapter 5

Wales in their words

Today, there are over 200,000 children in Wales living in poverty and over a third of them are falling behind their better off peers before they even start school. Many of them never catch up. They never reach their full potential because they do not have the help they need during their crucial early years.

Now, once again, in the 21st century our research and work with families is providing irrefutable evidence that it's at the beginning of a child's life that their future success can be secured. By partnering with schools, families and those providing early years services in some of the most disadvantaged parts of the country, we are helping to close the gaps in outcomes of children living in poverty compared to their better off peers.

Poverty affects all areas of a child's life. For many families living on a low income it's a daily struggle to pay the bills, or put food on the table, making it much harder to support their children's development at home. They simply can't afford the things all young children need – books and toys, the space to play and even a hot meal or a bed.

Our programme, Building Blocks, provides support to help struggling parents access the basics they need - like a bed, books, or toys. This helps families to create a positive home environment, reducing the stress associated with poverty and helping to make sure children can learn and develop healthily.

Catherine story

Catherine, 48, is a single mother from the Irish travelling community. She moved to Cardiff five years ago and has two young daughters. They live in a small terraced house in an area of Cardiff that is ranked as among the most deprived areas in South

Wales. They were referred to Save the Children's Building Blocks programme in May 2019 by local partner ACE and were awarded a fridge freezer and Early Learning Pack.

Catherine's fridge freezer broke down in early May, this had a huge impact on the family. She was having to store her milk in the kitchen sink. She had to buy food every couple of days which had a big effect on her income. Catherine usually buys a pre-paid monthly store card and does her shopping every two weeks. This allows her to manage her budget and ensure there is always food for the family. Without a working freezer her living costs went up enormously. She was also unable to store important medicines for her daughters.

Catherine approached ACE Cardiff's Learning Club and they helped her apply for a Building Blocks grant. Within a week she had received her new fridge freezer and an Early Learning Pack for her daughters. *"The kids loved the Early Learning pack. They wouldn't care if they had a fridge freezer or not. I was excited to get a new fridge freezer but when they got the pack, they felt included."* said Catherine. *"They love playing with the fairy set. The age gap didn't matter. They love playing with that. They played together with it."*

Without Building Blocks help Catherine would have had to take out a costly loan to replace her fridge freezer. *"God bless those people for donating and doing that for families like me and my children. When you're in that situation there's no way out of it. There's debt and more debt."*

*Names have been changed to preserve anonymity

In schools we're bringing parents, children and teachers together to make sure children get the support they need to fulfil their potential at school and in life. Our Families Connect programme, engages parents in their children's learning, boosting their skills and giving them the confidence to help their children learn.

Nina's Story

Having never engaged with parental initiatives at the school previously, Nina thought she'd *"give it a go"* when she was invited to participate in Save the Children's Families Connect programme at a primary school in Port Talbot. Her son, who was in year 1

at the time, loved everything about his mam going into school, especially the one to one time they had together – a sentiment she shares as she admits her biggest challenge is to find regular individual time with her children. *“Families Connect has helped us ensure we have special time. We go through the story cards and make up stories together. I’ve also been able to implement better discipline at home with all the children, which makes us all happier as it has led to less anger and clearer boundaries.”*

Nina didn’t previously have an established relationship with the school, but as a result of engaging in Families Connect, she has made close friends with other parents as well as the staff. Her message to other parents considering taking part in the programme would be *“Do it! The communication, one to one time, peer support and friendships are invaluable. It has made me feel a lot more in control at home and with my family. I loved it!”*

Partnership working

Our community programmes bring together health workers, schools, children’s centres, and local governments to make sure children are getting the support they need, and that they grow up in a place they can be proud of. We’re focusing our work in key communities across the country, developing strategic partnerships that demonstrate an evidence-based approach to improving the early learning of children growing up in poverty.

Policy, campaign and advocacy work

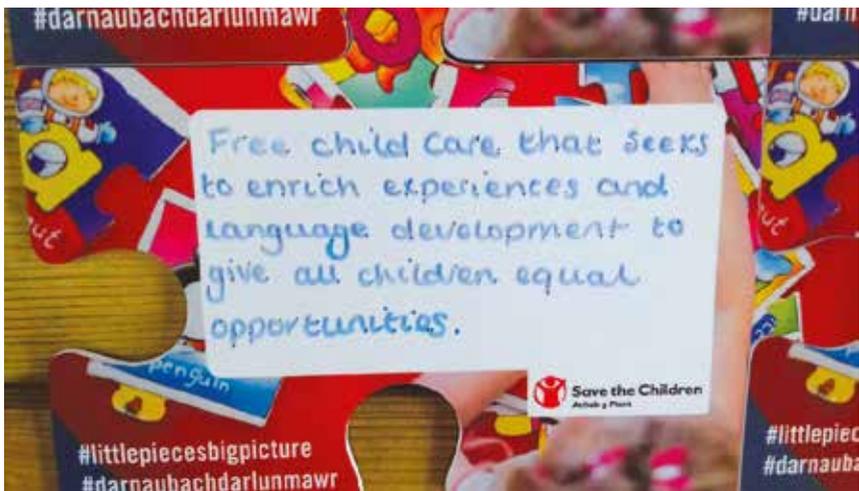
Our founder taught us that sometimes the only way to bring about real change for children is to force a change to the policies that have a direct influence on their lives. Save the Children in Wales believes that poverty is an infringement of a child’s rights so we campaign to change policy that could impact on this.

Our work in Wales now focuses on tackling the impact of poverty on the critical first years of life, from birth to eight. We are currently campaigning for improved early years childcare. This is our focus because the evidence is very clear that great early years education and care can be life changing for children living in poverty.

Our report, ‘Little Pieces. Big Picture,’ revealed significant issues with the current childcare system. Many children cannot access quality care. We are calling for a change to the early childhood education and care system to ensure

Chapter 5: Wales today, in their words

that it serves all children, whatever their background. During our campaign, we have asked politicians, stakeholders, volunteers and parents what they think is needed in Wales to support children during their critical early years. We have also given children and young people of all ages and backgrounds a voice in telling us what they think is important for every child to be able to grow up happy and reach their full potential.



Our tomorrow

As part of our centenary celebrations we returned to our roots in Merthyr to work on an art project with pupils from Pen-y-Dre High School in the Gurnos Estate. The project involved asking pupils to create a hundred self-portraits illustrating what they thought every child needs to grow up happy in Wales. Each wrote their comments on a piece of jigsaw to help us build the bigger picture of early childhood and to identify which pieces are missing in enabling children to thrive. The artwork was exhibited in an event in the Senedd in July 2019 where Save the Children called on the Welsh Government to show political lead in breaking the links between poverty and education in Wales by investing in the early years and keeping an eye on the bigger picture to ensure no child falls behind.

There is therefore no better way to end this book than in the words of our future generation.

Asha Beynon

Asha Beynon, a student at Pen-y-Dre High School articulates the importance of us all working together to benefit the children of today for the sake of our tomorrow. That is why Save the Children will continue to respond and champion the basic rights of children and young people living in Wales to secure a sustainable reduction in the number of children growing up in poverty and work to narrow the early learning gap between children growing up in poverty and their peers.

Save the Children was originated in 1919 and only a few short years later began its work in Dowlais running open air nurseries for mining families. We as students have absorbed this aspect of our local heritage and used it as a springboard to create an arts installation piece marking '100 years of work'. We have created this artwork to celebrate the work but also with an eye on the continual work that needs to be done in order to support them and all future generations of Merthyr Tydfil families.

Many of us students have become aware of the amount of work Save the children has accomplished in Merthyr but also around the world. It was important for us as young people to investigate and think about this and to see ourselves as part of a global community. Often, we learnt how our childhood can be so similar to childhoods around the world.

We have drawn on our own childhood experiences and thought about what makes children happy, what makes them thrive and what they think every child need in order to secure themselves with a happy and healthy childhood. By making such a positive approach, I believe that it has made us think what we want for our lives, our later lives and the lives of our own children.

The motif of the jigsaw and the concept of us all being pieces that can be fitted together can help us all see the bigger picture during all of this. This has encouraged us to work together for the benefit of all children around the world.

Our artwork aims to remind adults that they were once children - teachers, politicians, social workers and those working for charities and children's organisations. If they wish to improve the lives of young people, they must once more listen to the voice of their inner child.





Asha Beynon (first row), students and staff from Pen-y-Dre High School, Merthyr Tydfil with Louise Davies, Head of Save the Children in Wales (front row, right) and Dawn Bowden, AM Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (second row on right) during our centenary event at the Senedd in July 2019. Picture: Nick Treharne/Save the Children



Save the Children Wales staff along with Jenny Ogwen, our Ambassador take part in a beach art project as part of Christmas Jumper Day 2017. Photo: Keith Morris/ Save the Children



Save the Children Wales and ELRHA staff taking part in Den Day 2016. Photo: Save the Children

Little pieces, big picture.

A hundred years ago
she saw a stained picture.

She saw hot tears, a mother's fear and hunger,
she saw small hands held out in hope

and she faced the fragility
saw in them her responsibility
her part of the answer
and set out to re-draw that picture.

Slowly the pieces came together;
a jig-saw of care and devotion from day one

A declaration, a promise,
the right to play
the right to blue sky and open air
the right to milk as cold as frost and warm arms
love
away from harm.

The right to thrive
and so much more.

Slowly the picture sharpened,
the tears dried a little and
bones grew strong.

But today
that jig-saw is still fragile,
frayed edges,
a faded picture
and always
a missing piece.

Now it's our turn to re-imagine and re-draw,
and fight for every little piece as she did before.



Casia Wiliam, May 2019
Wales' Children's Poet Laureate
2017-2019

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Mrs Valeda May Rees, conducted by Eurgain Haf and Rhian Brewster,
November 2018

Mrs Olive Midha, conducted by Rhian Brewster, October 2018

Mrs Alison Wood, conducted by Eurgain Haf, February 2019

Mr John Roberts, conducted by Eurgain Haf, February 2019

Mrs Caroline Williams, conducted by Eurgain Haf, November 2018

Mrs Shirley Fleming, conducted by Eurgain Haf and Rhian Brewster,
November 2018

Dr Pam Muirhead, conducted by Eurgain Haf and Rhian Brewster,
October 2018

Mrs Tina Leahy, conducted by Eurgain Haf and Rhian Brewster, October 2018

Mrs Ann Jackson, conducted by Rhian Brewster, June 2019

Mrs Jenny Ogwen, conducted by Eurgain Haf, November 2018

Gwyn Hughes Jones and Stacey Wheeler, conducted by Eurgain Haf and Rhian
Brewster, December 2018

Mrs Christine Stinchcombe-Brown, conducted by Eurgain Haf, June 2019

Mrs Cerris Lewis, conducted by Lucy Potter, June 2019



Volunteer Kevin Wood from the Anglesey Branch, launches our Christmas Jumper Day during a scorching summer's day at the National Eisteddfod in Bodedern in 2017. Picture: Iolo Penri/Save the Children