

A young girl with dark hair tied back, wearing a khaki short-sleeved uniform with red trim on the sleeves, stands outdoors. She is holding a large bundle of thin, dried sticks or reeds. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a building and a gate.

# Annual Report and Accounts 2013/14

children  
unite

give child domestic  
workers a voice.

"I used to study in the morning and then they started asking me to work. The woman had recently given birth to a girl so I had to wash the clothes and the regular tasks were to prepare tea, cook food, wash utensils but mostly I had to work in the kitchen and I also had to clean the house."

Rita, aged 14 when she started domestic work

## Chair's Report



Stella Atherstone,  
Chair

aside this year, knowing the steering of the Board has been left in capable hands. I look forward to witnessing Children Unite's continued success and congratulate trustees and staff on steering this small but non-the-less significant charity through some testing financial challenges.

This year has seen some changes to the focus of Children Unite in an attempt to remain an active charity in an economic climate, which continues to take its toll on smaller charities. Children Unite has piloted a Technical Advice Service, which is currently providing an unrestricted stream of income. In addition, Children Unite received a grant from Network for Social Change to sustain our administrative expenses in order to enable us to continue to achieve our objectives. This will ensure the charity's continued ability to deliver support to child domestic workers. Children Unite recruited five new trustees towards the end of the 2013-14 financial year, in order to round out the skills available from the Board and to fill the gap left by the rotational departure of all but one of the founding trustees. I too will be stepping

### Trustees



Randini Wanduralaga



Susi Koch



Mariela Gonzales

## Children Unite

Children Unite is the only organisation working internationally with an exclusive focus on child domestic labour. We work in partnership with organisations to protect child domestic workers from exploitation and abuse and promote their rights worldwide.

**Our Vision:** a world where children in domestic work are valued and respected, can change their own lives and reach their full potential.

**Our History:** Children Unite was founded in 2010 by Helen Veitch and Jonathan Blagbrough, who successfully facilitated the involvement of child domestic workers across the globe in negotiating for their rights in a new international convention on domestic work. The Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189) was adopted by the International Labour Organisation in 2011 and protects children in domestic work from exploitation and abuse. Since then,

Children Unite has co-ordinated projects and given technical advice in collaboration with organisations working directly with child domestic workers.

### Children Unite's objectives:

- to increase the capacity of organisations to assist child domestic workers and develop services that are based on the needs and perspectives of child domestic workers.
- to build an international community of organisations and individuals who take action to support child domestic workers across the world.

## Children Unite works in two ways:

**1.** We run capacity building and advocacy projects in partnership with organisations working directly with child domestic workers that build the capacity of staff to run effective interventions with child domestic workers and give opportunities for children to identify their needs and advocate for their rights.

**2.** We run a technical advice service offering flexible, tailor-made advice to organisations that run interventions with children to set-up or expand services for child domestic workers. Our advice service builds the capacity of organisations to develop specific programmes, advocacy projects and services for child domestic workers that are based on the needs expressed by children themselves.

“My employers spoke [to me] only when I asked something to them. The rest of the time they remained quiet and the employer said ‘you should not talk to my daughters’ so later I developed the habit of not speaking to anyone.”

Sarita, 16 years old

## Children in Domestic Work: 2013-2014



Jonathan Blagborough,  
Technical Adviser

This year witnessed a significant upsurge in international concern about the situation of child domestic workers. Marking the World Day Against Child Labour in June 2013, the International Labour Organization published a global report – written by Children Unite – entitled Ending child labour in domestic work and protecting young workers from abusive working conditions (see <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/Campaignandadvocacy/wdacl/2013/lang--it/index.htm> for further details).

From Children Unite's perspective, the report reveals an important shift in emphasis – away from encouraging blanket bans of all child domestic work, towards more nuanced efforts to protect young domestic workers who are legally entitled to work. Significantly, this adjustment creates a space for organisations working with and on behalf of child domestic workers to review their approaches to these vulnerable children, and has the potential to generate new programmatic and funding opportunities for those working with them.

The focus on child domestic workers of the 2013 World Day Against Child Labour highlights the importance of ending their exploitation, as part of wider efforts to uphold the rights of children and workers and the promotion of gender equality. The report's recommendations reinforce what has become apparent programmatically: that child domestic work circumstances, while creating vulnerability to exploitation and abuse, need not always be harmful. Furthermore, there is growing acceptance that conditions of work can sometimes be improved to provide a decent alternative for those of legal working age.

The report also underscores the importance of child domestic workers themselves being involved directly as agents of change. We need to remember that it is the fundamental right of children to be heard on matters which affect them, and that practitioners and policy-makers alike have a duty to listen to and learn from child domestic workers.

## Summary



Helen Veitch,  
Director

### Our activities:

The development and launch of Children Unite's Technical Advice Service (TAS) over the course of the year was an important step on the path to sustainability for Children Unite, in particular, in the drive to secure a broad range of income sources. Despite no marketing of the service we successfully secured 43 days of advice with four agencies. In addition, a two-year research project looking at resilience of child domestic workers in Nepal was completed and a research report produced as well as a 10 minute film developed by children. In 2014 our collaborative campaigning approach bore fruit when we were able to achieve a key campaign objective - to start dialogue with the UK Government on ratification of the International Labour Organization's Domestic Workers Convention.

### Our changing role:

In a number of applications for grant-funded projects with overseas partners (to deliver services to child domestic workers) Children Unite's role changed from one of project administrator to an advisory role i.e providing a Technical Advice Service contract. In addition, we recognised that with a very small staff, the organisation's capacity to administer international projects is limited. Children Unite is better placed to offer consultancy (through our Technical Advice Service) to larger UK based NGOs who have the staff and resources to administer large international projects.

# Activities

## 1. Research project on resilience

In April Children Unite ran an analysis workshop in Kathmandu with the local research team and collaborated with Living Lens (a participatory video company) to support a group of six child domestic workers to produce a short film on one of the themes – ‘someone to confide in’ (see Meena’s Story on our You Tube channel: ‘ChildrenUniteFilms’). The research project was successfully completed in January 2014. The study focused on what can be learned from the life experience of child domestic workers that contributes to an understanding of resilience in the prevention of and recovery from child sexual abuse and exploitation. This was achieved through life story interviews and focus group discussions with a total of 117 children.

### Five themes were generated that highlighted children’s resilience:

- in the links children made between a positive attitude and the development of self-confidence;
- in the importance children placed in finding someone to confide in;
- in children’s involvement with cultural festivals, which appeared to present opportunities for child domestic workers to make the best of their situation;
- in children’s ability to assess risk and develop protection strategies and;
- in the importance children placed on nurturing ‘hope’, which enabled them to endure the hardships of domestic labour.

The research in Nepal is the last of three studies in the ‘Bamboo Project’, a learning initiative developed and co-ordinated by the child abuse programme of the Oak Foundation.

## Our Stories: child domestic workers in Nepal

“I analysed my family situation when I was a child, my father always used to be stressed about how to raise the children. I thought I couldn’t study in my village so its better I go somewhere to make some money. I also wanted to see city life so I told my father and came to Kathmandu.” 17 year old boy, Kumar

“I have to wake up anytime my employers ask me to but normally its 5 am....and it’s exactly 10pm when I complete my chores, then I have food and can sleep.” 16 year old Sarita

“I get scared when I wash glass utensils because if I break them I get beaten.” Prem, 12 year old boy

“They tied me up, poured water all over me and beat me telling to return back the money that they accused me of stealing. I said I haven’t stolen the money but they kept on beating and I fainted.” 13 year old girl Megha.

“At first he said I was like his granddaughter. Later that old man started to behave badly with me. His wife had already died. He used to come near me and touch my body.” Mahima 19 years old

Sixteen year old Gita, “My family is earning money from my work which is helping them to provide for their daily needs. As the eldest child of the family I am also obliged to take care of my family; so enduring these difficulties is okay for me.”

“In the festival of Teej she [employer] gives me money to buy bangles when she was also buying bangles for others and I think she loves me although she scolds me a lot.” Swasti, 15 year old girl



Photo: Shots from the making of “Meena’s Story”, produced by children in Nepal



# Case Studies from Child Domestic Workers in Nepal

## Mahima

Mahima's story demonstrates the structural barriers that exist for all children coping with sexual abuse – the power imbalance between victim and perpetrator that is compounded by being a girl, a child and a domestic servant. Mahima shows acute consciousness of these factors, but nevertheless proves courageous in her ability to negotiate them.

Mahima was 12 years old when she moved to Kathmandu. In her first house she says her employer treated her like a machine and gave her many chores. In her second workplace, the grandfather and the father from her employing family sexually abused her for three years, threatening to kick her out of the house if she resisted or told anyone.

**“Initially I was confused about what he was doing, later on I realised he was doing all bad things and when I asked him to stop he said - who are you to stop me in my home”.**

Mahima says she got angry but felt helpless. She used to cry and avoided being alone with her abusers, going to places like the rooftop where people could see her more easily. She also threatened her abusers and complained to her female employer (the wife and daughter of her

two abusers). She told herself that as she was living in someone else's home she had to endure many different types of hardship. Mahima's faith in God and her positive thinking helped her to overcome her problems. Eventually, she confided in a counsellor based in her school and was rescued from her employers home. She has now been reintegrated with her family and is studying in secondary school.

**“These days I don't get panicked over that incident of rape, I am happy now, and I don't get insecure about anything. The regular support I've had and counselling has helped me recover from my trauma.”**

**Mahima, 19 year old girl**

## Rita

Rita's story shows how, with the support of a number of people, she was able to escape a very exploitative environment and start to rebuild her life. Rita demonstrates skills in negotiation and communication in her escape, she has a grounded, courageous and responsible approach to her life.

Rita worked for five years as a domestic worker but was also sexually exploited by her employer. She says:

**“I had to work as a prostitute. If I didn't agree, my employer used to scold and beat me. So I agreed. It continued for a year.”**

Rita says she kept silent for five years because she was too scared to fight her torturers – she did whatever her employers asked her to do – working as a sex worker and a domestic worker. Despite this very difficult existence Rita planned an escape with her good friend, Radha, another domestic worker. While running away, however, Rita was arrested by the police who claimed she had 'trafficked' her friend Radha: “But later Radha and I spoke to the police and explained that we both planned to run away together. And so, the police freed us.”

It was the police who brought Radha and Rita to a shelter for sexually exploited children, where Rita still lives. The police are also supporting Rita to file a case against her former employer. But now that she is due to be returning home to her family she has a new fear - that she may have contracted HIV Aids. Despite this, she is planning to share her concerns with her family and is hoping they will support her if she is infected. Her dream is that one day she will own a shop and earn a living for herself.



“Children Unite’s expertise and detailed working knowledge of this issue, which embraces both policy and practice, enabled us to get things in perspective and test some of our assumptions.”

Jill Healey, Chief Executive, ChildHope.

## 2. Technical Advice Service

In 2013-14 Children Unite aimed to establish and market our Technical Advice Service to UK based organisations working with children overseas. The service was launched in June to existing contacts and promoted in November through the APPG on Street Children to members of the Consortium for Street Children. It was successfully piloted with children’s rights charity ChildHope over the summer with Children Unite delivering a workshop for programme staff to identify gaps in service provision for child domestic workers in their programmes. The pilot resulted in a TAS contract with ChildHope. Despite no marketing of the Technical Advice Service, a total of 43 days of advice was secured during the course of the year. This provided Children Unite with income for work implemented in the current financial year as well as the forthcoming year (2014-15).

### Technical Advice contracts:

- Global March: to produce a manual on child domestic workers;
- Aviva: to co-produce a resource on how to implement activities with street-connected children on planning, monitoring and evaluation;
- ChildHope: to build the capacity of local staff in Ethiopia to work more effectively with child domestic workers.



“I like to help child victims like me, somebody whose parents are poor like mine. I learned all this by talking to friends.” Manita, aged 12 years

## 3. Advocacy

In 2013 Children Unite’s SEND your gLOVE campaign met its key objective – to start dialogue with the UK Government on UK ratification of the ILO Domestic Workers Convention. This was achieved through our collaboration with Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB) and the Consortium for Street Children. MWiB members sent letters and postcards to Vince Cable MP and helped us organise the presentation of over 1200 rubber gloves to the UK Government in July. In collaboration with the Consortium for Street Children we organised a meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Street Children in November to discuss the needs of child domestic workers. At the APPG parliamentarians called for a meeting with Vince Cable’s Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) to discuss UK ratification. In February 2014 Mr Cable invited Children Unite (and MWiB) to a round table at BIS where UK ratification was discussed for the first time with government representatives, charities and trade unions.



*Representatives from Methodist Women in Britain, Children Unite and La Casa de Panchita presenting 1200 signed gloves to Tessa Munt MP at the Dept. for Business Innovation and Skills.*

“I am staying in this house with the hope that they will help me get onto a sewing course. I have been...facing all these difficulties with the hope that one day I would learn sewing and open my own tailor shop.” Samjhana, aged 17

## 4. Organisational development

In a recruitment drive to find new Trustees, eight candidates were interviewed between November 2013 and February 2014 and five selected who attended as observers to the March Trustee meeting (they have subsequently joined the Board of Children Unite). This was to fill the gap from two of our existing Trustees, Mariela Gonzalez and Susi Koch who will step down in 2014 after serving five years on the Board from the time the organisation was founded. Additionally our Chair, Stella Atherstone will also step down after serving on the Board for 3 years. Mariela, Stella and Susi have provided a huge amount of support to help Children Unite develop, innovate and adapt to changing circumstances.

## 5. Financial overview

Children Unite met our goal for the year to secure 18 months operating costs: acquiring an income of £35,000 over the course of the year. The majority (60%) of this income came from a grant for core costs of £20,000 (which will be used, for the most part, in 2014-15) and is crucial to Children Unite's development and growth in the forthcoming year. The remainder of the income for 2013-14 was secured through the Technical Advice Service (approximately £12,000) and donations from supporters (approximately £6000).

## Looking forward

### Our learning:

Over the course of the year, Children Unite's role has shifted from running projects with overseas partners to focusing on offering technical advice to UK partners. Our small size means we are better placed to offer consultancy (technical advice) than to administer projects – to both UK and overseas NGO partners. However, in order to do this effectively Children Unite needs to market the Technical Advice Service. In addition, we have recognised that our advocacy activities should follow suit and focus on affecting change with UK partners – where we have most influence – as well as raise the profile of child domestic workers in the field of children's rights.

### Recommendations:

- Focus capacity building activities on our overseas partner in Tanzania; Wotesawa. Undertaking a feasibility study with Wotesawa to identify their capacity building needs and develop proposals for funding as appropriate.
- Develop a joint advocacy campaign with Wotesawa that targets UK NGOs and complements activities carried out through the Technical Advice Service.
- Build staff skills in marketing and undertake market research to identify how the Technical Advice Service can address UK Partners' needs.
- Implement a marketing strategy to promote the Technical Advice Service to UK Partners and secure further TAS contracts.
- Continue to be involved in activities calling for UK ratification of the ILO Domestic Workers Convention (step down from the leading role)
- Use core funding to ensure sustainable and diverse sources of income are investigated, in particular, identifying how to build unrestricted funding sources.
- Reduce the time spent by the Director on administration tasks.

# ACCOUNTS

## Children Unite

### Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2014

<b>Balance Sheet</b>	<b>13/14</b>	<b>12/13</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>	9,498	13,134
Cash at Bank	7,904	12,726
Debtors	1,281	222
Gift Aid	1,281	148
HMRC Refund		74
Prepayments	313	186
Subscriptions	250	
Accountancy Fees	63	
Current Liabilities	717	110
Accruals	717	110
Unrestricted	717	110
Net Current Assets	<u>8,781</u>	<u>13,024</u>
Funds		13,024
Reserves	13,024	30,485
Surplus/(Deficit)	(2,478)	(17,461)
	<u>10,546</u>	<u>13,024</u>
Restricted Funds	5,000	11,533
Unrestricted Funds	5,546	1,490

For the year ended 31 March 2014 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies

Director's responsibilities:

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with Section 478

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.  
These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small

These accounts have been delivered in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

## Children Unite

### Statement of Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2014

<b>I &amp; E</b>	<b>13/14</b>	<b>12/13</b>
<b>Income</b>		
Donations	8,260	5,624
Gift Aid	1,131	774
Fees	6,017	6,600
Grants	5,000	
Bank Interest	3	11
Sundry	<u>1,767</u>	<u>2,090</u>
	22,178	15,099
<b>Expenses</b>		
Project costs	9,167	16,543
Staff Costs	9,062	10,903
Administration	6,409	5,078
Bank Charges	<u>17</u>	<u>36</u>
	24,655	32,560
<b>Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<u>(2,478)</u>	<u>(17,461)</u>



## Legal Status

Children Unite is a company limited  
by guarantee: 07032485

Children Unite is a registered UK  
charity: 1136614

[www.childrenunite.org.uk](http://www.childrenunite.org.uk)

## Non-share holding directors

Stella Atherstone

Mariela Gonzalez

Susi Koch

Randini Wanduragala

## Company Secretary

Helen Veitch

## Head of Technical Advice

Jonathan Blagbrough



[www.childrenunite.org](http://www.childrenunite.org)



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