

**FOR EVERY
CHILD IN
DANGER**



**CHILDREN'S CHAMPIONS HANDBOOK
CAMPAIGNING WITH UNICEF UK**

BE AS STRONG



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WELCOME TO THE CHILDREN'S CHAMPIONS NETWORK

As a Unicef UK Children's Champion you are part of a vibrant and growing network of dedicated and passionate campaigners, united in your ambition to change the lives of children in the UK and around the world.

Our Children's Champions are vital to Unicef's work. We couldn't reach MPs and the wider public, and achieve positive change for children, without your help.

From the global refugee crisis to air pollution in the UK, children around the world are in danger.

We stand up for children's rights, but we can only do it with your support. Whether it's signing petitions, telling your MP to act, sharing our stories with your friends or raising awareness locally, your actions help us to win campaigns and keep children safe.

At Unicef, we've done more to influence laws and policies to protect children than any other humanitarian organisation – we know that campaigning can make a difference. Unicef UK works to make sure the UK Government delivers on its responsibilities for children, and the Children's Champions network plays a crucial role in making this happen.

In this handbook you will find useful information about campaigning with Unicef UK, tips on how to engage your local MP, and answers to some frequently asked questions. Of course, we are always available to answer any further questions and provide you with support and training.

Thank you for your passion and commitment. We look forward to campaigning with you to protect children everywhere.



Adam Bailey

Senior Campaigns Adviser for Children's Champions, Unicef UK

activism@unicef.org.uk

ABOUT UNICEF



Unicef is here for every child in danger. We help more children than any other humanitarian organisation.

In 1989 the world came together to make a promise to children. A promise that every child is entitled to the best possible start in life, to an education, to a safe place to live and grow up, to enough food, to quality health care and to protection from violence. A promise that also says every child is entitled to play, to speak out and to be the best they can be.

This promise is called the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; it forms the basis of all Unicef's work. We are the only organisation named in the Convention as a source of expert assistance and advice in keeping children safe.

We keep them safe when war or disaster strike.

We provide life-saving food, clean water and vaccinations. We protect them from violence and exploitation. We give them a safe place to laugh and play. We help get them into school and give them the chance of a better future. All over the world we're working with our partners and supporters to make the world a safer place for every child.

But we need your help to keep more children safe by speaking up and campaigning for their rights here in the UK and around the world.

By supporting Unicef, you can protect children in danger, transform their lives and build a safer world for tomorrow's children.

For further information on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, visit: [unicef.org.uk/Unicefs-Work/UNConvention](https://www.unicef.org.uk/Unicefs-Work/UNConvention)

WHY CAMPAIGN?

Campaigning on issues that you feel passionate about can make a real difference to the lives of children. If we work together, we can make sure that our leaders support and protect children.

As a Children's Champion, you are one of Unicef UK's most dedicated campaigners, raising your voice for the most vulnerable children in the UK and around the world. By asking your MP to take action, or raising the profile of an issue online, with your friends and family or in your local community you are helping to protect children's rights.

"[I] felt like it was time to act upon the things that occur every day. [Children's Champions] is a continuously expanding network of likeminded people that makes me feel we can really have an impact."

Andrew, Children's Champion

WHAT IS CAMPAIGNING?

Campaigning, activism, advocacy, influencing, lobbying, protest – all of these words are drawn together by the theme of 'change' and how people achieve the change they want to see in the world.

Campaigning is all about taking actions on a specific issue – in Unicef's case relating to children's rights – in order to bring about positive change.

Essentially, campaigning is about a series of activities to bring about positive change.



Your voice



influences
decision-makers



to do the
right thing

WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED?

At Unicef, we've done more to influence laws and policies to protect children than any other humanitarian organisation. We know that campaigning can make a difference. These are just two of our recent achievements, thanks to the support of people like you.



PROTECTION FOR TRAFFICKED CHILDREN

Thanks to the help of more than 70,000 campaigners, there is now better protection and support for trafficked children in UK law. At least 10 children are trafficked every week in the UK, facing violence, exploitation and abuse.

As a result of campaigning to amend the Modern Slavery Bill, the final Act now provides trafficked children with an advocate with legal powers to protect and support them. These advocates can now guide them through stressful and complex legal processes that no child should have to face on their own.

Additionally, children now have better legal protections against being prosecuted for crimes their traffickers forced them to commit. These changes are already making a significant difference to the lives of trafficked children in the UK.

Unicef UK campaigners helped to make this happen by speaking and writing to their MPs, and raising awareness of the issue and proposed solutions



THE SAFE SCHOOLS DECLARATION

In 2018, the UK Government announced that the UK will sign the Safe Schools Declaration – a political commitment that protects schools, students and teachers from attack in areas affected by conflict. We have been calling for the UK Government to sign up to the declaration since the run up to the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 and we are delighted to see that this change has been achieved for children.

Unicef campaigned tirelessly to influence decision makers and their own networks, and thanks to their efforts, we gained the support of over 170,000 members of the public, ambassadors, business leaders, and hundreds of schools across the UK.

By meeting their MPs and discussing this vital issue, campaigners like you helped to make this a priority for the UK Government. With this declaration in place, not only does this send a clear message out to all governments about the importance of education in emergencies, but also more children affected by war will be able to learn and play in safety.

WHAT ARE WE CAMPAIGNING ON NOW?

We want to make the world a better place for children. And we won't stop until every child is safe. These are our current campaigning priorities.



PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM TOXIC AIR

Air pollution is a dangerous threat to children's health. In 71 per cent of towns and cities in the UK children are breathing in harmful levels of toxic air. It could leave them with lasting problems like asthma and badly affect their futures.

Air pollution is predicted to remain at harmful levels for another 12 years. The UK Government's current strategy is not ambitious enough, nor does it prioritise action for children. This poses a direct threat to a child's right to health (Article 24 in the UNCRC), and to not only survive (Article 6) but to thrive in a clean and safe environment (Article 24).

At Unicef UK we are uniquely positioned to use our expertise and profile on children's rights to urge the UK's Governments to put in place ambitious policies that protect children.

And it's not just in the UK. Around the world more than 17 million babies under the age of one are breathing toxic air. Globally, air pollution is linked to deadly diseases like pneumonia, which kills almost 1 million children under the age of five around the world every year.

Every child has the right to grow up in a clean environment, including breathing clean air wherever they live, learn and play.

Sign our petition: unicef.uk/toxicair_cc



REUNITING FAMILIES

Around the world, whole communities are on the move and children are the worst affected. Right now, children are being forced to make dangerous journeys to Europe to reach their family in the UK.

We have been calling on the UK Government to change the definition of family within the UK's refugee family reunion law to allow unaccompanied children to safely join their parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts and uncles in the UK, rather than making these dangerous journeys to reach Europe.

There has been progress, and the Government has committed to negotiate with the European Union to maintain current arrangements after Brexit. However, while we welcome a negotiating position, we still do not have safe and legal routes for refugee children to join their family in the UK. The UK can easily fix this by amending the Immigration Rules – a simple change to UK law – rather than needing to wait for the EU.

We're continuing to work with decision makers to make this change.

WAYS TO CAMPAIGN

As a Children's Champion there are lots of different ways to campaign with Unicef UK, including signing our petitions, directly emailing key decision-makers and sharing our campaigns with your friends and family. However, the crucial part of your role is to meet with, or make contact with, your local MP, making it more likely they will support Unicef UK campaigns and take action for children.

Meeting your MP face-to-face is the best way to build this important relationship, and taking the time to meet them shows your MP just how passionately you care about children's rights. If you can't arrange a face-to-face meeting, writing personalised emails or letters is also a good approach. It is important to make sure these letters or emails are as personal as possible, as

again this shows the MP the issue is important enough to you to take the time to write.

There are also other ways to get your MP's attention, such as through your local newspaper or social media. The local newspaper can act as a source of information for your MP's office, helping them to gauge local interests and concerns. Many MPs are also on Twitter or Facebook and this is quickly becoming an arena for them to make contact with their constituents.

Another key campaigning tactic for our Children's Champions is to raise awareness in their local community. You could try holding a coffee morning or attend existing events talk about our campaign and encourage others to support Unicef's work.

Vashitha, a Children's Champion, speaks at a Unicef UK face-to-face training session.



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SPREADING THE WORD

Raising the profile of our campaigns among your networks can really help get more people behind the cause. This could be chatting to friends or family in person or engaging on social media.

Social media is becoming a more and more effective way to share your views, spread campaign messages and influence decision makers. Here are some of the ways you can use the power of social media to champion children's rights.

GET STARTED

If you don't have a social media account, it's easy to set one up. Choose the platform that's right for you. Whether it's sharing images that mean a lot to you on Instagram, joining online groups on Facebook or getting in contact directly with decision makers over Twitter - there is a platform for you.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Decision makers are increasingly using social media to find out what their constituents are talking about. Follow your MP, comment on their posts and ask them their position on what matters to you. Depending on the decision maker, you may not get a response, a retweet or a follow, but it's likely your message will be read. It's also a great way to thank them when you meet or engage with them in person.

GET SHARING

Share Unicef content with your family and friends and keep people updated on what you are doing as Children's Champion. It's a great way to encourage your friends and family to get involved too and reach a larger audience. Think about who might be interested and how you can best express the issue to get them to act. It's also a brilliant way to promote what you're doing and ensure those who can't attend still see any events or activities you're organising.

FOLLOW AND ENGAGE WITH US

The best way to get updates on our work and content to share is by following our social channels. We also love to hear from you so tell us what you think of our work online.

 Facebook
[@unicef.uk](https://www.facebook.com/unicef.uk)

Join the Children's Champions Facebook group: [facebook.com/groups/uukcc](https://www.facebook.com/groups/uukcc)

 Twitter
[@unicefUK_action](https://twitter.com/unicefUK_action)

 YouTube
[youtube.com/user/unicefuk](https://www.youtube.com/user/unicefuk)

 Instagram
[@unicef_uk](https://www.instagram.com/unicef_uk)

TOP TIPS

- Think about your audience – what will be of interest to them?
- 'Like' or share stories you care about.
- Use hashtags and tags on your posts, to ensure you are contributing to wider debates.
- Don't always ask – make sure you thank people who share your messages or who agree with your point of view.
- Be polite! People may see the world differently from you, but people are rarely persuaded by angry comments. Make your points succinct and politely, treating everyone online with respect. If people are being abusive it's best to disengage from the conversation, if people are taking this approach they are very unlikely to be persuaded by any meaningful debate
- A picture says a 1000 words – images and videos are a lot more likely to engage people and influence their views.

HOLDING EVENTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Hosting or organising events can have any number of aims: from raising awareness, to fundraising, to meeting other like-minded people. Events can help you to reach your wider community to spread the word about children's rights.

Events do not need to always be large and glitzy, sometimes having a stall at an existing local event or doing something at work, can have even more impact. The key component to a successful event is to make them fun so that people want to attend!



TOP TIPS

- **Don't set up a new event unless you have to**
See what's going on already in your local area. Is there an existing group, festival, fair or event that you could piggyback on? It's usually easier to go to where people already are than set up a whole new event.
- **Don't try and do too much**
The most successful events are ones with a really clear purpose. Don't try to pack too much in. Set clear objectives and think about how you will measure them. Quantity of attendees is not always best, 5 people having really good in depth conversations can be better than 100 people hearing a talk.
- **Set a date well in advance**
Two months is a good minimum lead-in time. Check to see if there are other big events happening on that day and ensure the time suits the audience you are trying to attract.
- **Finding a venue**
Start in your local community – ask around and check out village halls, clubs and groups and local businesses to see if they have space for hire. Are the location, size and facilities what you need? Try and be cheeky and see what you can get for free or negotiate a discount!
- **Advertise**
Use the power of social media, word of mouth, as well as posters and flyers. Eventbrite has great 'how to' guides on how to get you started with setting up your own event to everything from advertising to maximising ticket sales.
- **Invite your MP**
It's a great way to raise awareness of the campaign and build a relationship with your MP by asking them to attend and speak on the issue. They often also like the opportunity to meet with their local constituents and have the opportunity for a photo.
- **Invite local media**
Local media (and MPs) love local stories which have a photo opportunity. Your local paper or radio station may also allow you to get free advertising and spread the impact of your event even further.
- **Resources**
At Unicef UK, we can support you with any resources you may need including T-shirts, posters, banners and information. We can also link you with other Children's Champions to see if you can work together or get advice. Just email activism@unicef.org.uk.

EVENT IDEAS

The best events are ones which people want to attend. Use any of the below ideas or get creative to raise awareness of Unicef, our campaigns or raise funds for our work.

You might want to:

- Screen a film about the issue and hold an audience Q&A or discussion afterwards.
- Hold a coffee morning, quiz night, picnic or sports day and use the opportunity to talk to people about the campaign.
- Organise a community nature walk or cycle and use the opportunity to discuss the rights of children.
- Invite local experts or people affected by the issue themselves to take part in a panel discussion about the issue.
- Have a craft day and make home-made campaign posters, then ask participants to put their poster in their front window.

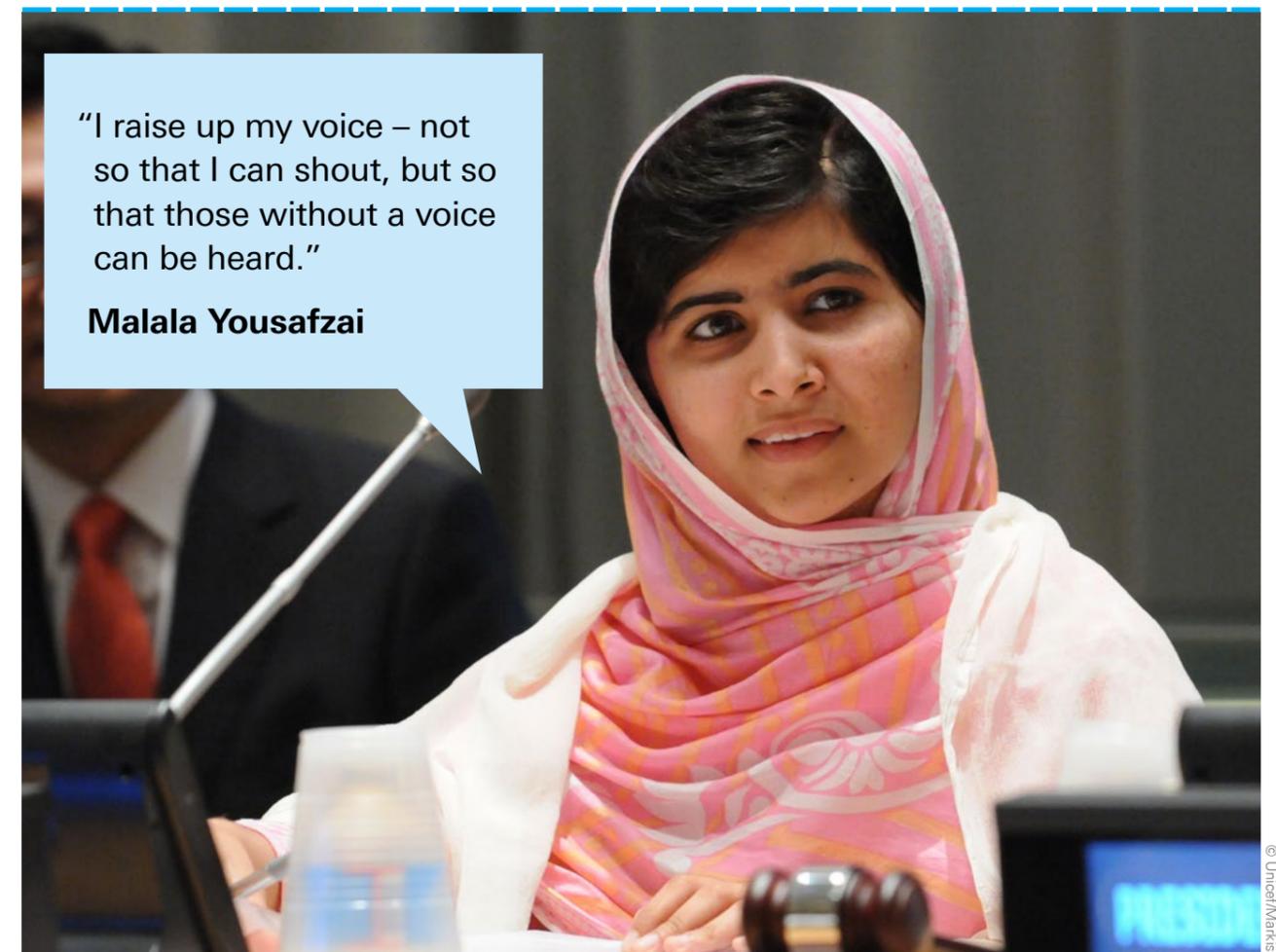
- Host a film or dinner night for a few of your friends.
- Ask your local football, netball or cricket team to allow you to speak to them about our campaign, hold a charity match or host a sports day.
- Put on a Facebook live or online workshop to bring people together online.

STAY IN TOUCH

We're very keen to hear what you decide to do and we'll be available by phone to help with anything you need.

We can also offer some funds to help cover any costs of your event, like printing posters, hiring a venue or catering. Just let us know what you need. Adam Bailey, our Senior Campaigns Adviser is on hand to support you.

Email: activism@unicef.org.uk



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MEETING YOUR MP

WHY IS MY MP IMPORTANT?

Your MP has an important role to play in changing the lives of children in the UK and around the world. Their role in Parliament means they are able to raise issues affecting their constituents directly with government ministers, attend debates and vote on new laws. Many MPs are also members of committees that look at issues in detail.

Some MPs are also appointed as Secretaries of State, or Ministers, who are responsible for the work of each Government Department. However, the main role of an MP is to represent their constituents. Often MPs care more about what constituents think than what organisations like Unicef tell them directly. This makes your role as a Children's Champion vital to our work.

TOP TIPS FOR MEETING YOUR MP

Be persistent

It can be difficult to secure a face-to-face meeting with an MP. Be persistent and try a number of ways to contact them: email, phone calls and letters. We know some campaigners who have received a quicker response by tweeting their MP or sending a message via a Facebook page.

MPs are very busy people and may take a while to respond to your email or letter. If you have waited four weeks or more it's worth sending a polite follow-up email. MPs are typically in their constituency on Fridays, so you are more likely to be able to meet them face-to-face then.

Know your stuff

You don't need to be an expert on the campaign issue, but the following points will help you to have a successful meeting with your MP:

- have a good understanding of the problem;
- understand how it affects children;
- understand what the solution or opportunity for change is; and
- know how your MP can help and what tangible actions they can take to bring about change.

Remember, your unique position is as a constituent, so if you convey concern and passion and call on their support, you've done a good job. If you are asked questions you can't

FIND YOUR LOCAL MP

The UK is split into 650 areas, or constituencies. Each constituency is represented by a Member of Parliament (MP). You can find and contact your MP in three easy steps:

1. To find out who your MP is simply type your postcode into the search box at www.theyworkforyou.com
2. You can find all their contact details here including their phone number, email address, and office address to use when you write to them.
3. When contacting your MP, it's always best to address them as Mr or Ms.

answer, simply say "great question, I will get back to you on that". This is also a really good way to maintain your relationship with your MP.

You can email us at activism@unicef.org.uk and we will help you compose an answer to send to your MP by email.

Get to know your MP

Before meeting with your MP, it's a good idea to do some research so you know a little about them. Your MP could have an important role in the UK Government, be a member of a parliamentary committee, or have a personal interest in the campaign issue. These websites will help you with your research:

www.findyourmp.parliament.uk
www.theyworkforyou.com

Work with other people

Meeting your local MP can feel nerve-wracking, but it doesn't have to be if you've given yourself enough time to prepare. That said, you may want to work with other people to give you more confidence. What about taking a friend who lives in the same area and is passionate about the issue too? To link up with other campaigners and let people know when your meetings are, use our private Children's Champions Facebook group:

www.facebook.com/groups/uukcc



"Meeting with my MP for the first time taught me a great deal and gave me confidence for future campaigning... What was important was to be prepared to answer counter-arguments, and be aware of their interests and try to link to issues they are also interested in."

Andia, Children's Champion

CAMPAIGNING IN THE NATIONS

If you live in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales, some of the issues that we campaign on are devolved, meaning they're debated and decided on in Edinburgh, Belfast or Cardiff. Sometimes we may ask you to get in touch with your Member of Scottish Parliament, Member of Legislative Assembly (in Northern Ireland) or Assembly Member (in Wales).

You can find out who they are here:

Scotland:
parliament.scot/msps.aspx

Northern Ireland:
niassembly.gov.uk/your-mlas/

Wales:
assembly.wales/en/memhome.htm

- Your checklist:**
Arranging and preparing for a meeting
- Write to your MP and follow up with a phone call to the constituency office.
- Look up your MP on theyworkforyou.com and on their own website. Do they have an interest in child rights or a connected issue?
- Email activism@unicef.org.uk to let Unicef UK know when you have a meeting booked and who it is with. Often we will be able to provide further information on your MP or valuable updates on the campaign.
- Plan ahead by reading our relevant briefings and research. No one expects you to be an expert, but the more you know about the campaign, the easier it will be to express why your MP should give their support.
- Be creative. Can you share a personal story, something going on locally on the issue, a photo or piece of art that demonstrates why you care about this issue? MPs hear from lots of their constituents on various issues, so get creative to ensure your concerns stand out.
- Once you have attended the meeting, email activism@unicef.org.uk to tell us how it went. Let us know what actions were agreed and if you need any further support. This information on MPs really helps us to ensure our work influencing Westminster at the office compliments the work you do locally.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

"[I joined the network] because I believe children all over the world are being overlooked and are not getting what they deserve – our protection and help.

I like being part of the network because I believe the more of us who stand together, the bigger the impact we have on changing the lives of the children the world has forgotten about."

Anne, Children's Champion

Q What is the Children's Champion network?

The Children's Champion network is a group of our most dedicated and active campaigners, who help drive action and change for children. Our Children's Champions are also active in their local community, writing to their local newspaper and using social media, to help ensure their MPs see the campaign message in different places. They also raise awareness of issues affecting children, sharing ways to take action with family and friends, and in doing so help us build public support for change.

Q What support do I receive as a Children's Champion?

Topics include how to run a good lobbying meeting with your MP, how to engage with local media, and how to utilise social media in campaigning. For example, you'll learn how to run a good lobbying meeting with your MP, you'll get tips on how to engage with local media, and you'll be given guidance on how to utilise social media in campaigning.

We also offer regular additional events, training conference calls and Facebook live events to ensure you have all the most up-to-date information.

With each campaign we will make supporting resources available with all the information you need to get involved. You can also use these resources to get up to speed if you're unable to attend our face-to-face training or conference calls.

We will also provide MP briefing documents for each campaign. You can hand over your MP briefing at the end of your lobbying meeting with your MP. It is a succinct document that ensures your MP has everything they need to take action and support the campaign.

Lastly, we are always at the end of the phone or email should you have any further questions, or need any support. All contact details can be found on the back page.



Q What commitment am I making?

As a Children's Champion you can get involved as much or as little as you like – we appreciate our campaigners have busy lives. We will only ever call on our Children's Champions to take action when we know it will have a meaningful impact. When we ask you to campaign with us, we know the difference it can make and that pressure felt at the constituency level is really needed to bring about change for children.

Where possible, we advise attending our face-to-face training or dialling in for our training conference calls. We also have an active community on Facebook where you can share your ideas and plans with other campaigners. This is also a chance for you to meet other Children's Champions, which we know our campaigners really benefit from.

Q Why is local campaigning important?

Campaigning in your constituency for Unicef UK is hugely beneficial in helping us achieve change for children in the UK and around the world. Your MP can play a role in protecting children's rights, and you are in a unique position as their constituent to convey your concern for issues that affect children and call on them to take action to keep children safe. You are vital in helping us bring about change for children, as MPs care about what their constituents think and are concerned about, sometimes more than they care about what organisations like Unicef have to say. Therefore, your meetings are crucial and we couldn't achieve change for children without you.

As a local campaigner you're applying pressure at the constituency level, while Unicef UK staff are doing the same thing at national level in Westminster – by combining forces we create powerful campaigns for change.



WE CAMPAIGN FOR CHILDREN LIKE SUSANA

Susana*, 13, lives in El Salvador, where violence is rife and children are being pushed into crime by powerful gangs. Susana supports her friends to make different choices.

"I am part of the prevention of violence committee at school. The group teaches the children to be good parents. I am going to love my children... I don't feel braver than others but I think being in gangs is unhealthy."

* Name changed to protect the identity of the child



GET IN TOUCH



Email

activism@unicef.org.uk



Join the Children's Champions
Facebook group

facebook.com/groups/uukcc



Follow us on

Twitter [@UnicefUK_action](https://twitter.com/UnicefUK_action)

unicef.org.uk

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