

EVERY CHILD

Hong Kong Committee for UNICEF Newsletter 2018

ISSUE 43

Happy Childhood Starts with Play



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Off to a Good Start with Love



As parents, there is no doubt that the moment our children are born is most memorable and heart-warming experience in our lives. From the moment they come to the world, we have a responsibility to look after them so that they can thrive and reach their full potential. UNICEF believes that early childhood development or ECD (0-8 years old) is critical to the growth and development of children. If children grow up in a

safe, loving, stimulating and nurturing environment, they can grow up healthy and have a full and productive life. That's why leaders from different countries work together and concentrate on early childhood development to strive for a better living environment for our future generations and meet the 2030 global Goals.

Earlier this year, the Hong Kong Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF HK) organized 'For every child, #EatPlayLove', a community event that provided a great opportunity for local families to learn and gain hands-on experience in ECD. Through eat, play and love – the essence of ECD – parents and caregivers were able to grasp the relevant philosophy and practice. This, in turn, would provide a solid developmental foundation for our children. Thanks to our community's support, the month-long event was a resounding success as the number of visitors exceeded 40,000!

'For every child, #EatPlayLove' is a hallmark plan of UNICEF HK in the coming years as we bring to life our initiative of building Hong Kong a child-friendly city. To this effect, we look to further collaborate with the government's Children's Commission, the private sector and local community groups.

We care about the well-being of our children in Hong Kong because they are the promise of the future of our society. Equally, we are deeply concerned about the situation of children around the world, especially those affected by poverty, as well as war and armed conflict. Our thoughts are with these children who need care from their parents, governments and communities.

Our donors are very supportive of UNICEF's work, and thanks to their generosity, the funds raised have gone a long way in ensuring the most vulnerable and marginalized children receive critical support in education, healthcare and humanitarian aid. We look forward to your continued support, so that we can bring every child in the world a happy childhood.

Judy Chen, JP
Chairman
Hong Kong Committee for UNICEF

Hong Kong Committee for UNICEF

The Hong Kong Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF HK) was founded in 1986 and was established as an independent local non-government organization to raise funds through public donations, partnerships with companies, special events, etc. to support UNICEF's work. UNICEF HK also promotes and advocates for children's rights via organizing education and youth programmes in Hong Kong.

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7 years of devastation in Syria

"The children of Syria have witnessed and experienced unimaginable suffering over the past seven years. This can be stopped. It needs to stop now. Children are dying before our eyes."

Henrietta H. Fore, UNICEF Executive Director

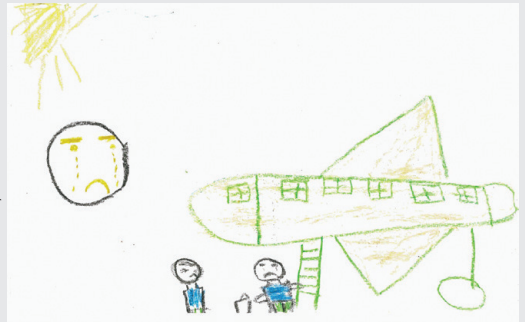


12-year-old Jihad and his sister. Taken in Eastern Ghouta in 2017.

This year, Syria's conflict enters its eighth year, and there is simply no way to describe the enormous harm suffered by children. During the first two weeks in 2018, over 30 children had been killed. At the moment, one-third of the local schools have been damaged or destroyed; it is estimated that 1.75 million children are deprived of education. Since 2013, approximately 200,000 children have been under siege in Eastern Ghouta. The violence committed against children has rendered us speechless. Can this be stopped right now?



"Syria is sad that her people are killing each other," says Haneen, 11. "One day the men with guns walked in and forced us out of school. On that day, Haneen's parents decided it was time to escape from the governance of the Islamic State."



"I drew myself seeing my father off at the airport, it's my saddest memory," says Aya, 11. Aya's father left Syria for Egypt to work and provide for the family almost five years ago and she hasn't seen him since."

UNICEF is working closely with partners to provide health, nutrition, education and child protection services to children in need in all countries. At the same time, it asks all parties in conflicts to observe their obligations under international law and stop harming children immediately. In 2017, UNICEF partnered with the Clooney Foundation for Justice and provided critical education opportunities to Syrian refugee children in seven public schools. It was estimated that this would help nearly 3,000 out-of-school refugee students returning to school this school year, and will also support a pilot of technology tools in these schools to advance learning outcomes for refugee children and Lebanese youth. In the same year, we teamed up with the World Health Organization and other partners to provide polio vaccination to more than 355,000 children under the age of five in hard-to-reach areas of Syria. The campaign ensured that even children living in conflict areas could receive comprehensive medical protection.

Quality ECD yields benefits

Children love to play, and play is seen as second nature for children. Yet, how many Hong Kong kids can fully enjoy play in their childhood? UNICEF HK advocates that every child should have at least one hour of free play every day for their healthy development, and that play is one of three key elements of early childhood development (0 to 8 years old).

UNICEF believes that eat, play and love provide the developmental foundation for children. According to the UNICEF report, *Early Moments Matter for every Child*, nutrition (eat), stimulation (play), parental and nurturing care (love) are the most critical in the first 1,000 days of life. Parents and caregivers who seize this golden opportunity can help children to thrive and reach their full potential. As such, we recently held a month-long event – ‘for every child, #EatPlayLove’ – to help local parents to gain a better understanding about early childhood development (ECD) and support UNICEF’s global efforts in ECD.



Moving towards child-friendly city

In February 2018, UNICEF HK conducted an online survey about local parents' knowledge on children's free play and successfully interviewed more than 1,000 parents. While it found out a vast majority understood the importance of free play to the healthy development

of children, many of them had misconceptions about free play (please refer to the Four Key Discoveries below for details). 'for every child, #EatPlayLove' provided a platform for local parents to learn and experience the importance of ECD through thematic workshops and activity zones. The event attracted over 40,000 visitors to learn about tips for nurturing children.



Play is a fundamental right for children; it is also a building block for their all-round development. 'for every child, #EatPlayLove' is not only a community event but also our hallmark plan to promote ECD in Hong Kong in the coming years. To this end, we look forward to closer collaboration with the government, the private sector and local community groups in implementing ECD-friendly measures in the community.

Similarly, we look forward to seeing the enhancement of play time, play opportunity and play space at family and community levels in the near future. With the soon-to-be completed inclusive playground in Tuen Mun and the establishment of a Commission on Children, we hope Hong Kong will progressively become a child-friendly city.



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The Four Key Discoveries

- 1** Nearly 84 per cent had misconceptions about free play. Over half of the surveyed parents indicated that their children's free play time included activities with electronic devices. This is a serious misunderstanding of the concept of free play.
- 2** Families and communities are common play spaces for children (80 per cent of the responses). As such, enhancement to children's play experience at home and in the community would be highly conducive to children's healthy development.
- 3** In one-child families, 57 per cent of the children did not have playmates. Quality child-parent interactions and recreational time are key to children's healthy development in their early years, and this includes their brain development.
- 4** 98 per cent of parents surveyed believed that free play is crucial to children's early development. We recommend the government to meet the needs of early childhood development by taking a multipronged approach to improve children's play time, play opportunity and play space at family and community levels.



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▶ Mr Andy Lau cares about child development. At the event's kick-off ceremony, he witnesses child representatives conveying the idea of making Hong Kong a child-friendly city. He says, "Every child has different abilities and needs. We need to make sure that they can reach their full potential and grow up healthy."

Chief Secretary for Administration Mr Matthew Cheung notes that play will lead us to children's inner world. He says the government welcomes and appreciates UNICEF HK for providing suggestions on the upcoming Commission on Children, and the government is committed to working for every child and youth in enabling their healthy development to the fullest potential. ▶



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Four key elements in real games

Adult-led school and recreational activities are structured and oftentimes competitive. They limit children's creativity and cannot replace the benefits of free play. On the other hand, children passively receive a large amount of images and messages through video games; they seldom take the initiative to participate. As such, video games are not considered as free play. So, what exactly is free play?

Child-initiated:

Children have the right to decide what to play and how to play, rather than following the instructions given by adults all the time. Active exploration is a key element in play for children to explore, invent and create.

Anytime & anywhere:

Adults should show their support whenever children express a desire to play. Giving a flat refusal can have a negative impact on children. In fact, play should be facilitated under any circumstance.

Growing up happy and healthy:

Every child needs to play; happiness coming from play is crucial to children's development as it helps them to relax and relieve stress.

Playable Space:

This includes playgrounds, recreational facilities and space designated for children; parental attitude towards play; opportunities for children to play; and children's freedom of choosing what and how to play, etc.



Download our tips for child-parent interaction!



To Learn more:





Sierra Leone's

'playground'

After walking through a heavily-rutted mud road and dodging fallen bamboo branches from the surrounding forest, we have arrived in Sierra Leone. Two years ago, with the support of the Sierra Leone government and partners, UNICEF started an early childhood development pilot project. Under the project, parents in five

vulnerable communities were taught to view children's development in these early years in a holistic way, recognizing the importance of nutrition, nurturing care and play in building strong and healthy children capable of reaching their full potential.



▲ 1-year-old Mohammad Taha Ibrahim plays with his father, Abdul Anath Ibrahim, in their room at an emergency shelter in Vienna. Mohammad lives in a supportive and caring environment, which will help him to deal with pressure.

Led by a UNICEF education officer, families from neighbouring communities gathered in a meeting hall to watch a drama, where they could learn how to cultivate a good parent-child relationship in an easy and relaxed way. This was followed by visiting a toy making workshop, where they learned how to make simple and interesting toys from easily found materials. For example, thick stems from a nearby swamp were assembled into dolls' houses and empty sardine became cars.

Play should always be free and beyond anyone's imagination; children's creativity can make play ever-changing. The key is the value of a toy is unimportant. Children should be free to explore during play as this will promote their physical and mental development with lifelong benefits.

In fact, in areas frequented by conflicts, play can soothe the hearts and minds of children effectively. This not only provides a feeling of safety and stability but also helps their early development. In 2009, UNICEF launched the Early Childhood Development Kit to support 0 to 6 years old children affected by conflicts or natural disasters. Together with resources like the Recreation Kit and Education Kit, these children can still enjoy learning and playing in a safe environment, and won't miss early development opportunities during emergency situations and the post-disaster transition period.



▲ The kit contains 37 carefully selected items for early childhood learning, including pencils, puzzles and various toys. Caregivers can use these resources to promote early childhood learning and stimulate their brain development by playing, talking and reading with children. The kit has been used in 86 countries and benefited over four million children.

 **To Learn more:**



Local Fundraising and Achievements



First place winners (from L to R) Li Tin-yu (6 years old or below), Kylie Choi (10-12 years old)

Little artists give every child a good start in life

In March, over 600 children aged 12 or below gathered at the Nursery Park in West Kowloon Cultural District for the 11th 'UNICEF HK Little Artists Big Dreams Competition'. The competition raised funds for mothers and children in rural China and demonstrated the spirit of 'kids helping kids', as participants not only expressed their visions of a better world through drawings but also their blessings to vulnerable children. Almost HK\$1 million was raised for UNICEF's Cash Transfers for Deprived Children (CCT) Project in China.

According to UNICEF figures, on average, 11 newborns in China die every hour, with three of those happening

on the same day they were born. The situation is even worse in poor and remote areas, where the neonatal mortality rate is 2.4 times higher than cities. The causes of these deaths, such as complications during pregnancy and delivery, are preventable. Funds raised through the competition will go towards supporting China's maternal and child health services.

The CCT project provides pregnant women in 15 poor counties across Yunnan, Gansu and Sichuan provinces with cash subsidies for life-saving medical care, such as antenatal and postnatal check-up, birth delivery in hospital and immunization for their newborns.



Ms Judy Chen, Chairman of UNICEF HK (third from right), Mr Aaron Kwok, UNICEF Regional Ambassador (East Asia and Pacific) (second from right), Mr Peter Suen, Executive Director of Chow Tai Fook Jewellery Group Limited (first from right), and Mr Kent Wong, Fundraising Committee Member (second from left), Mr Gordon Ng, Audit Committee Member (third from left) and Ms Jane Lau, Chief Executive of UNICEF HK (first from left) cheered for the little artists on the grass field.

For the first time, we collaborated with Mr John Chan, author of the renowned cartoon Din Dong, and launched a new competition category, Comic Strip Drawing Challenge. Pictured here is the artwork of Champion Charisse Kwok. (12 years old or below)



We value your opinion

Please scan the QR code to complete a short online survey and provide your feedback so that we may continue to improve Every Child. This survey should take a few minutes of your time. Thank you!

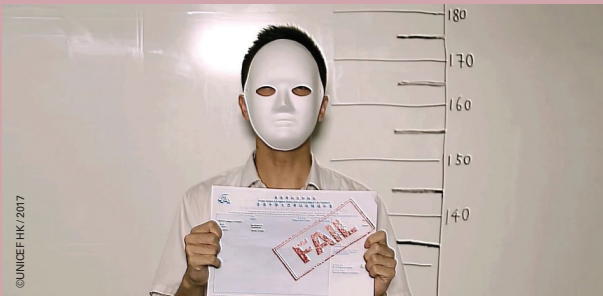
Hong Kong youths express themselves through videos

Protecting and advancing child rights is one of UNICEF HK's core commitments for children. The Make A Video Contest empowers local children to exercise their right to participation, i.e. the right to freely express their views, through one-minute videos. Since its launch in 2012, Make A Video has inspired local youth to express their dreams and anxieties by producing more than 520 videos.

Co-organized with Hong Kong Arts Centre's ifva, the contest continued to enjoy the full support from Hang Seng Bank in 2017. Under the theme of 'I am ME', 15-year-old Tsang Chi-wah, winner of the Best One Minute Video in the Junior Secondary School category, shared his views in *Connect* on the destabilizing effects of labelling. In the Senior Secondary School category, 18-year-old Tsang Kin-wong won The Best One Minute Video Award with *An Exam Result Decides My Fate?*, a video that look into the lives of students suffering from unbearable academic pressure.



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Screenshot of

An Exam Result Decides My Fate?



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Screenshot of

Connect

"We have seen a lot of stories about Hong Kong youth. They are about individuals, but those stories also share common themes. This reflects the problems facing a lot of young people in the same age group."

Director Adam Wong Sau-ping
Creative Adviser, judge and UNICEF HK Ambassador

"The contest encourages students to self-explore and express themselves, therefore has gently become a crucial bridge for society to learn more about the youth, and take the youth's thoughts and inner world in consideration."

Director Heiward Mak Hei-yan
Creative Adviser and judge

Friends Go and *Girls for?*, produced by Jacky Chan and Aurora Xu respectively, emerged from over 500 short videos and named among the 15 finalists in this year's The OneMinutes.Jr. Awards. UNICEF HK Ambassador and director Adam Wong accompanies Aurora to the Netherlands where both of them attend the prize presentation ceremony and masterclass. (You can view the video on our website)

The Make A Video Contest will return in summer. This year, the theme is 'The Value We Embrace', where we encourage young people to explore and discover on their path of growing up by taking notice of and embracing their own values. For more details: mav.unicef.org.hk



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To Learn more:



for every child, take action now



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Designation Ceremony for Hong Kong's Second Baby-friendly Hospital

In January 2018, the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative Hong Kong Association (BFHIHKA) accredited Queen Mary Hospital as the second Baby-friendly Hospital in Hong Kong. To mark this historic occasion, a designation ceremony was held on April 21 in the presence of the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan.

A Baby-friendly Hospital aims to help mothers breastfeed their new-borns and provide coherent services so that mothers can provide the best nourishment for their babies. The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI), launched in 1991, is an effort by UNICEF and the World Health Organization to remove breastfeeding barriers in healthcare facilities by implementing the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding. UNICEF HK has been working closely with BFHIHKA to promote breastfeeding and accredit local maternity hospitals as Baby-friendly Hospitals. In addition, UNICEF HK launched the Say Yes to Breastfeeding campaign to support mothers by creating a breastfeeding-friendly community. To date, over 150 corporations and 100 shopping malls and restaurants have committed to supporting the campaign.

Time to warm up

It's about time for last year's UNICEF Charity Run runners to warm up and get ready for this year's event. Our flagship fundraising event will return on November 25, and once again it will be held at Hong Kong Disneyland Resort and Sunny Bay. Since the launch of the UNICEF Charity Run in 2006, we have engaged over 120,000 runners from different sectors and raised over HK\$120 million to support UNICEF's 'For Every Child, End AIDS' campaign. This year, the

Charity Run continues to provide a wide array of races, including Half Marathon, 10km Run, 5km Run and 3km Run (Youth and Family) for individual runners or families to choose from. We look forward to joining forces with the wider community to support the most vulnerable and marginalized children around the world. Details of the event will be announced soon. Stay tuned and see you in November!



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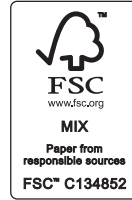
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