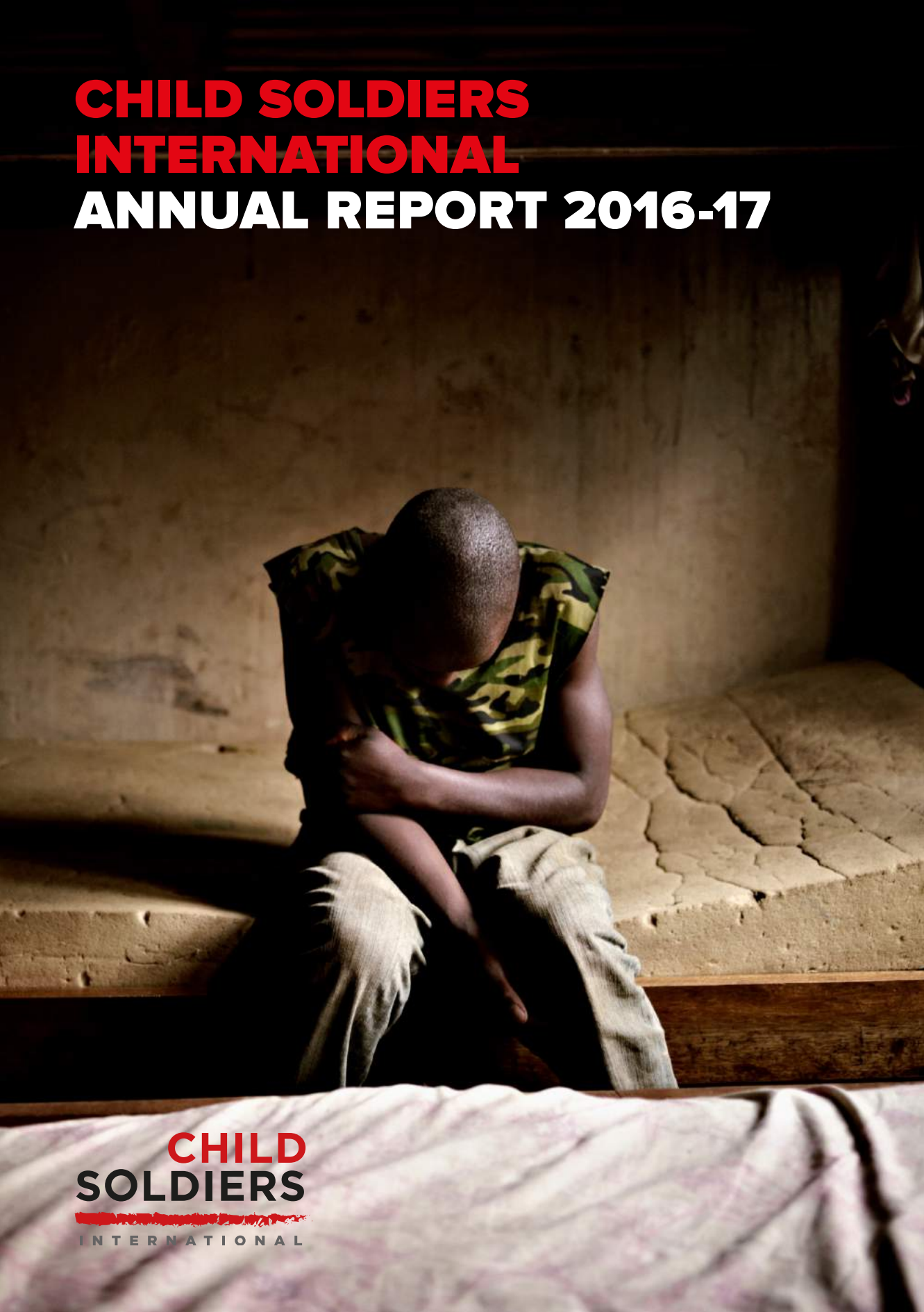


**CHILD SOLDIERS
INTERNATIONAL
ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17**



**CHILD
SOLDIERS**
INTERNATIONAL

**CHILD SOLDIERS
INTERNATIONAL
ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17**

Key events and progress over the financial year

In the UN Secretary-General's latest annual report, armed forces and/or groups in 14 countries, highlighted in the map below, were listed as recruiting children.

The Secretary General's children and armed conflict report for 2016 formally lists seven armed forces and 56 non-state armed groups in countries including Myanmar, Somalia and Syria. Additionally, non-state armed groups

in several other countries are also known to recruit and use children to participate in hostilities, although the changing nature of conflicts often makes these situations difficult to formally verify.



- | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Afghanistan | 5. Iraq | 10. Somalia |
| 2. Central African Republic | 6. Mali | 11. South Sudan |
| 3. Colombia | 7. Myanmar | 12. Sudan |
| 4. Democratic Republic of Congo | 8. Nigeria | 13. Syria |
| | 9. Philippines | 14. Yemen |

OUR VISION

Armed conflict continues to tear apart communities across the world. From Boko Haram's abducted 'brides' and Islamic State's 'Caliphate Cubs', to the countless others exploited by armed groups in Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Afghanistan, many taking part in the world's wars are still children.

We are fighting to end this. We envision a different life for children – one where they can grow up realising their full potential and enjoying all their human rights.

CHILD SOLDIERS INTERNATIONAL EXISTS TO WORK FOR A WORLD WHERE CHILDREN ARE NOT USED IN WAR.

This vision may be simple, but the task is huge. Only by working together – with governments, armed forces, international agencies, local partners, businesses, faith groups, affected communities, and children themselves – will we create a world where no child is recruited for war. Everyone has a role to play.



©Salma Khaili Alto

OUR STRATEGY

Our strategy is informed by one overarching goal: to prevent the military recruitment of any child.

We work with governments, non-governmental organisations, affected communities and children to identify and implement effective practical measures to prevent children being recruited by armed forces, and to ensure children who escape or are released can rebuild their lives.

But we also go beyond crisis response and immediate solutions, to tackle the problems at source. In addition to our practical, community-based programmes, we drive change in national laws and international standards – action which is essential for a permanent end to the military exploitation of children.

HOW WE WORK

Our approach uses our unique combination of specialist knowledge and country-based partnerships. We work with the right experts in the right countries to drive progress towards our goals, both locally and globally.

Community

We work with local child protection actors to bring about tangible improvements to the lives of children and communities affected by conflict around the world. We work together to foster an environment that protects children from recruitment and re-recruitment by passing on our specialist legal knowledge and connecting local partners with government and United Nations (UN) officials. This ensures our initiatives are sustainable and can protect children from recruitment in the long term.

National

We conduct national level advocacy campaigns, directly and with our partners, to bring about the political and legislative changes needed to end child recruitment. Where necessary, we work with governments to provide technical assistance and practical guidance to ensure these changes are implemented effectively.

International

We use our research at the international level to drive action, improve understanding and change the approaches of other international child rights and child protection actors, the UN, and diplomats, for a more effective, permanent solution to ending child recruitment.

ACHIEVEMENTS & PROGRESS

A snapshot of our year

APRIL 2016

Launches in Delhi and Jharkhand, India of our local language handbook on the laws which protect children from military recruitment.



MAY 2016

We meet government officials in Bangui, Central African Republic to advise on steps in law and policy which can better protect children from recruitment.



JULY 2016

Unveiling of our new website www.child-soldiers.org, updated to provide accessible information on current child soldier issues, advocacy and research resources.



SEPTEMBER 2016

We launch our specific teaching resources and campaign for schools and young people.



OCTOBER 2016

We present at the International Criminal Court on reparations for victims of Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, convicted for recruiting and using children in DR Congo.



NOVEMBER 2016

Launch of our DR Congo education projects for former girl soldiers, supported by our research report representing the voices of these girls, *If I Could Go to School*.



JANUARY 2017

Video campaign, giving the perspective of a British Army veteran on the reality of military life for under-18 recruits, launches.



©Wayne Sharrocks

FEBRUARY 2017

We convene a specialist team of 12 child rights and child protection organisations for a conference at UNICEF Paris, to discuss a shared campaign for a worldwide end to the use of child soldiers.





© UNICEF

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Central African Republic (CAR) has spiralled into increasing violence in the last year, with up to two-thirds of the country controlled by armed groups.

Thousands of children have been recruited by these groups – often with the support of their families or communities. Demobilising these children is problematic, since the armed groups who recruited them usually belong to the same communities.

Following our assessment in the capital

Bangui in May 2016, we published our report, *Des Milliers de vies à réparer* (Thousands of lives to repair) reviewing the problem of child recruitment in CAR, and presenting our recommendations on how to prevent this abuse to the government, armed groups, the UN and the international community.

We met the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Social Affairs, to advise on policy measures and practical actions which can be put in place to better protect children from recruitment, including advice on the steps needed to ratify the child soldier treaty. We were delighted to see CAR become the 167th country to ratify the treaty in September 2017.

We continue to support the government in the finalisation of its Child Protection Code, which should effectively criminalise the recruitment of all children under the age of 18. This will be one of the next steps for the government in implementing their obligations under the treaty.

In the year ahead we will be promoting the adoption of this Child Protection Code, and supporting our prevention initiative by delivering a workshop for 30 government officials from across the country on procedural measures and practical steps to prevent child recruitment.

At the same time, we have designed a community-led programme to tackle the problem at its source.

Working closely with our Central African partner, Enfants sans Frontières, we have developed context-specific prevention booklets and illustrated training resources for community leaders, designed to build resistance to the recruitment - and re-recruitment - of children by armed groups operating in these communities.

In the year ahead we will disseminate the booklets through our workshops for a network of 40 child protection actors from across the country. We will work with these organisations to identify at-risk communities, and train them on how to use our booklets and resources. Our Congolese partner, PAMI joins us in this initiative, to present perspectives and practical experience from our community programmes in DR Congo.

At least

10,000

children estimated by UNICEF to have been used in the CAR conflict.



167th

country of 198 to ratify the child soldier treaty



CHILD SOLDIERS INTERNATIONAL

is building a network of **70 child protection actors** across the country, to support community-led initiatives to prevent child soldier recruitment



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

In eastern DR Congo, our work continues to support the needs of former girl soldiers. These girls face particular challenges: almost inevitably subjected to sexual violence during their time with armed groups, they suffer stigma which causes them to be excluded from official release and reintegration programmes. Often, their communities, and even their families, reject them. Many feel they have little alternative than to return to the very armed group that they left.

The impact which this isolation and discrimination has upon the recovery of these girls is striking. In the words of one 16-year old:

‘It is better to die there than come home and be rejected.’

This girl’s voice, and those of the other 149 girls who spoke to us, are represented in our research report, *What the Girls Say*, launched

on 19 June 2017, the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict.

The report presents the challenges faced by former girl soldiers in DR Congo, told in their own words and with their own recommendations on the support they now need to rebuild their lives.

To respond to the problems which the girls identified, we organised a workshop in Goma, which brought together child protection actors, UN agencies and government officials. Together we discussed solutions and interventions, designed to meet the girls’ needs and facilitate their recovery, while respecting their rights.

Our practical guide to promote community acceptance of girls is the outcome of that process. Published in Swahili, Lingala and French, it presents a series of practical interventions for use by local child protection

actors – based on the recommendations of the girls themselves, and devised with the NGOs and community groups who support them.

3,000 copies of the practical guide have now arrived in DR Congo. In 2017 our team returned to the country to meet our newly established National Action Group – formed of government and civil society child protection actors.

With the Group, we are mapping priority communities and providing support for members to target and train their own networks – which include local organisations, community groups and local authorities – on how best to implement the guide. This creates a cascade effect, enabling best practice initiatives to support former girl soldiers to be rolled out across remote conflict-affected communities in eastern DR Congo.

GRACE’S STORY

Grace* lives in Katogota, a small village in South Kivu, DR Congo.

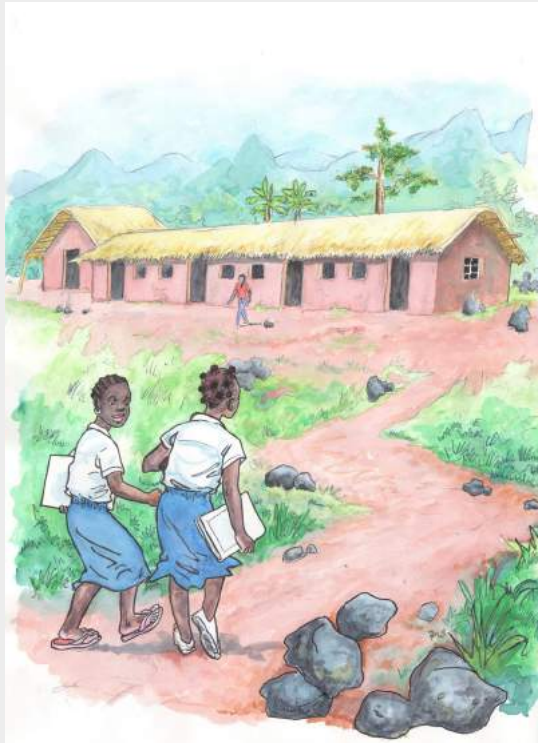
In 2015, Grace’s mother was killed by an armed militia which attacked her village. She was angry and afraid and so decided to join a rival armed group in pursuit of revenge. She was 15. After three months, she managed to escape but because of her experiences she was rejected by her family and friends.

Thanks to public donations we were able pay for Grace’s return to school in Katogota. She is one of 177 girls now benefiting from our education programme in the region.

When we visited Grace again in 2016 she told us that going back to school had completely changed her life.

“Your last visit brought so much to both me and my grandmother with whom I live with now. I can’t even believe that I’m back in school since I had given up hope and didn’t expect to be able to go back.”

*Name changed to protect identity



promote the community acceptance of girls, across conflict-affected communities in DR Congo.

With support from a group of Congolese partner organisations, and working closely with community leaders, the initial phase of our project in 2016 saw 55 girls return to either formal schooling or 'catch-up' literacy and numeracy programmes.

In September 2017, we were pleased to coordinate the addition of another 122 girls to this programme. We have committed to supporting all these girls through the programme for three years.

This scheme will serve as a pilot project for similar initiatives to support the reintegration of child soldiers across the world. We are evaluating the success of the intervention, and sharing the results with child protection actors looking to replicate this project in other countries where reintegration programmes for former girl soldiers need support, such as South Sudan.

Focus on education

During the year we began testing the education initiative in the practical guide to

3,000

copies of our Practical Guide delivered to DR Congo partners

18



locations where our partners are working to implement our education programme



150

former girl soldiers told us about the support they need



177

former girl soldiers and vulnerable girls in their communities, helped back into education



AFGHANISTAN

In Afghanistan, severe poverty and a lack of other opportunities have driven children into fighting on all sides. Children taking part in hostilities risk being killed, injured or sexually abused, and have been used as suicide bombers.

Our research in six provinces of Afghanistan identified ongoing recruitment and use of children by the Afghan National Security Forces, and confirmed ongoing reports of the sexual abuse of children by named commanders.

This has formed the basis of our advocacy during the year to better protect children from recruitment into the Afghan National Security Forces. We supported calls for an amendment to strengthen the US' Child Soldiers Prevention Act (CSPA), which leverages further pressure on the Afghan government to ensure that no children remain in their ranks. Our research provided the basis for a briefing with recommendations to the Afghan government on preventing child soldier recruitment and use, and informed our campaign to raise awareness on the sexual abuse of boys within the ranks.



4

armed groups in Afghanistan and the Afghan Police are listed by the UN Secretary-General in 2017 for recruiting and using children



FUTURE PLANS

As a small organisation, we recognise that our goals can be best achieved through collaboration with others. In February 2017, we presented our new strategy for consultation with a panel of international NGOs working on child soldier issues. We are now working to create a network of child rights and child protection agencies working to prevent the military recruitment of all children, by coordinating a complementary series of initiatives.

February 2018 will see the 18th anniversary of the adoption of the child soldier treaty. As the organisation founded to call for the treaty we will be marking this '18th birthday' with an event at the UN in New York, bringing together child protection actors, governments, UN officials and young advocates.

working worldwide. 2018 will see the next phase of development, which we believe will see this tool become the definitive information source for anyone working on child soldier issues.

We will continue to apply the expertise we're building through our current initiatives – promoting best practice on thematic areas such as education and reintegration, preventing the use of children by extremist groups, and community-led prevention.

Here, we will take stock of past successes and obstacles; highlight best practice; develop collaborative initiatives; and galvanise the international community to take definitive action to stamp out the use of child soldiers.

It is this appetite for innovation, coupled with the strategic agility which comes with our status as a small, non-hierarchical organisation, which we believe qualifies Child Soldiers International for its niche role: driving collaboration to build a world where no child is recruited for war.

At the event, we will also be launching our new Online Global Report - an internet-based information resource, with an interactive map; facts and data on child recruitment, alongside downloadable advocacy resources, to support initiatives by child rights actors

UNITED KINGDOM

At 16, the British armed forces' minimum recruitment age is the lowest in Europe, and one of the lowest in the world. Our research has shown that recruits who enlist as minors face much higher risks of abuse, mental health problems and long-term unemployment than those who enlist as adults. Specifically channelled into the most dangerous roles, child recruits also face a higher overall risk of death in action.

We also raised awareness among young people and their parents of the specific risks associated with enlisting as a minor. We produced and distributed a booklet challenging misconceptions about early enlistment and launched a series of 10 short videos of a young British veteran talking candidly about his experiences as a minor in the armed forces.

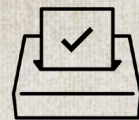
Throughout the year we built and broadened political support for raising the minimum enlistment age to 18. We met with representatives from all the major national parties, including in the Houses of Parliament, the Defence Committee and the Ministry of Defence, to lobby for change.

Our research was widely published in the mainstream media and specialist international affairs and defence publications, including the Royal United Service Institute and Chatham House journals.



23%

of the British Army's recruits were aged under 18 in 2016.



3

political parties in the UK now back our call to raise the recruitment age to 18

JANUARY 2018

We travel to Myanmar to meet with local parliamentarians and child protection actors to move forward with the country's ratification of the child soldier treaty.

FEBRUARY 2018

To mark the 18th anniversary of the child soldier treaty, we will hold an event at the UN in New York. Involving governments, peer organisations and groups, it will ensure that child soldier recruitment remains on the international agenda.

MARCH 2018

The next phase of our CAR work gets underway. We will be training government officials and local partner organisations on measures to help prevent child recruitment in communities.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2017

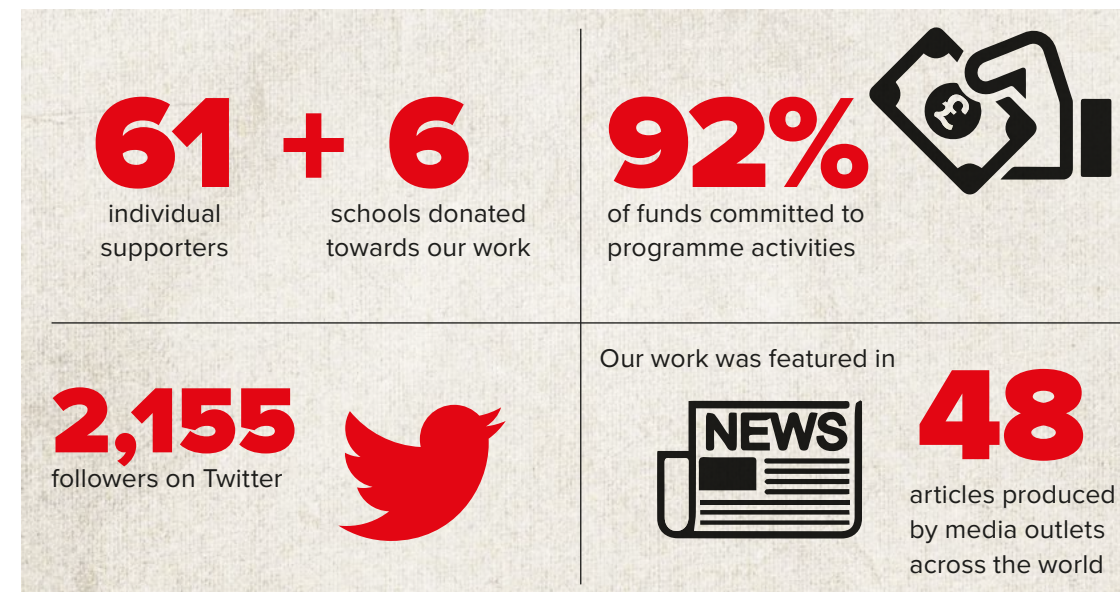
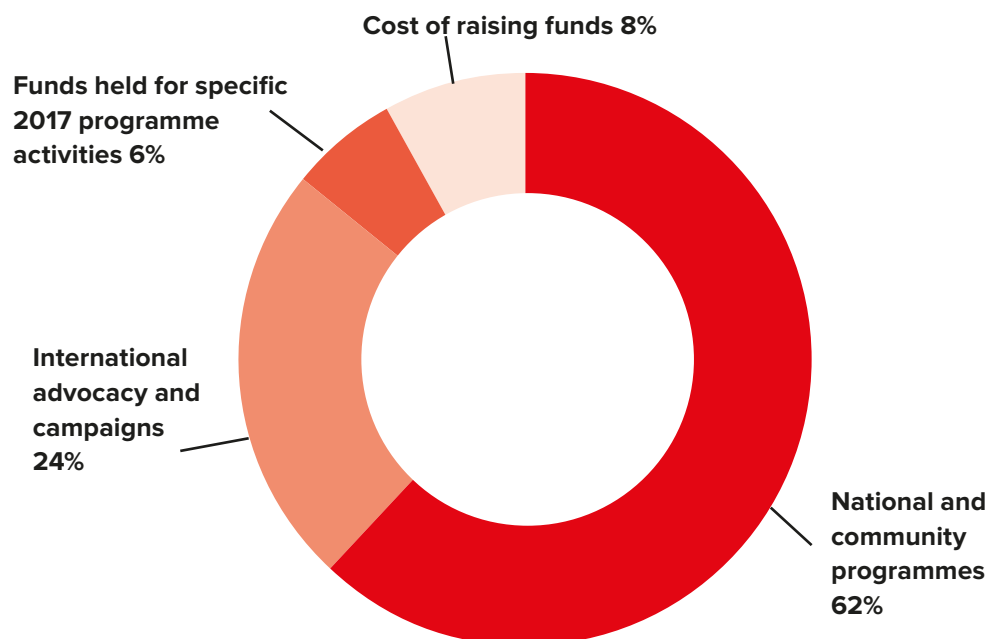
1. Financial review

We maintained a robust financial position over the course of 2016-17, managing the challenge – common to our sector – of handling a portfolio of grants and contracts largely restricted in nature. Total income of £546,000 enabled us to deliver our planned schedule of ‘core’ programme activities, and to maintain our free reserves within the target range of four to six months’ office and salary costs.

Going forward, we are diversifying our fundraising efforts, with the aim of broadening

our hugely valued team of individual and corporate supporters. Through this initiative, we aim to build an ‘urgent response’ fund, which will enable us to mobilise immediate responses to conflict crises.

The below illustration demonstrates our commitment to delivering the highest possible impact for the contributions we receive: in total 92% of our income was committed to our programme activities – either to support activities during the year, or for the financial year ahead.



2. Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2017

	Unrestricted funds GBP £	Restricted funds GBP £	Total funds GBP £
Income			
Donations and grants	192,955	337,254	530,209
Income from charitable activities	-	15,806	15,806
Bank interest	133	-	133
Total income	193,088	353,060	546,148
Expenditure			
Raising funds	8,733	37,465	46,198
Costs of charitable activities:			
- National and community programmes	94,750	241,986	336,736
- International advocacy and campaigns	42,945	89,298	132,243
Total expenditure	146,428	368,750	515,178
Net income/(expenditure) for the year	46,660	(15,690)	30,970
Total funds brought forward at 1 April 2016	191,552	238,558	430,110
Total funds held by Child Soldiers International at 31 March 2017	238,212	222,868	461,080

3. Balance sheet at 31 March 2017

	GBP £	GBP £
Fixed assets		
Tangible assets		133
Current assets		
Debtors	220,011	
Cash at bank and in hand	262,995	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(22,059)	
Total net current assets less current liabilities		460,947
Total net assets at 31 March 2017		461,080
Funds held by Child Soldiers International		
Restricted funds		222,868
Unrestricted funds:		
Funds designated for 2017-18 programme activities	56,167	
Tangible assets	133	
Funds designated for 2017 office move and dilapidations	30,000	
Unrestricted reserves	151,912	
Total unrestricted funds		238,212
Total funds held by Child Soldiers International at 31 March 2017		461,080

These summarised accounts are extracted from the full unqualified audited accounts approved by the trustees on 6 October 2017.

For further information, the full statutory accounts, which have been filed with the Charity Commission and Companies House, should be consulted. These can be obtained from Child Soldiers International, The Grayston Centre, 28 Charles Square, London N1 6HT.

Auditors statement on the Financial Statements

We have examined the summary Financial Statements set out on these pages.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Auditors

These summary accounts presented on these pages are the responsibility of the trustees. It is our responsibility to report our opinion of their consistency with the full financial statements, on which we reported on 16 October 2017. Our report on the full financial statements of Child

Soldiers International includes information on the responsibilities of the trustees and the auditors relating to the preparation and the audit of those financial statements and on the basis of our unqualified opinion of those financial statements.

Basis of opinion

We have carried out the procedures we consider necessary to ascertain whether the summary accounts are consistent with the full financial statements from which they have been prepared.

Opinion

In our opinion, the summary accounts on these pages are consistent with the full financial statements of Child Soldiers International for the year ended 31 March 2017.

H. W Fisher & Company, Chartered Accountants, Registered Auditors, Acre House, 11-15 William Road, London NW1 3ER

Dated 16 October 2017

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

UK registered charity number: 1095237

Company number: 04458380

Registered office: The Grayston Centre, 28 Charles Square, London, N1 6HT

Trustees

Chair of the board of trustees:

Julie Light

Elected trustees:

Janet Anderson

Veronique Aubert

Duncan Barnet

Alison Wallace

Christine Watkins

Staff team:

Director of Operations: Carol Steel

Director of Programmes (maternity cover):

Rachel Taylor

Director of Programmes (maternity leave):

Isabelle Guitard

Senior Advocacy Consultant: Hiba Qaraman

Programme Manager, Child Protection:

Sandra Olsson

Programme Manager, Child Rights:

Tim Molyneux

Programme Manager, Projects, M&E and

Fundraising: Lianne Minasian

Administrative Officer: Melanie Doucakis

Communications Officer: Chris Matthews



OUR SUPPORTERS AND CONTRIBUTORS DURING THE YEAR

Alistair Berkley Charitable Trust

Alice Buffett Magnet Middle School,
Nebraska, US

Berwin Leighton Paisner LLP

Cambridge University RAG

CB and HH Taylor Trust

Design Corps, Pratt Institute

Dr Linda Dowdney, Consultant
Clinical Psychologist

Jodie Eastman and John Eastman

Education Above All Foundation

Eleanor Rathbone Charitable Trust

Evan Cornish Foundation

Fairfield Centre School, Vermont, US

Flapjack Trust

Fulmer Charitable Trust

Garden Court Chambers Special Fund

Hillcote Trust

Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust

Liechtenstein Office for Foreign Affairs

Long Field Academy,
Leicestershire, UK

James Mehigan, Barrister,
Garden Court Chambers

Norwegian Royal Ministry
for Foreign Affairs

Portrack Charitable Trust

Steven Powles, Head of Doughty
Street International

The Ramsey Family Fund

Revolution in Kindness

Shelley Stock Hutter LLP

Rosie Strachan, communications
consultant

Switzerland Federal Department
of Foreign Affairs

Yvett Talas, legal researcher

Thread Design

Transform Foundation

UNICEF

Westcroft Trust

Thank you for helping us end the recruitment and use of child soldiers. Equally, thank you to every individual who has donated to our work over the past year. Together, we have helped make a difference.

Child Soldiers International

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www.child-soldiers.org
twitter.com/childsoldiersin
facebook.com/childsoldiersinternational
instagram.com/childsoldiersin

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CHILD
SOLDIERS

INTERNATIONAL

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