



ON THE **EDGE**

 SIGN UP

RESTORING HOPE, DIGNITY AND JUSTICE

Where 'the edge' takes us today

GOING BACK TO OUR ROOTS

Supporting Ukrainian refugees in Moldova and Romania

DIGITAL EDUCATION HELPS CHILDREN THRIVE

How video lessons and newsletters are providing access to meaningful education and connection

2023

OUR HISTORY ON THE EDGE

In **ROMANIA, BOSNIA, ALBANIA & KOSOVO** we supported children without parental care, provided relief for refugees and helped children rebuild their lives post-conflict.



1990s

In **INDONESIA** we helped children and their wider community to rebuild their lives following the Asian Tsunami.



2005

In **UGANDA** we established Child Friendly Spaces, an agricultural training programme and voluntary Child Protection Teams.



2012

We began supporting education for Dalit children in Bihar State, **INDIA**, and tent schools for Syrian refugee children in Bekaa Valley, **LEBANON**.



2014

We saw the passing of 'The Prevention and Prohibition of Human Sacrifice Bill', to end child sacrifice in **UGANDA**.



2021



2001

In post-conflict **EAST TIMOR** we established a model child-friendly space to help children heal from the trauma of war.



2009

After building experience working with refugees on the **THAI/BURMA BORDER**, we began our work in **BANGLADESH** with the Rohingya refugee community.



2013

Early Childhood Development and support was set up for children displaced by war and living in remote mountain camps in Kachin State, **MYANMAR**.



2018

In Kyaka II refugee camp, **UGANDA** we started work with refugee communities to provide vital early years learning for the youngest Congolese children.



2022

We provided support for **UKRAINIAN REFUGEES** in Moldova and Romania, and expanded our work with Rohingya refugee children to Bhasan Char Island, **BANGLADESH**.



RESTORING HOPE, DIGNITY AND JUSTICE

A WORD FROM OUR CEO AND CO-FOUNDER, **RACHEL BENTLEY OBE**

Children on the Edge places children at the heart of everything we do, working hand-in-hand with local communities to restore hope, dignity and justice. We actively involve everyone, especially young people, in creating transformation.

We are truly grateful to have a wonderful community of supporters behind us. You enable us to act quickly for those most on the edge, helping us to restore hope, dignity and justice to the communities we partner with.

When we began in 1990, the children on the edge we served were those incarcerated in Romanian orphanages. Today, the 'edge' takes us into refugee camps, slums and warzones and, in 2022, right back to our roots in Romania and Moldova, supporting Ukrainian refugees fleeing Russian invasion.

Rachel

CEO and Founder
Children on the Edge

HOPE

We believe in **cultivating hope as a catalyst for change**; a gritty, determined, can-do kind of hope that restores people's motivation and ability to transform their own lives.

DIGNITY

We treat everyone with the **dignity they deserve**, because people who are pushed to the edge of society, overlooked or told they are worthless, often start to believe it.

JUSTICE

Every child has rights, yet these are rarely realised for children living on the edge. We work to ensure that children and communities can advocate for, and **realise their rights**.

THE FIRST SPARK

Anita Roddick and Children on the Edge



'AT A TIME WHEN I WASN'T BEING LISTENED TO, ANITA LISTENED'
RACHEL BENTLEY - CEO AND CO-FOUNDER - CHILDREN ON THE EDGE

READ ABOUT WHERE THE
SPARK HAS TAKEN US TODAY



The 23rd October 2022 would have been the 80th birthday of the late Dame Anita Roddick who, together with our CEO Rachel Bentley, co-founded Children on the Edge over 30 years ago in response to the Romanian Orphanage crisis. We reflect on her legacy...

Anita had a powerful drive for social change. Shocked by the images of neglected orphans that dominated the headlines, Anita travelled to Romania in 1990 to see the situation for herself. Horrified at what she saw, she quickly mobilised The Body Shop to send supplies, and a small group of volunteers, to help three orphanages in the remote village of Halaucesti.

One of those volunteers was Rachel Bentley who says, **"I owe my whole humanitarian career to Anita Roddick's faith in me as a young woman. I'll never forget what we found when we first arrived in Romania. I remember the smell, the thick swarms of flies everywhere. Quiet and emaciated, children were lying in their own excrement for days. They weren't even touched."**



After the team had left, Anita asked her opinion on how the trip had gone. Rachel said that if The Body Shop was really serious, they'd make a 5-year commitment in Romania and do it properly. To her surprise, the next day Anita said "OK let's do it. If you think it takes 5 years, then let's do it."

Rachel describes how, **"Suddenly there I was - a 23 year old, working in a small team with Anita's daughters, helping to lead an international humanitarian project. Within five years, our work had led to the closure of some of those institutions. We were young and stupid enough to think we could change the childcare system in Romania. Anita believed we could. And we did."**

Anita continued to guide and encourage Rachel, who says, **"Anita knew that when you are young you have the energy and the ideas. At a time when I wasn't being listened to, Anita listened. She would use her influence to ensure we were taken seriously by decision makers. I was frustrated when the bigger aid agencies were discussing building expensive shower blocks for Kosovan refugees, and the conversations were going nowhere. I suggested providing mobile showers but I was laughed out of the room. A week later when I told Anita my idea, she put it forward and people listened. Within 3 weeks we had them manufactured."**

Over 30 years later, Rachel still leads Children on the Edge with the same spark that she and Anita started out with. She was awarded an OBE in June 2022 for services to the protection and education of marginalised children worldwide, and The Body Shop remains a faithful pillar of support to this day.

OUR WORK - A SNAPSHOT



BANGLADESH: EDUCATION FOR ROHINGYA REFUGEE AND SLUM DWELLING CHILDREN

Over 9,000 refugee and slum dwelling children receive high quality primary education through colourful learning centres based in Kutupalong - the world's largest refugee camp, in the slum communities of Cox's Bazar and the Doharazi Enclaves, and on Bhasan Char island. Digital lessons are used to break down language barriers and ensure meaningful learning.

UGANDA: EARLY YEARS EDUCATION FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN

In Kyaka II refugee settlement, we work with communities to provide vital early childhood education for over 9,000 refugee children through newly built classrooms and award winning outdoor 'cluster lessons'.



UGANDA: TRANSFORMING SLUM COMMUNITIES

Our Child Protection Team model creates protective environments for thousands of children living in urban slums around Jinja and remote rural villages in Karamoja. Early Childhood Development Centres provide education to 150 children, while Child Rights Clubs empower young people to change their communities.



READ MORE ABOUT
OUR PROGRAMMES



INDIA: EDUCATION & SUPPORT FOR DALIT CHILDREN IN BIHAR STATE

Learning centres in Patna offer education and support for around 1,000 Dalit children who are denied their rights, excluded from society, and struggle to access education as a result of caste discrimination.

MYANMAR: EARLY YEARS EDUCATION FOR DISPLACED CHILDREN

Early Childhood Development centres support 500 internally displaced children in Kachin State, in some of the most isolated mountain settlements. Here the youngest children can play and receive expert care to recover from trauma.



LEBANON: EDUCATION FOR SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN IN BEKAA VALLEY

300 Syrian refugee children receive quality education in safe, colourful classrooms, with vocational training, creative opportunities and lots of space to play.



ROMANIA & MOLDOVA: SUPPORT FOR UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we have been working with local partners to provide accommodation, food, clothing and support to refugee families.



MEET PUJA KUMARI



"I am Puja Kumari and I am 13 years old. I have two younger sisters and am in sixth grade at a government middle school. I also attend my local Children on the Edge learning centre..."

We support over 20 Child Parliaments at our learning centres in India, who learn about their rights and campaign to realise them. They grow in confidence, tackle caste discrimination and have a huge positive impact in their local communities.

... I am the Sanitation Minister for my centre's Child Parliament. Before, I was not bothered much about my studies or my personal hygiene. As girls, my parents did not pay us much attention. I used to have long nails, dirty hair and didn't wear clean clothes. I was neither a regular at school or the learning centre.

Once I became a minister in the Child Parliament, things changed. The training made me realise the importance of going to school regularly. I learnt to be clean and tidy, and I started keeping my home clean too. I started to take care of my sisters, and I bring them with me to the learning centre.

I am thankful for the Child Parliament programmes, which build up our confidence and leadership skills."

**READ MORE ABOUT PUJA
AND THE CHILD PARLIAMENTS**



MEET NAJIBU SIFA



Najibu Sifa is 6 years old and attends our early years cluster group lessons in the Kyaka II refugee settlement, Uganda. She told us how she was finding the new classes..."

"Before the clusters, learning was just for the older children who could walk longer distances. I used to stay home and take care of my brother and sister while mama went to Bukere Market to sell 'Matunda' [fruits]. I was happy to start school because I got new friends and I love my teacher – Master Sipiriano. I enjoy going to the study area because I feel good about myself, especially when I give an answer and my classmates clap for me."

During lockdown in Uganda, when our Early Childhood Development Centres were closed, we had to ensure the Congolese refugee children we support could still learn. Lessons were arranged in small groups, in people's homes and compounds, around local churches and under trees - our award winning 'Cluster Learning' model was born!

We realised this approach could be used beyond lockdown, and it is now reaching thousands of the youngest refugee children in Uganda.



**READ MORE ABOUT SIFA
AND THE CLUSTER GROUPS**



DIGITAL EDUCATION *is helping children* THRIVE



"I AM ABLE TO EXPLAIN TO THE CHILDREN QUICKLY THROUGH THE PROJECTOR WHAT I HAVE BEEN EXPLAINING FOR A LONG TIME THROUGH BOOKS."
ROJIN AKTER - TEACHER IN KUTUPALONG

In Bangladesh, digital lessons are helping to boost confidence and enhance learning in the world's largest refugee camp - Kutupalong, and in the slums of Cox's Bazar and the Doharazi Enclaves.

Teachers use projectors to deliver lessons each day and the children love watching videos and cartoons, telling us it's their favourite thing about school.

Rohingya refugee children in Bangladesh are still banned from learning in their own language, so our digital lessons provide much needed visual education to 7,500 children, enabling them to learn in a meaningful way.

The children both in the refugee camp and in the communities tell us that they enjoy the lessons, describing how they are "always learning brand new things from the videos."

Teachers tell us how much digital lessons are helping children not only learn more easily, but also to remember what they have learnt.



"IT USED TO BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR US WHEN WE STUDIED JUST USING BOOKS BUT I FIND IT VERY EASY WHEN THE TEXTS ARE SHOWN THROUGH THE BIG PICTURES ON THE PROJECTOR."
ABDUL - AGE 7



**MEET
SHAHIDA BIBI**



'Moja Kids' is another element of our digital programme in Bangladesh. The children work together to create fun-packed video newsletters which are shared with children in our classrooms across Bangladesh.

Child participation is one of our core values. We believe that all children should feel free to express themselves and have opportunities to safely chatter, play, dance, paint and create.

Moja Kids gives the children the chance to do this, as well as connect and interact with peers beyond the confines of the refugee camp and the slum communities where they live. Teacher Zobaida Akhter said, "When they see their work on the screen, I am amazed to see their bright eyes and how happy they are."



"I PARTICIPATED IN THE NEWSLETTER. IT'S A GOLDEN MEMORY FOR ME. IN THE MOJA KIDS VIDEOS, THERE IS SOMEONE LIKE ME AND SHE TELLS HER BIOGRAPHY, AND THEN I RELATE IT TO ME. THEN I REMEMBER MY PAST AND FEEL I AM NOT ALONE IN THIS WORLD AND IN THIS SOCIETY. MOJA KIDS VIDEOS INSPIRE ME A LOT."
MINARA - AGE 10

**WATCH THE
MOJA KIDS VIDEOS**





SUPPORTING UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

Going back to our roots in Moldova and Romania

In **Moldova and Romania**, we are working with local partners to support Ukrainian refugees. Thanks to our long history in the region, we were able to quickly set up an emergency fund and offer accommodation and support for refugees in transit soon after the conflict began early in 2022.

As refugees begin to settle on a long term basis, we are ensuring they have the support they need to recover from the trauma of fleeing their homes and adjust to life in their host countries.

In **Moldova** we initially provided transit accommodation to refugees fleeing the war. As the conflict progressed, those centres adapted to provide longer term refugee support where there are gaps in services.

In **Romania**, an emergency fund helped our partners respond to the needs of the most marginalised refugees. This has included the establishment of a drop-in centre in Iasi where refugees can receive all kinds of support, including provisions of food and basic supplies, along with help to access medical appointments and prescription services.

We are also working closely with the Child Protection Department to house 43 children who fled Ukraine after their group home was bombed. We are funding a social worker and psychologist, who are supporting the children, and they enjoy daily activities, including Romanian lessons to help them integrate into the local schools.

READ MORE ABOUT OUR WORK
WITH UKRAINIAN REFUGEES



We were blown away to see our local community **come together in support of our work with Ukrainian refugee families**. Among many amazing fundraisers, here are some highlights:

- **81-year old Major Mick** took to the local waterways and has sailed over 100 miles in his homemade 'Tintanic II' vessel - made of sheets of corrugated iron - raising more than £10,000 for our appeal! A true inspiration and iconic fundraiser.
- The wonderful team at **Tuppenny Barn** in Emsworth hosted a 'Gardeners' Question Time' with a panel of green-fingered legends, including Arit Anderson from BBC Gardeners' World, raising an amazing £2,000.
- Families from **Westbourne House School**, both past alumni and current students, have collectively raised in excess of £20,000 with a multitude of activities including bake sales, a choir concert and a South Downs Trek.



SUPERSTAR SUPPORTERS!



We are stunned by the **amazing achievements of some of our youngest supporters**. Children who embark on huge challenges to help make a difference for the children we support.

TAKING ON HER LONGEST RIDE EVER, **9-YEAR OLD FLORENCE** CONQUERED A **125 MILE CYCLE TO PARIS WITH HER DAD, CHRIS**. FLORENCE SMASHED HER FUNDRAISING GOAL FOR CHILDREN ON THE EDGE AND THE SNOWDROP TRUST AND RAISED OVER DOUBLE HER ORIGINAL TARGET OF £1000, **RAISING AN INCREDIBLE £2,210!**



9 YEAR OLD BEST FRIENDS **FINLEY AND JENSEN** DECIDED TOGETHER ONE DAY AT SCHOOL TO TAKE ON A CHALLENGE TO RAISE MONEY FOR THE FAMILIES OF UKRAINE. THE BOYS **RAN AN IMPRESSIVE 5KM** ALONG WORTHING SEAFRONT WITH A CROWD OF FRIENDS, FAMILY AND SUPPORTERS AND **RAISED A WONDERFUL £1,264!**



EVERY PENNY ADDS UP

Thank you to **The Body Shop**, **Scarlett Jewellery** and **The Little Botanical** who have raised thousands through their sales, supporting our work with refugee children in Romania, Moldova, Lebanon, Bangladesh and Uganda.

Customers have added on small donations with their purchases through **Montezuma's**, **The Body Shop** and **The Body Shop at Home**. Pennies that add up to transform lives.

Thank you also to the incredible teams at **Rowdy Fitness**, **Audley Travel**, **Pirbright Institute**, **Planet K2** and **Coffin Mew** who have generously fundraised and donated to Children on the Edge.



If you or your business are interested in supporting Children on the Edge, we would love to hear from you. Get in touch at fundraising@childrenontheedge.org.

GET INVOLVED



*Our supporters play a vital role in transforming the lives of marginalised children around the world. You can get involved and really **make a difference**.*

HOW TO SUPPORT
CHILDREN ON THE EDGE



DO YOU RECEIVE OUR EMAILS?

SIGN UP

Get all the latest Children on the Edge stories and updates, direct to your inbox.

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