



The UN calendar contains at least two dates related to child protection – June 1, the International Day for Protection of Children, and November 20, the Universal Children's Day. Incidentally, on that very day in 1959, the Declaration on the Rights of the Child was adopted, and, in 1989, the Convention on the Rights of the Child entered into force.

UNICEF Raises Alarm



- Every day 16.000 children die mainly from reasons that could have been prevented or treated.
- Out of 35 million HIV infected people 2 million are 10-19 years old and 56% of them are girls.
- One third of all 20-24 years old women worldwide are child brides.
- Every ten minutes in some part of the world a teenage girl dies of rape.

16 Million Babies Were Born In Zones of Conflict



In 2015, more than 16 million babies were born in zones of conflict. This means that every 8th child came to this world under the whistle of bullets and cannons.

"Every two seconds, a newborn takes its first breath in the midst of conflict, often in terrifying circumstances and without access to medical care," said UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake. "Too many children are now starting their lives in extreme circumstances – from conflict to natural disasters, poverty, disease or malnutrition. Can there be a worse start in life?"

More than 200,000 children applied for asylum in European Union countries in the first nine months of 2015, adding to the 30 million children across the globe forced from their homes by 2014 due to war, violence and persecution.

"If we address the reasons so many families feel the need to uproot themselves and their children from their homes – by resolving conflict, by addressing climate change, by expanding opportunity, we can make 2016 a year of hope for millions – not a year of despair," said Lake.

Woman & politics

This year "Activate Talks" discussions were held under the slogan "Knowledge for Life: School Safety"



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www.WomenNet.am

«The Angel's Prayer» Unites All Children



Photo by UNICEF

Ahead of the New Year Armenia Country Office of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UCOM presented a new song to all children - "The Angel's Prayer." The premiere performance stood out for its singers: students of the vocal studio of Yerevan Municipality performed side by side with children with hearing impairment using sign language.

At the premier of the song in UN Armenian country office, the song writer, composer Narine Zarifyan, highlighting the importance of this initiative, said: "While writing this song I had a feeling that something was missing. If the child speaks to God, why wouldn't a child with hearing impairment be part of it? And that is how the idea of this initiative

was born, which is also one of the best ways of integrating children with disabilities into the society."

She said that during the first 2-3 hours of video shooting children did not communicate with each other, there was some invisible barrier between them, and only towards the end they felt more at ease.

"I was very excited when I saw for

the first time how they sang through sign language. It was so beautiful and touching. I wish such occasions happen more often and eventually become something ordinary and commonplace," said Narine Zarifyan.

Ani, who was one of the children singing "The Angel's Prayer," shared her joy with us: "I always wished that someday children with hearing impairment could stand next to other children and sing together, and feel equal. Today my little dream came through..."

Ani is eighteen, and she has hearing problems. She has found her own

ways of self-expression – pantomime, expressing feelings through gestures, as well as singing.

Ani performed the song in company with Gevorg, 17, who also attends the theatre of pantomime: "At first I thought pantomime was easy, but then I understood that it was actually very complex. When I perform I have a feeling that there are two Gevorgs – one is me, and the other is the character I play."

For Ani and Gevorg, rights are the opportunity to express themselves and the essential conditions for engaging in their favourite work.

"I Am a Child": a Comprehensible Guide to Rights

- Hi, I am Areg. I cannot see, but that does not stop me from learning.
- Hi, I am Davit. I love playing football.
- And I am Mane. I cannot walk, but that does not prevent me from travelling.

Areg, Davit and Mane are the main characters of "I Am a Child" brochure. It was developed on the basis of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and offers a comprehensible interpretation of the articles of the Convention. The brochure was developed by the UN Children's Fund in association with the Office of the Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia and "Eiva" Arts Foundation. It was approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of the RA as a supplementary educational material.

"Twenty five years ago, the world made a promise to children, when it adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child, that we would do everything in our power to ensure respect and protection of their rights. Since then the world, including Armenia, has made considerable progress. However, there is much to be done yet. I hope that this book will help all members of the society to start a dialogue about what are the priorities in the field of child rights, what are the gaps, and what should be our next steps in this area," said Deputy Representative of UNICEF Armenia Radoslav Rzehak.

Anush Margaryan, Advisor to the Defender of Human Rights in Armenia says that there are many problems in the area of child rights, including many cases of abuse and discrimination.

"Every child has the right to live in a family. This is a major challenge for the State – to transition from childcare institutions to a foster fami-

ly system. The international practice shows that it is the best option for the development of the child," says Anush Margaryan. She similarly highlights another important issue – participation of children in the development of strategies related to their rights.

Our little survey among children shows that very few of them know what the rights of the child are and what types of rights they have. We hope that the brochure will soon fill in that gap.

For 13 years old Davit education is the most important right.

"We should have the right to get education, have access to knowledge, enter university and then find a good job. It will be awful if we do not have that right and do not go to school," confesses Davit.

And for Ani Rubinyan, 15, the most important is to ensure that: "We, the children, are raised in normal, peaceful conditions, there are no conflicts at home, no abuse, so that we too can grow up to



have good families."

Lilit Petrosyan, 12, says that very often children themselves violate the rights of each other. "For example, there was a case when a student could not speak well and for that he was being constantly ridiculed. They did not want to accept him and it was so wrong. A person should be accepted as he is," says Lilit.

Fact Sheet

Child Poverty

According to the data released by the National Statistical Service of the RA in 2015, 3.3% of children under 18 live in extreme poverty, and 34% live in poverty, while for the overall population of the country extreme poverty and poverty indicators are respectively 2.3% and 30%. This means that children are more vulnerable to the risk of poverty than the overall population. 41.1% of children live in households the breadwinner of which is unemployed.



Photo by UNICEF

In families with three or more children under 18, 45.8% of children are poor, and in large families 5.3% of children are extremely poor. Among children with disabilities 52.3% are poor.

The ratio of child poverty significantly varies among Marzes. In Shirak Marz, 49.6% of children are poor, and 5.8% are extremely poor. In Aragatsotn Marz child poverty is the lowest – 13.5%.

The risk for poverty is significantly higher among those children who live in households the breadwinner of which is uneducated or has only elementary education (50.2%), compared to the children whose parents have university education (15.3%).

Poor children often live in houses lacking essential conditions, such as kitchen facilities, running water, gas, sewage system, bathroom or shower. Among poor and extremely poor children 9.2% and 30.7% respectively live in households without a refrigerator. 56% of poor children and 75% of extremely poor children live in the conditions of insufficient heating. 43% of poor children and 67% of extremely poor children live in damp homes, compared to 34% of all children. Inadequate housing conditions can have a negative impact on children's health, safety, education and social development.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concern in its concluding observations on the third and fourth joint regular reports of the RA that in result of the insufficiency of the formula on family benefits and the lack of awareness on existing state support only 54.3% of extremely poor families and 4.1% of poor family have regular use of benefit packages.

Mission

«The Biggest Problem is Poverty»

«It is poverty that takes children to institutions. Poverty harms even children who are not institutionalized. It has multidimensional impact on children, depriving them of their right to quality education, sufficient housing and even good nutrition, and leaving its mark on their entire life. And if we do not take respective measures today, we will have to face a situation in which the next generations confront still higher poverty,” said Tania Radochai, Representative of the UN Children's Fund in Armenia, in a discussion with us that took place during the presentation of the brochure “On the Rights of the Child” developed on the basis of the Convention.

According to her, in many cases not only children, but also their parents and teachers have no idea what the rights of the child mean, or what they consist in. In fact, understanding these rights is the prerequisite for making the world a better place for children.

“By presenting the new edition of the handbook for children we hope to voice a number of concerns which have never been subject to public discussion. One of these concerns is child abuse. It exists in all societies. Adults often use “harsh disciplines,” considering it an ordinary method of treating children. At times children themselves display abusive behavior towards their peers. Lately we are also witnessing a conceptually new type of abuse in cyberspace, the internet, and we have little idea of the actual dangers that await our children there, and how we can help them.”

At the same time Tania Radochai noted that Armenia had made certain achievements in the field of child rights, especially in the area of inclusive education.



Photo by the Ministry of Justice of the RA

“It is not ideal, of course, however we see that there is a clear vision and determination to move towards inclusive society. The next achievement is large-scale public awareness on issues of school safety, which is of utmost importance taking into consideration the devastating earthquake that Armenia has been through. Along these years much has been done to teach children how to behave in such circumstances. Changes are apparent also in reorganization of large childcare institutions, provision of alternative family-based services, and on the other hand introduction of case manager – social worker institution,” added Tania Radochai.

She also highlighted the importance of avoiding unnecessary haste in the process of reorganization, and carefully measuring each step. “There are many families with complex problems, and we have to be very

«Even if the child has infringed the law, we should keep in mind that we are dealing with a child.”
Tania Radochai
Representative of UNICEF

careful when talking about the rights and protection of the child. Our joint support shall be based exclusively on accurate assessment of the needs of each family,” she said.

Tania Radochai made further reference to the rights of the child at the recently held first session of the Council of Juvenile Justice. The Council was created by the Ministry of Justice of the RA in the framework of “Improving Access to Justice for Children in Armenia” program launched in May 2015 with the UN Children's Fund as the main supporter.

“Even if the child has infringed the law, we should keep in mind that we are dealing with a child,” she said at the session, noting that often interrogations cause trauma to children instead of protection and ensuring justice for them. “And this is true not only for children who became victims of abuse. Potentially every child can find himself or herself in the role of the victim, the witness, the criminal or other. That is why justice should be accessible to all children.” She concluded that in any circumstances the ultimate goal is to help children get to the right track.

By the Power of the Basic Law

What has Changed in the Constitution in Regard to the Rights of the Child?

Within the changes in the Constitution a new article was added regarding the rights of the child.

Article 37: The Rights of the Child

1. The child has the right to express his or her opinion freely and to have that opinion taken into account in any matter affecting the child, with consideration of his or her age and level of maturity.

2. All actions concerning the child shall take full account of his or her best interests.

3. Every child has the right to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis, except if it is recognized by the court to be contrary to the child's best interests. Details are defined by the law.

4. The State is obliged to provide care and protection for children deprived of the family environment.

At our request the ARF Dashnaktsutyun MP Artsvik Minasyan interpreted the nature of the new article and said that it sets the foundation for a thorough and comprehensive system of child protection.

“All these norms undoubtedly made part of Armenia's international commitments and agreements, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, or the current Law of the RA “On the Rights of the Child.”

Reflection of this issue in the Constitution further increases its value, and most importantly makes the child a major subject of human rights and freedoms,” says Minasyan.

In addition, within the new constitution the state is obliged to continuously increase the level of protection of the rights of the child and submit reports to the National Assembly. The MP notes that this article is of significant importance and it is

a mechanism that will help ensure not only the implementation, but also the progress of the norms defined by the Constitution.

From now on all public bodies are obliged to be guided solely by the rights of the child, which was not reflected in the Constitution of 2005 and in certain cases allowed for regress or stagnation of legal practices. “Now we have to ensure progress for every successive period, otherwise the responsible bodies may face consequences up to dismissal,” said Minasyan.

As to the concerns that expansion of the rights of the child may be hindered by traditional family values, the MP believes that in the formal sense granting the rights cannot change those values. “On the contrary, the constitutional changes aim at creating stronger families, and ensuring utmost protection and encouragement of parent-child, child-parent family relations,” he concludes.

The Voice of Children

“Dad, Aren't We Going to Buy New Clothes?”

Children of the large Melkonyan family residing in Aygavan village of Ararat Marz spent September 1 at home. “We were looking so much forward to September 1, but on the last day we learnt that we would not be going to school. It was very sad. The TV showed people buying clothes, so we asked dad if we would be buying clothes too, but he said there was no money,” Mariam told the reporter of News.am. Of the six school-aged children, Amalya, 6, was saddened most of all – this was to be her first Sempember 1. Sarah, 8, was consoling her sister; she already had a full year's experience in this. “Last year too I did not go to school on September 1. Yesterday and today I did not go as well. I have no clothes and shoes, so I don't go to school, but I really want to go,” she said.

“I Love School, But...”

“When I was supposed to start high school, I decided to quit. My parents could barely make ends meet. We are four kids, and we hardly manage to send my sisters to school. It is tough – buying clothes, shoes, and everything else. There is no money. I decided to help my mother sell goods in the market. I used to be a good student, and knowledge from school helps me in making calculations. I wish I could continue school, but we cannot afford it... My father and mother tried to persuade me to continue schooling, but I felt that in many things I was behind my classmates and preferred to quit. I always attended school in old clothes, while my classmates ... and many things like that. This September my mother bought a uniform for me. We did not manage to buy shoes through. I love school, at home I read at nights. One should be able to have daily bread without compromising on education,” told us Gor, 15, who lives in one of the villages of Tavush Marz.

Expert opinion

When a Child is Exposed to Violence...

“Almost every day my dad was drunk, he was beating my mom, as I was trying to protect her, he would hit me too,” tells Anna, who has recently come of age but remembers that abuse has always been there in her family since her early childhood years. Although she and her sister – a few years her junior – have not been abused beyond words like their mother and have only mainly witnessed brutal beating, however, their father happened to beat them too and threaten to kill or slaughter should they raise their voices.

“In the beginning when we were too little, as he took my mom to another room so that as if we didn’t see how he was beating, we were afraid to intervene or call anyone because he was threatening to kill mom if we intervened or called anyone. In the beginning I wouldn’t intervene, but when I grew up a little, I couldn’t stand it, I would meddle and fall under his punch,” tells Anna clenching her fists in agitation.

Anna’s mother tells the girls happened to faint from fear: “We had nobody to ask for help, no relative, no family, the police came several times but they did not press charges against him and took his side. Once he hit my youngest so that the child flew and hit the wall with her head. Thank God, they were doing well at school, after all that my Anna was still the best student in class.”

Now Anna, her mother and sister are more worrisome, they have managed to “flee from” the father – Women’s Resource Center supports them. **Hasmik Gevorgyan**, Program Manager of the Center, says that although there are exceptions but mostly in those families where there is violence, children have serious psychological problems, they stammer.

“We encounter cases when 16-17 years’ old girls suffer bedwetting, low hemoglobin count, malnutrition which causes anorexia,” says Gevorgyan.

She observes that if children are not exposed to violence but only witness it they are also victims of violence. “In our country not only women, but also children are not protected, the institute of custody and guardianship does not function. We have trusted the most important issue being that of children to a system which does not serve its purpose, no special approach is applied to cases of domestic violence and child abuse. We have a case when let alone that the father was beating the mother he would also force the child to spit on her and hit her, after which the child, frightened and weeping, would apologize to her mom. It’s dangerous also when a woman divorces her abusive husband, but, say, the



nism in Armenia to protect children from domestic violence.

According to **Knarik Garanfilyan**, President of Family and Community NGO, the issue of child abuse should mainly be dealt with by a social worker.

“Today the primary bodies of child protection – Custody and Guardianship Commissions – mostly lack professional qualities and sufficient resources, function on voluntary basis, whereas they must

family is a closed system, cases of violence remain unidentified. There are public stereotypes, quite often beating and slapping are not considered as child abuse but rather a means of upbringing.”

In Hasmik Arakelyan’s opinion, a reform is carried out in the field of integrated social services, social workers have got a mandate to reveal cases of child abuse in families, but they are overloaded, they lack time and a mechanism, and in some cases they still have no professional knowledge. “Alarm calls are often received from neighbours or when it is already a criminal case punishable by law. We mostly deal with consequences rather than prevention.”

Touching upon the issue of child abuse the Human Rights Defender in his annual report qualified as a positive step the fact that in 2014 the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues developed and adopted Protocol Resolution N 51 “On approving the conceptual framework of fight against the phenomenon of child abuse and the list of measures arising from it” of the RA Government dated 4 December 2014.

Pursuant to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Armenia joined in 1992, the state is obliged to protect children from all forms of physical and mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, while in the care of parents, legal guardians or any other person who has the care of the child.

Guardianship Board leaves the son with the father explaining that it is the child’s wish, the father owns a house. They do not take into consideration that the father is a drunkard, and the boy will grow with the psychology of the father and will take after him, will learn that, indeed, “a real” man must beat the wife.” In one word, Hasmik Gevorgyan concludes that, essentially, there is no mecha-

be the ones to reveal and support such cases. In this regard a question arises as to how cases of violence must be detected,” she says.

Hasmik Arakelyan, UNICEF Child Protection Programme Coordinator, observes that we lack a comprehensive national strategy which would include a mechanism for the detection, prevention and referral of all forms of child abuse. “Since a

The Reaction of Law Enforcement Bodies



This year 38 criminal cases of sexual crimes against minors have been filed, 47 of which are sexual crimes within families. Such figures were presented by **Arthur Ghambaryan**, Deputy Chief of RA Investigation Committee. He stated that criminal proceedings with regard to family violence can

only be initiated on the basis of the victim’s or applicant’s complaint. However, according to him, frequent are the cases when after the application the victim of the violence withdraws the complaint because they reconcile.

As presented by **Arthur Vardanyan**, Deputy Head of

the 3rd Unit of General Department of Criminal Investigation (GDCI) of the Police, during 10 months of this year 154 cases of violence against minors as compared to 152 of the previous year were registered. “Eleven out of those 154 cases happened in families; last year that figure was 8,” said the Police representatives in a meeting with reporters, adding that violence was mostly exercised in the form of beating and both in families and in the street. Moreover, violence is performed either by a minor to a minor or by adults.

Nelly Duryan, Head of the Department of Juvenile Rights Protection and Combating Domestic Violence of GDCI, stated in a conversation with us that even if children are not exposed to physical violence in

the family but only witness it; this means that they are exposed to psychological violence.

“If a child has been abused, we respond very quickly. If necessary, we take the child to a child support center where all the conditions are created so that a multi-professional group of a psychologist, pedagogue and other specialists can work with the child. Here the child can stay for an extended period of time,” she says.

Duryan states that women exposed to violence leave the house mainly with children. “We also have community rehabilitation centers and, if necessary, we take them there,” says the Police representative adding that we should reach the point where violence against even one child is excluded.

Rights Defenders

“When you see the child came to school with bruises you are obliged to raise the alarm.”

“Children raised in hardship and neglected conditions will not be able to acquire full conditions to develop their potential in the future. This is what we raise alarm over. Violence against children exists, it does not decrease, unfortunately, in the conditions of deepening poverty it acquires new forms,” such was the opinion of Mira Antonyan, Head of Child Protection Network, Director of Child Support Center of FAR, in a meeting with journalists.

According to her, besides the ratification of the conceptual framework of combating the phenomenon of violence against children, we are not able to record any other progress, there are no procedures arising from the conceptual framework as to who should do what, starting from kindergarten teachers to all those who relate with children. “Now everything is left on good will. There is not one point in the job description of anybody that when they see that a child went to school with bruises, untidy or dressed inappropriately for the season, they are obliged to ring an alarm,” says Antonyan.

“My heart sinks at the sight of the children...”



In the family picture drawn by Ani, 11, the father has ears of a devil, and beneath the mother’s drawing “dear mom” is written. These drawings by the children were provided to us by specialists of Women’s Rights Center when we were inquiring about children of abused women. “A child suffers from violence two-fold: they are both exposed to violence and are witnesses. My heart sinks when I look at the children, I look at them as a mother and grandmother,” says Susanna Vardanyan, Director of the Center.

From the Ombudsman’s report

Cases of violence against children have been recorded also during monitoring carried out in child care and protection institutions as well as special public schools, as stated in the Human Rights Defender’s annual report. In particular, cases of maltreatment by some nurses in separate boarding institutions were recorded, including beating, violence, not giving supplies of hygiene, stealing. So, experts have recorded how a tutor slapped a child in one of the classrooms of lesson preparation... Another time the children informed that the nurses swear, call them with improper words, beat with wood and pieces of parquet and hit them on the head. Another nurse, as a measure of punishment, sometimes makes the children stand in the corridor naked for speaking at night, or threatens to keep them in the toilet all night for not sleeping, sometimes forbids going to the toilet after 21:00 and the children either have to restrain themselves or go to the toilet stealthily.

Begging children



The recent report of the HRD states that begging children are also most vulnerable to violence. Panhandling is manifested in two ways – either socially disadvantaged families induce the children to beg trying to earn some money though them, or if the child is little and is not able to act independently, they use them as a means to incite pity among others to get money.

Vox Populi

Pursuant to the survey on Child Abuse carried out by the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues in 2014, in general 27% of children are exposed to violence by their surround-

ing relationships, 68% of which is physical, 48% is psychological. Outside their families, children were exposed to violence mainly by peers (82%), teachers (17%), babysitters and tutors (15%).

Activate Talks

“Knowledge for Life: School Safety”



“If two years ago someone told me that I would leave for Moscow to see my grandmother, all alone, nobody would believe. But I went thanks to my mother, I wanted to try my abilities, to take steps independently, to make decisions,” tells 17-year old Syuzanna Aleksanyan who has eyesight problems. She likes to play the guitar, to play the piano and sing. She says: “When I decided that I must learn to play the piano, we went to the school, the director introduced my teacher to me. I will never forget her confusion – perhaps our meeting was an extraordinary situation for her. But at the end of the year I had a good performance.” Syuzanna and other guests told about their experiences and small successes during Activate Talks event of UNICEF, which this year was held under the slogan “Knowledge for Life” and was dedicated to the topic of school safety.

and teachers aimed at teaching the rules and developing their skills of safety-related conduct. It is also a means of activating and expanding the parents’ knowledge on safety.

Tigran Tovmasyan also addressed women’s preparedness in resisting disasters stating that in the Armenian setting it is accepted to present the woman in the status of a victim and the affected. As a consequence, during disasters and difficulties women wait for men with the expectation of being rescued. Whereas in other countries women are already actively involved in the system of disaster risk reduction and management.

“It is very important that women are able to make right decisions to act in emergency situations. We have such a mentality enrooted that a man will come

on a white horse and rescue them. And they keep waiting. This is extremely dangerous especially in rural settlements where the majority of men is away as labour migrants. We want women to decide and act very quickly instead of waiting”, - says UNICEF representative reminding that the best result is achieved when one takes steps by themselves before the rescuers arrive.

Let us mention that the format of Activate Talks event was developed by UNICEF on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2014 and aims that representatives of the government, civil society, business, educational system and other structures hold discussions with children and find solutions to problems faced by children in a most vulnerable situation.

According to UNICEF estimates, each year 50-60% of people affected by natural disasters are children. In poor countries, children are more affected by the effects of disasters. More than 99% of deaths attributed to climate change happen in developing countries and over 80% of those who die are children.

Syuzanna goes to special school No. 14. She says they are taught how to behave in special situations.

- The most important thing is not to panic in any situation, for example, one should not walk down in the middle of the stairs, but go down close to the wall, - says Syuzanna.

Another guest of the event, Mary Mirzoyan, who attends Ashtarak School No. 1, recollects that when she was in the second grade, they received a false alarm in their school.

- As if there was a bomb in the school. Fortunately, that was not the case, I was little, I don’t remember much from that day, but we have learned at school how one must behave in emergency situations, for example, I know how to use a compass, to render first aid.

As presented by Tigran Tovmasyan, Disaster Risk Reduction

Programme Manager, around 80% of schools in Armenia do not meet current seismic construction norms.

- In 2014, UNICEF supported the Government of Armenia to apply school safety methodology, and in July 2015 Seismic Safety Improvement Programme of Public Schools of 2015-2030 was approved which will target 380 public schools. In the coming 15 years those schools will be reinforced or reconstructed, and 46 of them will be selected for the coming 5 years, - he informed. According to the guest the main goal of the programme is to increase the preparedness of the educational level to withstand disasters and make a disaster-resistant country, as well as to develop the culture of safety among children.

The model of “safe school” also includes working with parents, and collaboration of parents

Challenge

“War is the only thing they have seen in their life”



About 14 million children have already been affected due to the conflicts in Syria and Iraq. This is what UNICEF raises the alarm over.

“For little children war is the only thing they have seen in their life. These children and adolescents are threatened by the danger of growing and reproducing in the next generation the horrors and tortures that they have survived,” said Anthony Lake, Executive Director of UNICEF. As reported by the UN experts, in the areas under control of the extremist group of the Islamic State, 12 years’ old children are forced to undergo military training, as well as perform assignments of terrorist acts and killings.

“Small Hands Heavy Burden”

“Syrian children pay a very high price for the endless war and because the world does not succeed in ending the conflict” – this is stated in “Small Hands Heavy Burden” report prepared in July by UNICEF and Save the Children. The subject matter of research in the report is exploitation of child labour in conflict conditions due to which they lose their right to receiving education, harm their health and are stripped off the perspective of a better life.

“In Syria children often provide 75% of the family income, and in Jordan almost half of them participate in securing the livelihood of their families. In some regions of Lebanon children are involved in labour before the age of 6,” is stated in the report.

“They Need Protection”

“Heart-breaking images of children’s bodies washing up on the shores of Europe ... lying suffocated in the backs of trucks crossing borders ... being passed over barbed wire fences by desperate parents. As the migrant and refugee crisis in Europe deepens, these will not be the last shocking images to ricochet around the world on social media, on our television screens and on the front pages of our newspapers. But it is not enough for the world to be shocked by these images. Shock must be matched by action. For the plight of these children is neither by their choice nor within their control. They need protection. They have a right to protection...” this is said in the statement of UNICEF.



Fathers and Daughters

Essays so Emotional and Touching

The results of an essay contest “My Daughter” for fathers, announced jointly by the Country Office of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and Mediamax, were summarized.

The first three winners – Ashot Badalyan, Karen Karapetyan and Hakob Karapetyan – came to the award ceremony together with their families including their little princesses. Garik Hayrapetyan, Assistant Representative of UNFPA Armenia Country Office, stated in his speech that when they were announcing the contest, they didn’t expect that it would receive such widespread response as they understood that the essays would be written by the fathers and it is not always that they are prone to expressing their feelings, moreover, writing about them. That concern was dispelled when 122 essays were received each more emotional and touching than the other.

“There were essays which, I should confess, by reading and appearing in that tide of love and warmth, I hardly resisted by tears. I am proud of our fathers

who have those daughters and who expressed their love, wishes and feelings with such great enthusiasm. I am convinced that their daughters, growing in that love and respect, will be of great advantage to our society,” stated Garik Hayrapetyan.

Ara Tadevosyan, Director of Mediamax, said that the contest has really become a revelation. “For me the most important part of this contest is that many people reimagined their love for their children through writing those essays,” - mentioned he.

... “I know what is her favourite colour, I know what ice-cream she likes, I know how she cries, and I love the laughter that’s hers and is so familiar. I love her hair locks and her way of hugging me. I know that before going to bed I must kiss her eyes and tell her to see butterflies in her dream... I also know that it is important for her that the butterflies are pink. Yes, she likes pink... I love Maya. I love her voice and her name. Maya is my daughter. Most importantly, she is real, breathtakingly real.

Today at the college the teacher said that she

had pushed away the boys and had not played with them only because they were boys. I got angry, I look at her questioningly. She looks at me attentively and asks:

- You are also a boy, aren’t you, Daddy?
 - Well, yes, - half-sadly answered I anticipating the content of the second sentence. I wait.
 - You are a boy, but, nevertheless, I love you, you are a good boy.
 I am a good boy. My heart is content. Well, let’s go home”.

Ashot Badalyan, first prize



This issue was prepared by:

Lilit Kochinyan, Lia Khojoyan, Nelly Babayan, Arman Gharibyan, Lala Ter-Ghazaryan, Hasmik Hakobyan, Marianna Ghahramanyan



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Editor-in-chief: Tamara Hovnatanyan
 E-mail: womennetam@gmail.com