

CAMPAIGNING WITH UNICEF UK ON CAMPUS



WHAT IS CAMPAIGNING?

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

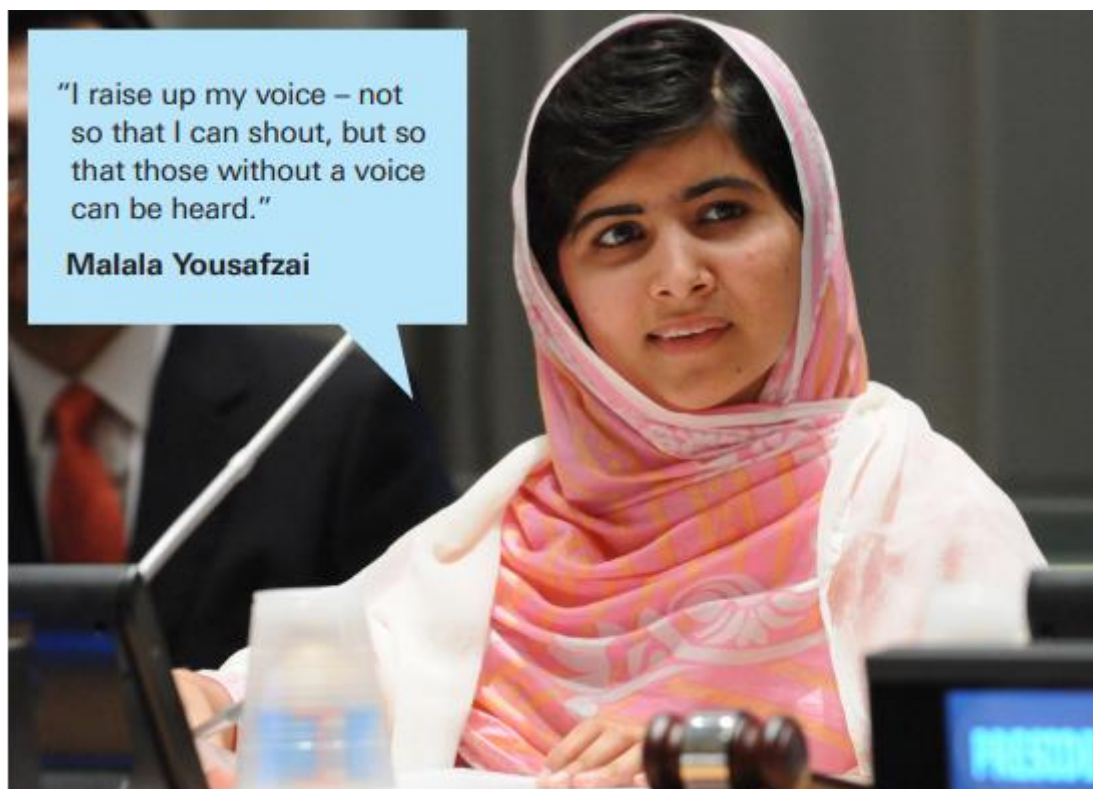
Campaigning is all about taking various actions on a specific issue or issues – in UNICEF’s case on children’s rights – in order to bring about positive change.

An essential part of campaigning is to mobilise people to speak up and influence key decision-makers in order to achieve the campaign goals. As a Unicef UK On Campus campaigner, we encourage you to contact your MP (including meeting them face-to-face and writing personal letters or emails), engage with local media, and raise awareness of our campaigns with your university community.

WHY CAMPAIGN WITH UNICEF?

UNICEF is the world's leading organisation for children. We ensure more of the world's children are fed, vaccinated, educated and protected than any other organisation. We have done more to influence laws, policies and customs to help protect children than anyone else in history.

All this would not be possible without the support of our campaigners. Our campaigners are a vital, integral part of the process - supporting UNICEF in its efforts to keep children safe, transform their lives and build a better world for tomorrow's children. University On Campus societies have an important role to play in campaigning to create change. Campaigning on issues such as air pollution can make a real difference to children and young people in the UK and around the world. By signing petitions, making videos, writing blogs, speaking to your MP and local newspaper, your society can show just how much they care about children around the world to those in power.



HOW DOES CAMPAIGNING MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO CHILDREN'S LIVES?

We know that campaigning can create real change for children. These are just two of our recent achievements, thanks to the support of people like you.



REUNITING CHILDREN IN CALAIS WITH THEIR FAMILY IN THE UK

Around the world, whole communities are on the move and children are the worst affected. Right now, children are being forced to make dangerous journeys to Europe to reach their family in the UK. We have been calling on the UK Government to change the definition of family within the UK's refugee family reunion law to allow unaccompanied children to safely join their parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts and uncles in the UK, rather than making these dangerous journeys to reach Europe. In 2016, Unicef UK campaigners took 175,000 actions urging the UK government to reunite refugee children in Calais with their family in the UK. This demonstration of strong public support led to over 700 vulnerable children safely reuniting with their families in the UK.



PROTECTION FOR TRAFFICKED CHILDREN

Thanks to the help of more than 70,000 campaigners, there is now better protection and support for trafficked children in UK law. As a result of campaigning to amend the Modern Slavery Bill, the final Act now provides trafficked children with an advocate with legal powers to protect and support them, who can guide them through stressful and complex legal processes that no child should have to face on their own. Additionally, children are now able to defend themselves if they're prosecuted for crimes their traffickers forced them to commit.

WHAT ARE WE CAMPAIGNING ON?

PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM AIR POLLUTION



Air pollution may be largely invisible, but it's incredibly dangerous for children. Breathing toxic air can damage their growth and leave them with lasting health problems. Unborn babies, newborns and young children are particularly vulnerable because their bodies are developing so quickly. Exposure to air pollution during these critical stages of development can damage children's lung growth, increase their risk of conditions like asthma and potentially reduce their brain development. Children in deprived communities tend to be exposed to the highest pollution levels, so air pollution also worsens and drives inequality

And it's not just a problem in the UK. Around the world almost 17 million babies under the age of one are breathing toxic air, and they continue to breathe it as they grow up. Globally, air pollution is linked to deadly diseases like pneumonia, which kills almost 1 million children under the age of five around the world every year.

Policies to reduce children's exposure to air pollution urgently need to be put in place to ensure every child can live a happy, healthy life. Across the UK, around a third of children are living in areas that have unsafe levels of air pollution. Under the government's air quality plans, unsafe levels of air pollution in around 71% of UK towns and cities is likely to be the case for another 12 years – in this time the health of millions of children could be damaged beyond repair.

At Unicef UK, we believe the government's current strategy on air pollution is not ambitious enough, nor does it prioritise action for children. This poses a direct threat to a child's right to health (Article 24 in the UNCRC), and to not only survive (Article 6) but to thrive in a clean and safe environment (Article 24).

1 IN 3

ONE IN THREE CHILDREN ARE GROWING UP IN PARTS OF THE UK WITH HAZARDOUS LEVELS OF TOXIC AIR.

WHAT CAN THE GOVERNMENT DO?

Children and young people contribute the least to air pollution, but are the ones suffering most from its effects. The government must accept this is a children's health crisis and offer targeted action and funding to reduce their exposure in the most polluted areas. Children should not be forced to breathe toxic air in the areas where they live, learn and play.

WE ARE CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT TO:

- Prioritise and fund measures that protect children and other vulnerable groups from toxic air in places they live, learn and play.
- Create ambitious networks of clean air zones that lower pollution and create child-friendly urban areas that promote walking, cycling and public transport.
- Commit to urgent action to reduce particulate matter, meeting World Health Organization (WHO) levels by 2030 at the latest.



WE STUDY IN AN AREA WITH LOWER LEVELS OF AIR POLLUTION, CAN WE STILL SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN?

Most towns and cities in the UK (71 per cent) have unsafe levels of air pollution, but air pollution differs from road to road, and place to place. Of course there are also areas where the levels of air pollution are not dangerous and if you live and study in one of these areas you may be wondering how to engage people in this subject.

Most people will have visited an area or experienced air pollution first hand, even if they are not directly living with dirty air on a daily basis. The impact of air pollution on children and young people's health is real and even if they are not directly affected themselves, all us can call for change on behalf of others.

TAKING ACTION ON CAMPUS

As an On Campus campaigner there are lots of different ways to campaign with Unicef UK, including:

RAISING AWARENESS OF UNICEF UK CAMPAIGNS AT YOUR UNIVERSITY

The more people there are speaking out about children's rights and highlighting the lived experiences of children in danger, the louder our collective voice can be. To inspire your fellow students to take action, it's important to raise awareness of the issues facing vulnerable children in the UK and around the world. This will help to ensure your campaigns are at the forefront of the minds of your fellow students and wider university community. This can be done by holding events, for example open mic nights with artists encouraged to create material based on the campaign, or designating an area as a 'solidarity wall' where people can write and post messages.



EVENT IDEAS

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

You might want to:

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

- Host a film or dinner night for 5 of your friends.
- Ask your local football, netball or cricket team to allow you to speak to them about our campaign, hold a charity match or host a sports day.
- Put on a Facebook live or online workshop to bring people together online.

STAY IN TOUCH

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

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

Email: activism@unicef.org.uk

CALLING ON YOUR LOCAL MP TO ACT

Taking the time to meet your MP face-to-face will show how passionate you are about children's rights. If you can't arrange a meeting, writing personalised emails or letters is also a good approach. Reaching your local MP who has the power to raise the campaign issue in Parliament and take action is really important. Another key way you can peek your local MP's interest in your campaign is by **spreading the campaign message through local media/social media** – this is also a good way to raise awareness of your campaign in your local community.

CAMPAIGNING IN THE NATIONS

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

You can find out who they are here:

Scotland:
parliament.scot/msps.aspx

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

Wales:
assembly.wales/en/memhome.htm

SIGNING UNICEF UK'S PETITIONS

Unicef UK regularly calls on key political decision makers, like the Prime Minister or the Ministers to support our campaigns. One way of demonstrating strong public support for a campaign issue is by gathering as many petition signatures from the UK public as we can. We need your support in collecting as many signatures as possible. Numbers don't lie – if there is a large number of signatories then the issue at hand matters to a lot of people and the UK Government has to act.

On campus petition Link: unicef.uk/toxicair_onscampus

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE:

Helpful links

Unicef UK's campaign on air pollution
unicef.org.uk/clean-air-child-health-air-pollution

Unicef's research on air pollution in the UK
unicef.org.uk/publications/child-health-breath-of-toxic-air

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
unicef.org.uk/UNICEFs-Work/UN-Convention

More information on air pollution levels
uk-air.defra.gov.uk

FOLLOW AND ENGAGE WITH US

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



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

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



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

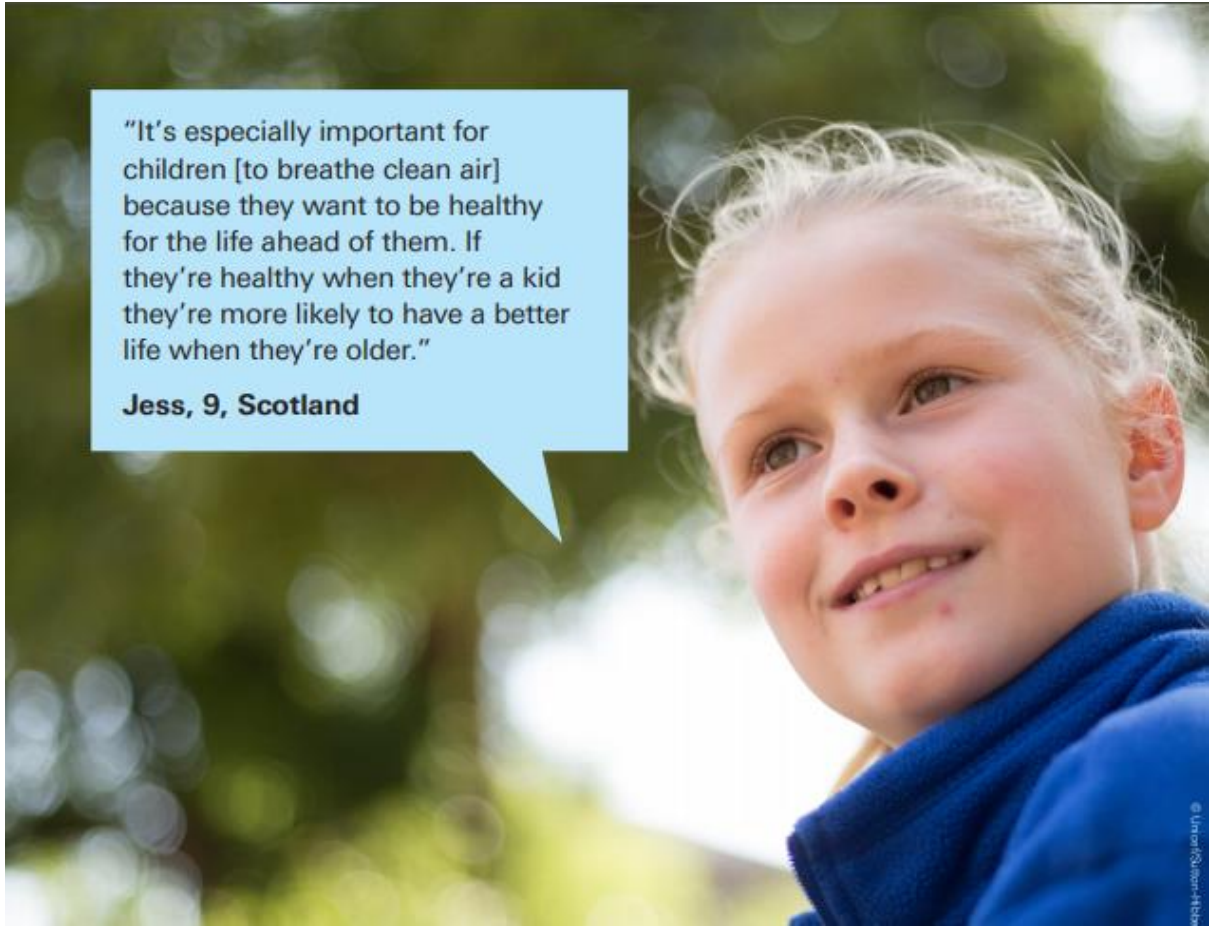


YouTube
[youtube.com/user/unicefuk](https://www.youtube.com/user/unicefuk)



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

If you have any further questions about campaigning with Unicef UK, please don't hesitate to ask your Unicef UK On Campus Regional Coordinators or email activism@unicef.org.uk



"It's especially important for children [to breathe clean air] because they want to be healthy for the life ahead of them. If they're healthy when they're a kid they're more likely to have a better life when they're older."

Jess, 9, Scotland

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