



GLOBAL BRITAIN: BECOMING A LEADER FOR CHILD RIGHTS AT A TIME OF CRISIS

A UK Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF UK) essay series.

CONCLUSION: AN INSPIRING VISION FOR GLOBAL BRITAIN

The essays in this collection demonstrate that despite the many challenges children face there remains an exceptional opportunity confronting the world in 2021. The UK sits in an unusually influential position to lead and inspire transformative change for children everywhere – creating an opportunity to cement the UK's status as a leading force for good in the world.

Amidst the many challenges faced since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, it could be easy to forget the rich capacity for global solutions we have before us. Solutions that afford us a choice – to revert to business as usual post-pandemic, or to act decisively and collectively to build a better, fairer, more equitable and inclusive world for every child.

Our essay collection seeks to inspire a more radical vision of 'Global Britain', with children and future generations at its heart. Despite the reduction in aid from 0.7% of GNI, the UK government retains the capacity to set an ambitious agenda within its forthcoming International Development strategy. One that harnesses the UK's diplomatic, aid and humanitarian endeavours to uphold the rights of every child, everywhere.

This strategy can bring people of all political perspectives together behind a shared mission and belief; a belief that a truly Global Britain can lead the way to a better world for future generations. After the divisions and debate around the UK's role on the global stage and the suffering of the pandemic, there is surely one thing above all else that can bring us together – our deep care for our children and young people who have faced enormous difficulties in recent years. Those same children who have inspired and challenged us with their strength, resilience, and activism. The challenges they, and their children, will face are problems without borders. We must face them together and that is why a vision for Britain must be truly Global.



Children everywhere are suffering from the ill effects of the climate crisis; inequality and poverty; disease and malnutrition; inadequate housing, social protection or education. By placing children at the centre of all policies and action, we can protect and enhance the health and well-being of all the world's children. Indeed, by placing children at the heart of the UK International Development strategy through the formation of a child rights hub and a complementary child rights framework, the UK Government can be at the forefront of this agenda globally.

Taken together these 11 essays speak to us all with a powerful and united voice. The authors are telling us that the world now faces a binary choice between reverting to business-as-usual post-pandemic or acting decisively to build a better world.

In the former case, we would continue with deep global inequality, widespread poverty and malnutrition, and worsening damage to the environment on which we all depend. If we choose the latter path, we can tackle climate change, meet the SDGs, eliminate extreme poverty and protect global health.

Today's children and young people know which path they would choose for themselves and the next generation. If we listen to them, bring their perspectives and ideas to the fore, and decide that the impact on their wellbeing is the true test of all our policies and decisions, we can only choose the right path.

The decision by the UK Government to reduce international aid spending complicates this picture, as this means less resource committed to the world's children, programmes have been stopped and vital support has been reduced. For every pound cut, children living in some of the world's worst crises and conflicts could suffer the consequences, with fewer children able to attend school, receive life-saving food and access critical healthcare services. Now is the time to step up and ensure that they do not shoulder this burden and it is critical that the UK Government charts a clear path back to delivering its life-saving aid commitment. As the new International Development strategy is finalised, decisions made now will have a huge bearing on the future for many of the world's children. That is why the UK Government's vision for Global Britain must have both child rights and multilateral cooperation at its core.