



RRSA Update

28.2.2020

Article Focus:

Article 3 (best interests of the child) - The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

Article 29 (goals of education) - Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

Article 38 (war and armed conflict) - Governments must not allow children under the age of 15 to take part in war or join the armed forces. Governments must do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by war and armed conflicts.

Soccer Aid:

Over the last few years, as a school, we have taken part in Unicef's Soccer Aid Playground Challenge. This challenge involves the children at school designing an obstacle course, to bounce, roll or dribble a football around. The whole school takes part in this obstacle course and donate to help to raise money so that children everywhere can grow up healthy, happy and able to play.

As part of taking part in this challenge, we were entered into a competition draw to win a number of prizes. This month, we received an email informing us that our school had won a prize - a set of Soccer Aid footballs. The school received a set of colourful footballs bearing the Soccer Aid and Unicef logos which we now have available as part of our sports equipment.

Thank you to everyone for taking part in this event and we look forward to the next playground challenge this June!





Gold Banner:

This week, we received our Rights Respecting Gold Banner, which is now hanging proudly at the entrance to our school.

Conflict Writing Day:

In assembly on Friday, the children were introduced to an image surrounding our termly theme of 'conflict'. In the assembly, the children discussed what they could see in the image and then explored the story behind it (see below) linking their explorations to their right to be protected from war and armed conflict (article 38).

Following this, each year group returned to their classrooms and spent the day completing activities surrounding the image. The children took part in drama activities, discussions and art activities all of which culminated with each child in the school producing a piece of writing inspired by the topic.



BENTIU, South Sudan – The boy* felt almost safe. His uniform of the last three years had been replaced by jeans and a bright orange football shirt. He stepped off the helicopter and took in the commotion at the airstrip, overwhelmed. The boy was rescued by aid workers from a military outpost last year, and was placed in the care of UNICEF protection officer Franka David. The search for his family then began. David took the boy to a foster family, where he stayed while his relatives, if living, were traced. David said the boy, who was quiet and shy, showed signs of trauma. “He’s still tired, and he’s hungry.” He was about to have his first home-cooked meal in years. The fact he survived for so long on the scorched battlefield was a miracle. The boy is evidence of the horrors committed in Bentiu, a state capital in the oil-rich north of South Sudan, and the backdrop to some of the worst fighting



since the civil war began in 2017. Military recruitment is one of the greatest risks for children in the country. Some 19,000 children are estimated to have been recruited into armed groups where they are systematically mistreated. They are overworked. And they will be walking through the bush the whole night,” David said. “If they get sleepy, the soldiers will tell them to fetch water and cook. If they become tired, they will be punished. That's why most of them are scared. They are beaten, there is no food. If they are sick, no one treats them. No clothing, no education.” During the past four and a half years, UNICEF has overseen the release of over 2,600 children from armed groups across the country, helping them to return to their families and communities. Reuniting children with their families is further complicated by the mass displacement caused by the conflict. In and around Bentiu, the bloodshed has driven thousands from their homes to the sanctuary of an enormous camp, protected by razor wire and UN peacekeepers. The Protection of Civilians site, or 'PoC', is roughly one square kilometre of red dirt on an arid, heat-soaked plain, and home to over 112,000 people. A thick coat of dust gives way to deep mud as the seasons come and go. The shelters are arranged in long rows, separated by dirt roads and drainage ditches. A kilometre from the site, Bentiu township has changed hands between government and opposition troops several times during the conflict. Soldiers walk the tense streets, buildings are pock-marked with bullet holes and tanks sit quietly at strategic locations. UNICEF is working both in and outside the site to support family reunification and provide psychosocial support. “When there is conflict, children are separated, they are exposed to risk. They are at their most vulnerable,” says David. “Children have a right to be at home and be cared for properly. A family, reunited The child from the airstrip spent just one night with the foster family before relatives were traced. His uncle, who helped raise the boy after his father died years earlier, was living in the PoC site along with the boy's four siblingHe learned from his uncle that his mother had died just a few months earlier, shortly after giving birth. His aunt, also in the camp, was breastfeeding and caring for the baby. “I didn't know if he was alive,” the uncle said, overcome with joy. He explained that the boy had disappeared three years earlier, after leaving the site at night with friends to walk into Bentiu town. The family searched for him but found no trace. He had been taken by a military unit.The shy boy finally knew he was safe. David gave him a change of clothes and a school bag containing exercise books and pencils. Caseworkers would continue to pay him and his family regular visits, to make sure that he received the psychosocial and educational support he



needed. But the full story of his time in the military and its longer term effects would remain unknown.