



## 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**.

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CHILDREN  
ON THE EDGE



# ON THE EDGE

2025

## PLAY-BASED EARLY EDUCATION

How learning assessments can be fun

## HANIFI SCRIPT

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## MESSAGE FROM RACHEL BENTLEY OBE

### *Our CEO and Co-founder*

By piloting new play-based methods, refugee communities are now transforming learning and assessment.

Despite our digital education programme for Rohingya children bringing new visual learning opportunities, we knew they still couldn't learn in their own language. In response, for the first time, we're piloting lessons in the Hanifi script, enabling children to read and write in their mother tongue.

We are committed to doing better, being daring, first, different, and just. This includes everyone: local partners, staff, teachers, parents, and the children themselves. Community ownership is at the core of who we are.

None of this would be possible without the incredible support of trusts, foundations, businesses, and generous individuals. By choosing us, you are daring to be different and making change where it is most needed. **We cannot thank you enough.**

Rachel Bentley OBE  
CEO and Co-Founder  
Children on the Edge

**Children on the Edge envisions a world where every child thrives, regardless of geography, ethnicity, gender, or caste. For over three decades, we have worked with the most marginalised children in some of the toughest global situations.**

Last year, we expanded our tried and tested education models to reach thousands more refugee children, and this year we've pushed even further.

**"If you do things well, do them better. Be daring, be first, be different, be just."**

This quote from our Co-founder, the late Dame Anita Roddick, has shaped our approach and is fully reflected in this year's efforts.

After our cluster learning model brought education to Congolese refugee children, we found their development was hindered by rote learning.



## PLAY-BASED EARLY EDUCATION

### *Can learning assessments be fun?*

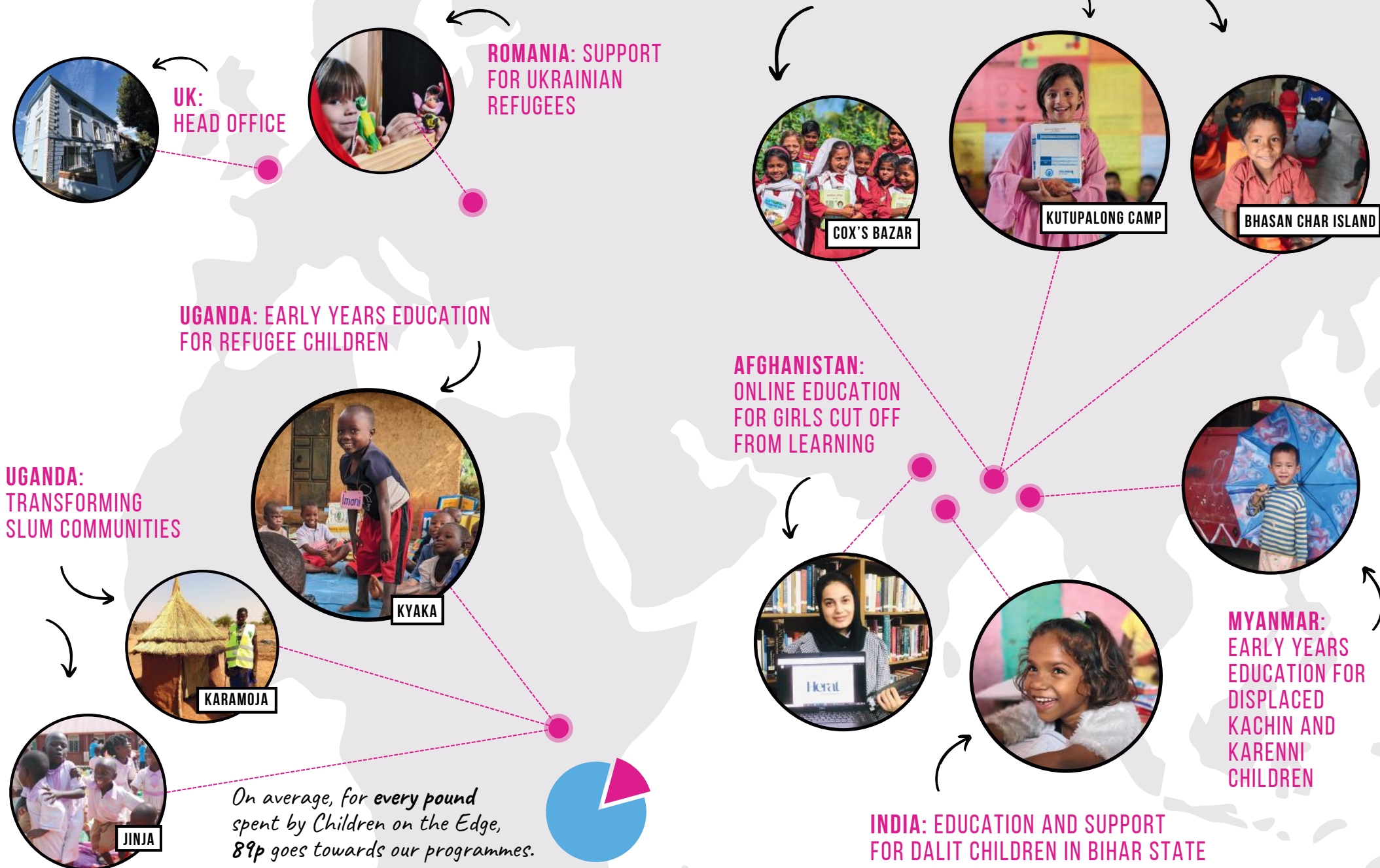
In collaboration with Learn to Play Botswana and the University of Chichester, we have created a new play-based assessment tool for our early years refugee education programme in Uganda.

Working with Congolese refugee children, we focus on developing curiosity, creativity, resilience, and problem-solving through child-centred, play-based learning. However, we found that traditional assessment tools only measured academic learning and involved unfamiliar environments and evaluators.

Our new tool uses eight play-based activities aligned with curriculum goals, allowing children to engage in familiar settings with friends and their regular teacher. The fun activities give them freedom to explore concepts in their own way, showcasing their individual learning journeys.

The pilot results have shown how effectively children can reflect their learning journey through play and have helped us refine daily routines. We are now pleased to be sharing this innovative tool with other early childhood education organisations.

## OUR WORK - A SNAPSHOT







## KARAMOJA

### *Child Protection on the move*

**Endemic poverty in the remote Karamoja region of north eastern Uganda puts children at risk of abuse, human trafficking, neglect and exploitation. Cattle raiders attack remote villages that have little police protection, and where infertile soil leads to famine.**

After seeing over 10 years of success with volunteer Child Protection Teams in Jinja city, Children on the Edge Africa now train teams in Karamoja, 400 miles to the north. The teams work with community members and families to change mindsets, support each other and create the change needed to keep children safe.

**Loru never had the chance to go to school and used to survive by cattle rustling. When this became more violent, he began hunting wild animals to take care of his family, but struggled to make enough money.**

When Loru attended our community workshop on sack gardening, things changed. He started growing vegetables and now sells them at the market, earning enough to pay his sisters' school fees and buy food and clothes for the family.

From being a part of one of the major problems in this area - cattle rustling - Loru is now not only part of the solution, but thriving from it.

Child Protection Teams hold many popular workshops for hundreds of community members. These cover topics like child trafficking, hygiene and sanitation, positive parenting and child labour. They encourage parents to send their children to school and report any cases of child abuse that they come across.

**11 year old Ngorok Nivia is a proud member of the Child Rights Club in her village.** When she was eight, she was rescued from the streets in Kampala where she was begging for survival. She now lives with her grandmother in Karamoja.

Despite wanting to go to school, her grandmother couldn't afford the fees and instead Ngorok was responsible for collecting and selling firewood to support her family.

Things changed when she joined her local Child Rights Club and became an advocate for children in her community. Our staff in Uganda encouraged her relatives to register her at the local school and she is now attending her first year.

**"I'M VERY GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO STAND AS A CHILD RIGHTS CLUB MEMBER FOR MY VILLAGE. I ADVISE ALL MY PEERS NOT TO EVER GO AND LIVE ON THE STREETS BECAUSE IT IS NOT A GOOD LIFE THERE. I'M NOW IN SCHOOL AND AM RESPECTED IN MY COMMUNITY."**

**NGOROK NIVIA - 11 YEARS OLD**







"HANIFI IS MUCH EASIER TO READ, WRITE, SPEAK, MEMORISE, AND UNDERSTAND! I REALLY WANT TO BE A WELL-EDUCATED AND SKILLED MEMBER OF MY COMMUNITY BECAUSE 95-100% OF OUR ROHINGYA POPULATION ARE UNEDUCATED. I WANT TO USE THIS NEW SKILL AND CHANGE MY COMMUNITY IN THE FUTURE."

ROMAINA - 11 YEARS OLD  
KUTUPALONG REFUGEE CAMP  
BANGLADESH

# HANIFI SCRIPT

## A literacy revolution for the Rohingya?

**Children on the Edge is embarking on an unprecedented initiative to support thousands of Rohingya refugee children to learn in their own language.**

By pioneering the use of 'Hanifi' - a written script of the Rohingya language - our learning centres in the world's largest refugee camp are teaching the children to read and write in their mother tongue for the very first time.

After decades of discrimination and genocidal violence by the Myanmar government, over a million Rohingya people now live in overcrowded refugee camps in Bangladesh.

In Myanmar, they were excluded from education and most cannot read or write Burmese, speaking instead in a Rohingya dialect with no standard written form.

Seven years after the 2017 genocide, the refugee camps are facing a severe education crisis, largely driven by these language barriers. Bangladesh, already heavily populated, restricts refugees from learning Bengali and imposes the Burmese curriculum, which proves ineffective for Rohingya children and teachers alike. This has led to a decline in school attendance, leaving children increasingly vulnerable to child labour, early marriage, human trafficking, and recruitment by extremist groups.

Hanifi is a written form of the Rohingya dialect developed in the 1980s by Rohingya scholar, Mohammed Hanif. There is no widespread use of Hanifi in education, yet the script enables children to learn to read and write fluently in their own language within a matter of months. It also provides a strong foundation for learning other languages.

**On our pilot programme, 400 students taught with the Hanifi script achieved an 82% higher exam score than those without, showing just how quickly it enabled them to progress.**

Our plan now is to translate textbooks and Hanifi teaching tools for dozens more education providers in the camp.



"LEARNING HANIFI IS LIKE A BEACON OF HOPE AMIDST THE CHALLENGES WE FACE. I'M DETERMINED TO MAKE THE MOST OF THIS EDUCATION AND USE IT TO BUILD A BETTER COMMUNITY, BOTH HERE IN THE REFUGEE CAMP AND HOPEFULLY ONE DAY BACK HOME IN MYANMAR. MY MISSION IS CLEAR, AND I WON'T STOP UNTIL I SUCCEED."

MOHAMMED REYAS - AGE 14, KUTUPALONG

We are optimistic about the longer term possibilities Hanifi can open up for the Rohingya community as a whole, believing this could be an historic step forward for both Rohingya literacy and identity.





## ONLINE LEARNING

### *For girls in Afghanistan*

Since their return to power in August 2021, the Taliban have decimated the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan. Forbidden from going to secondary school or university, they are forced to stay home, out of sight.

**Without an education, opportunities are severely limited and they face a bleak future.**

Children on the Edge supports two online schools, providing education to over 800 women and girls in Afghanistan.

Founded by Anglela Ghayour, a teacher and activist from Afghanistan, a network of volunteer teachers from around the world offer daily lessons on a wide range of subjects. These are accessed online from the safety of students' homes.

We have supported Angela to raise funds and register as a charity, now known as Afghanistan Education Action.

**"I SIMPLY COULD NOT SIT AND WITNESS THE DESPAIR, TEARS, AND GRIEF OF THE GIRLS OF MY HOMELAND, SO I STARTED TO LIGHT A CANDLE IN THE DARK TO KEEP THE HOPE OF THE BRIGHT DAY ALIVE."**

**ANGELA GHAYOUR - CEO AND FOUNDER  
AFGHANISTAN EDUCATION ACTION**

Both initiatives have already seen remarkable results, with some students even accessing overseas high school programmes and universities.

**In the early days of the Taliban takeover, Aqdas was just 14, and felt like her entire future had been taken away in just one night.**

A year later, a light switched on when she began learning with Herat Online School. She logged on from home to learn English with volunteer teachers and enjoyed creative writing and art workshops. She says,

**"THE SCHOOL PIERCED THROUGH THE DARKNESS AND REMINDED ME OF MY FORGOTTEN POTENTIAL. EVERY TIME THAT I HAD A CLASS, I COULD FEEL MY FREEDOM, DESIRES, AND SHARED DREAMS THAT WERE STOLEN FROM ME BY THE CURRENT REGIME."**

Aqdas has found her freedom, starting an International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme in the USA after the school mentored her through a successful application to an Afghan Youth scholarship programme.

She was just one of a small number of students awarded the scholarship, out of over one thousand applicants.







## COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

### *Why it is so crucial*

**For over 30 years, working collaboratively with local people has formed the basis of the programmes we support.**

We wholeheartedly believe that those living in the communities where we work are best positioned to identify needs, create the most effective innovations and maintain lasting change.

The term 'locally-led' has become quite the buzzword in international development work, but this is something that has shaped our work from the start. We don't arrive in a situation and assume we can 'build capacity'.

In our back pocket, we have decades of experience working with marginalised children around the world. We're open to contributing learnings from this when invited, but first and foremost we listen. We genuinely learn from grassroots leaders and their communities and find solutions together.

**"MANY DONORS WANT TO RULE THE PROJECTS, AND THEIR AGENDA DOESN'T REFLECT THE REAL NEED THAT IS HERE. CHILDREN ON THE EDGE WORK WITH US IN DISCUSSION AND FRIENDSHIP."**

**NUNA MATAR, PARTNER ORGANISATION CEO, LEBANON**

We build real relationships, prioritise the use of local resources, invest in local staff and ensure cross sector collaboration wherever possible. From design and implementation to adaptation, monitoring and evaluation, our programmes are community driven, with the ultimate goal of sustainability and independence.

**"EVEN AFTER CHILDREN ON THE EDGE AFRICA LEAVES, WE PARENTS SHALL CONTINUE EDUCATING OUR CHILDREN THROUGH THE CLUSTER GROUPS."**

**PARENT FROM CONGOLESE REFUGEE COMMUNITY, UGANDA**

**"BEFORE PEOPLE WOULD COME AND BUILD A WELL OR A LATRINE AND THEN LEAVE. THEY DON'T TALK TO US. WE DON'T KNOW WHO THEY ARE. THEY JUST HANG UP THEIR SIGN AND LEAVE WHEN IT IS FINISHED. BUT THESE PEOPLE TALK TO US. WE KNOW WHO THEY ARE."**

**NAEEM, KUTUPALONG REFUGEE CAMP, BANGLADESH**





## TURNING PROFITS INTO PURPOSE

*Our passionate supporters are at the heart of our fundraising. Every penny raised, every mile run and every event helps to ensure that children living on the edge can grow up in a safe place, protected from harm.*

We visited St James' CEC Primary School during Refugee Week to share how we help refugee children in Bangladesh to learn, play and have fun with their friends.

Students decided to get creative with their fundraising, using their skills to turn a profit at their Enterprise day. Each class of budding entrepreneurs was given £5 to invest and multiply; and after milkshakes, loom bands, cakes and artwork were made and sold, they raised £398 for Children on the Edge.



**We love visiting schools and clubs to speak about our work, either in person or virtually. Get in touch to arrange a speaker for your next assembly or event.**

**'AT SCHOOL, WE OFTEN TALK ABOUT HOW SMALL ACTS OF KINDNESS CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE. ENTERPRISE DAY WAS DEFINITELY AN EXAMPLE OF THIS.'**

MRS LOVE, PICTURED ABOVE  
WITH STUDENT AT ST JAMES'



**COULD YOU  
SUPPORT  
CHILDREN ON THE EDGE  
THIS YEAR?**



## LEAVING A LASTING LEGACY

Leaving a gift to Children on the Edge in your will is a way of leaving a legacy of safety, education and resilience for children for many years to come. No gift is too small to make a difference.

It might be a small cash gift, or a residual gift from your estate after you have made provision for your family. In the last few years we have received two significant legacy gifts, and we are deeply thankful for five further supporters who have contacted us to let us know they have planned a gift in their will.

Kim\* volunteered with Children on the Edge for a number of years at our events.

As well as including specific gifts for family and friends in her will Kim also left a gift for Children on the Edge.

Kim's generosity continues to have a ripple effect; helping to create spaces for 100 children to learn, play and grow every year for the next 5 years.

**"IF YOU THINK YOU'RE TOO SMALL TO HAVE AN IMPACT, TRY GOING TO BED WITH A MOSQUITO"**

**DAME ANITA RODDICK  
CO-FOUNDER OF CHILDREN ON THE EDGE**

\*All our legacy donors' names have been changed to protect their identity.

*To find out more, get in touch at:*

**[fundraising@childrenontheedge.org](mailto:fundraising@childrenontheedge.org)** *We'd love to hear from you!*