UNICEF and Child Protection

> "Trafficking of children is a grave violation of their rights, robbing them of their childhood, their well-being, and the opportunity to reach their full potential. No country is untouched by human trafficking as a source, transit point, or destination."
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> *-- Dr. Susan Bissell Chief of Child Protection, UNICEF*

Millions of children around the world are subjected violence, exploitation and abuse. Many more, not yet victims, also remain without adequate protection. In more than 150 countries around the world, UNICEF helps create a protective environment for children to guard them against abuse in the same way that good health and adequate nutrition strengthen them against disease.

Some examples of UNICEF's work around the world include the following:

- In Nepal, UNICEF is working to educate parents on the harmful effects of child labor and to give children ages three to five a safe, encouraging place to learn and play. In just one year, tens of thousands of parents and caregivers participated in this effort.

- In Romania, UNICEF has worked to prevent child abandonment by working with maternity hospitals. They have provided counseling and financial support to pregnant women and mothers in difficult circumstances, enabling them to keep their children. UNICEF has also supported foster families and family-like homes to keep children from being institutionalized.

- In Niger, UNICEF has advocated against early marriage through training village chiefs, producing TV and radio dramas in local languages, and facilitating open discussions with rural populations. UNICEF also trained staff in a hospital that offers services to girls suffering medical complications due to early pregnancies, many of whom had been married early.

- In India, children participated in a training session designed to influence police in their approach to children's issues such as drug addiction, street children and exploitation. The children participated as "resource persons" to help police learn about life on the street from a child's point of view. The children and police worked together with UNICEF to create a more child-friendly approach to police interventions.

- In Thailand, UNICEF supported the government in organizing a "Youth Camp for Ending Violence against Children and Women." The Youth Camp helped build up youth networks and strengthen the capacities of local agencies to protect children and women from domestic violence. After the training, participants were appointed as youth volunteers, monitoring violence against children, youth and women in their communities.