

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Over 12 million children have better educational opportunities through IKEA Foundation, Save the Children and UNICEF partnership

NEW YORK, 15 January, 2016 – More than 12 million children in over 46 countries have better schools, teachers and learning materials, thanks to a 13-year partnership between the IKEA Foundation, Save the Children and UNICEF.

Since 2003, the IKEA Foundation's 'Soft Toys for Education' campaign has contributed €88 million to Save the Children and UNICEF, helping to increase school attendance for some of the world's most marginalized and vulnerable children. Funds have also helped train teachers, provide educational materials and improve child-protection systems in schools and communities.

"Education is the most solid road leading out of poverty. All children have the right to an education but still too many are left behind. Partnering with UNICEF and Save the Children for 13 years has allowed us to address this issue strategically and invest in improving the quality of education in some of the world's poorest communities—and we're incredibly grateful to the IKEA customers and co-workers who have worked so hard to make that right a reality for over 12 million children," said Per Heggenes, CEO IKEA Foundation

In Ethiopia, funds from the IKEA Foundation have helped UNICEF reach children in rural farming communities with basic education. The flexible schooling model has been so successful that the Ethiopian government has rolled it out nationally.

In China, IKEA Foundation funding helped develop early-childhood development centres for disadvantaged children living in selected rural communities. The impact of these centres on children's lives contributed to the Government of China's decision to universalize preschool education.

"UNICEF is grateful to the IKEA Foundation, IKEA co-workers and customers for the commitment demonstrated over the past 13 years to help transform children's lives through education," said UNICEF Global Chief of Education Josephine Bourne. "We will continue to build on these achievements so that many more of the world's most vulnerable and marginalized children are given the opportunity to build a better future for themselves and their families through education."

With the support of the IKEA Foundation, Save the Children has worked in 17 countries in Asia and Europe to provide educational opportunities for previously out-of-school children, to improve the learning environment and to train teachers on child-centred, nonviolent, and inclusive teaching methodology.

In Bangladesh, the Philippines and Vietnam, Save the Children has, together with education authorities and civil society organizations, supported policy reform and practices to ensure that children from minority groups learn in a language they understand.

“Education is a human right and the means by which to equip children with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in the world. It also saves lives, protects and builds peace. Save the Children is extremely grateful for the partnership we have with the IKEA Foundation and the support we receive from IKEA employees and customers around the globe. Together, we have made an enormous difference for children with disabilities and children from ethnic minority groups, and Save the Children will not rest until all children have the opportunity to learn,” said David Skinner, Director of Save the Children’s Education Global Initiative.

Although the Soft Toys for Education campaign has ended its successful run, the IKEA Foundation will continue its commitment to UNICEF and Save the Children through ongoing grants in Eastern Europe, sub-Saharan Africa and Asia in the areas of education, early-childhood care and development, child protection, adolescence and humanitarian response.

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Notes to editors

Behind these figures are the individual stories of teachers and children like May Yoi Ching Marma in Bangladesh, Naima in the Philippines, Nokolunga in South Africa and Jan Sankoh in Sierra Leone.

Save the Children

The story of Naima in Mindanao, the Philippines

<https://www.savethechildren.net/save-children-ikea-foundation-partnership-case-study-philippines>

The story of May Yoi Ching in Bangladesh

<https://www.savethechildren.net/save-children-ikea-foundation-partnership-case-study-bangladesh>

UNICEF

The story of Nokulunga in South Africa

http://www.unicef.org/esaro/5440_south-africa_day-of-the-girl-child.html

Studying despite the Ebola outbreak Sierra Leone

http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/sierraleone_81528.html

About IKEA Foundation

The IKEA Foundation (Stichting IKEA Foundation) is the philanthropic arm of INGKA Foundation, the owner of the IKEA Group of companies. We aim to improve opportunities for children and youth in some of the world's poorest communities by funding holistic, long-term programmes that can create substantial, lasting change. The IKEA Foundation works with strong strategic partners applying innovative approaches to achieve large-scale results in four fundamental areas of a child's life: a place to call home; a healthy start in life; a quality education; and a sustainable family income, while helping these communities fight and cope with climate change.

Learn more at www.ikeafoundation.org and www.facebook.com/IKEAfoundation.

About IKEA Group

Our vision is to create a better everyday life for people and we offer well-designed, functional and affordable, high-quality home furnishings, produced with care for people and the environment. The IKEA Group has 315 stores in 27 countries. In addition, more than 40 stores are run by franchisees outside the IKEA Group. The IKEA Group had 716 million visitors during FY14 and 1.5 billion people visited www.ikea.com.

About Save the Children

Save the Children is the world's leading independent organization for children, delivering programmes and improving children's lives in more than 120 countries worldwide. Working towards a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation, Save the Children's mission is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives. Learn more at www.savethechildren.net and www.facebook.com/savethechildren.

About UNICEF

UNICEF promotes the rights and well-being of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere. For more information about UNICEF and its work, visit <http://www.unicef.org>. Follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/unicef) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/unicef).

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