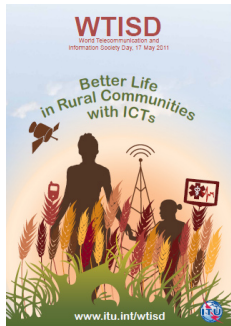


International Child Helpline Day

International Child Helpline Day, 17 May, was celebrated for the first time in 2007.



International Child Helpline Day is held in conjunction with World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD), an annual event coordinated by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

The theme of WTISD 2011 is: *“Better life in rural communities with ICT’s”*.

“As the leading specialized agency of the United Nations for information and communication technologies (ICT), ITU looks towards its Members to raise awareness of the role of ICTs in creating fresh opportunities for a better life through long-term, sustainable development, not least among the most vulnerable sections of our society.”

Child helplines will link to this year’s WTISD theme by celebrating:

“Reaching more children with Information Communication Technologies (ICTs)”.

More information:

- <http://www.childhelplineinternational.org/en/May17>
- <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/Child-Helpline-International/119426988084367>
- <http://www.itu.int/wtisd/index.html>

ICTs - helping children in need

ICT – Information Communication Technology

We live in a rapidly changing world, and **ICTs are increasingly becoming children’s primary means of communication**.

Child helplines across the globe continuously work to adapt their methods and incorporate new technologies and means of communication, to ensure that all children everywhere can get help when they need it.

In addition to the more traditional phone lines, many child helplines now also provide online chat services, SMS and text message counselling and even radio to reach all children, and especially those in remote or marginalised areas.

We should embrace the advantages that ICTs offer us, and use the tools available to us to help those who need it most.

We should be available to children in need 24/7, via the means that they themselves use: SMS, text messages, online chat rooms and more!

SMS and texting – on the rise amongst children and youth worldwide:

The **mobile phone sector** has shown phenomenal growth over the past five years, in contrast to the slow fixed growth of regular telephone lines,

According to the International Telecom Union (ITU), by the end of 2008, the world had 4 billion mobiles subscribers, almost two-thirds of the world population.

While there is an obvious link between a country’s income level and its teledensity, the level of poverty does not seem to have an impact on the number of mobile subscribers.

Unlike in the developed countries, where there is already an existing network of communication through landlines mobile phones in African countries provide communication where previously there was none¹.

This creates a vast opportunity for child helplines in both economically developed and developing countries to reach out to children in need of care and protection through mobile phones.

¹Sokari Ekine (ed) (2010) SMS Uprising: Mobile activism in Africa, Pambazuka Press, Oxford (available on Google Books)



Child Helplines

Child helplines are often a young person's first contact with any kind of child protection services, *the gateways to a world of help and support.*

Child helplines allow children to reach out when they need it, directly, to speak with someone in a safe, trustworthy environment.

Toll-free phone lines, online chat rooms, SMS text messages and letter boxes in remote areas provide children with accessible, confidential means to reach out for help.

In countries where the child protection system is porous, child helplines often also step up and provide direct interventions, shelter, mediation and rehabilitation services to children and young people reaching out for help.

Child helplines not only provide children with their fundamental right to be heard, as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), but they also play an instrumental role in shaping, strengthening and filling in the gaps of existing national child protection systems. Indeed, child helplines are core components of any comprehensive child protection system.

Child helplines are in the unique position of being privy to children's true voices, as they themselves choose to express them.

“There is a pressing need for safe, confidential and accessible channels for children to seek help and advice.”

~ Marta Santos Pais, United Nations Special Representative on Violence Against Children.

Child Helpline International (CHI)

Child Helpline International (CHI) is the global member network of child helplines, working to protect the rights of the child.

Founded in 2003, the CHI network today spans 133 countries worldwide (Dec. 2010).

CHI is founded on the belief that children and young people are capable of making sound decisions in matters concerning them, and works towards giving children the right tools, knowledge and guidance to make that happen.

CHI provides its member child helplines with support, advocacy and opportunities for networking and sharing knowledge and expertise. Together, we can all better help children.



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Child Helpline International

International Child Helpline Day

“Reaching more children with ICTs”

May 17, 2011



In 2010 child helplines in the CHI network received over 14 million contacts.

An average child helpline receives ten contacts on violence and abuse per day, every day.