



Child Helpline International

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Press Release:

May 17 – International Child Helpline Day

Theme: Reaching more children with ICTs

Children contacted child helplines worldwide over 14 million times last year!

April 11, 2011 (Amsterdam, Netherlands) May 17, 2011 marks the fourth annual **International Child Helpline Day**. Child helplines across the globe will celebrate the crucial role of child helplines in child protection.

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). This year's theme is "Better life in rural communities with ICT's", and the CHI* network will link to it by celebrating "*Reaching more children with Information Communication Technologies (ICTS)*".

We live in a rapidly changing world, and **ICTs are increasingly becoming children's primary means of communication**. Child helplines are constantly adapting their methods and incorporating new 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.

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, in real time and 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.

"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)** is the global member network of child helplines, working to protect the rights of children. CHI's network consists of 147 members in 133 countries worldwide (December. 2010).

For more information about specific May 17 events, how child helplines use ICTs to reach out to children in need, photos and facts and figures, please contact CHI at:

info@childhelplineinternational.org, or see the CHI website, below.

Links:

<http://www.childhelplineinternational.org/en/May17> (for information, fact and figures, photos)

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/Child-Helpline-International/119426988084367>

<http://www.itu.int/wtisd/index.html>

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