

ISSUE 3 - AUTUMN 2023

# STRONG WOMEN STRONG WORLD

## Dear friend...

Read on for lots of great news about strong women!



Fola

Congratulations to Fola Komolafe MBE, new CEO of World Vision UK – our first female CEO and first black CEO! Previously a vice-chair on the Board of Trustees, she has also been a member and champion of our Strong Women Strong World (SWSW) leadership group. As an initiative that strives for female empowerment, Fola's appointment has huge significance for us.

We're also pleased to welcome our new SWSW Programme Manager Charlotte Maytum. She has exciting plans to develop the initiative so watch this space!

*The End of Poverty Begins with Her* World Vision event in Madrid saw partners and donors from across Europe and the US pledge their commitment to support women and girls.

### Bold action

This year's theme for International Day of the Girl in October was *Invest in Girls' Rights: Our Leadership, Our Wellbeing*. Responding to girls' calls for change, the global community must move beyond reaffirming commitments and invest boldly in the action needed to make that change. If you would like to make your own bold action and be part of the change, see the end of this newsletter.

But before that please read the inspiring story of 18-year-old Monika (pictured above), who is fighting against child marriage (see page three).

Best Wishes,

Saramine

Saramine Mukute – Head of Key Relationships, Strategic Partnerships - [saramine.mukute@worldvision.org.uk](mailto:saramine.mukute@worldvision.org.uk)

*P.S. The devastating news in the Middle East is on everyone's hearts right now. Find out how you can help on the back page.*

## Spotlighting...



Charlotte Maytum,  
our new SWSW  
Programme Manager

Hi, I live in Coventry with my husband Andy, a teacher, our three teenage boys and our black lab Max. I've worked with many charities and education institutions, including a short stint at World Vision from 2017-19. I'm looking forward to working with you, sharing how girls can have a voice and a say in their future. It's also started some great discussions in my house of boys about inequalities and ways we can make a difference.

### Fun fact:

I love swimming and used to represent my county as a synchronised swimmer!

If you'd like to get in touch with Charlotte please email

[charlotte.maytum@worldvision.org.uk](mailto:charlotte.maytum@worldvision.org.uk)

IMAGE ABOVE:

Monika and her team are fighting child marriage in Bangladesh

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**GIRLS DESERVE** to live free from fear



IMAGE ABOVE: Leah is just a teenager but she's fighting FGM in Kenya. © 2022 Sarah Ooko/World Vision

## Did you know it was International day of the girl child on 11 October?

**World Vision is working to help girls fight for their rights - the right to be free from fear. Free from rape, abuse and violence.**

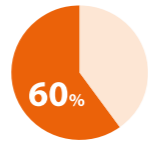
12 million girls marry before the age of 18 every year. **That's 22 girls every minute.**



At least **120 million girls** under the age of 20 – **about 1 in 10** – have been forced to engage in sex or perform other sexual acts, although the actual figure is likely much higher.



60% of all **trafficking victims** worldwide are **women and girls.**



At least **200 million women and girls** aged 15-49 have undergone FGM in 30 countries where representative data is available. [See how 14-year-old Leah \(pictured\) is fighting FMG in Kenya.](#)

## Day of the Girl events

A **SWSW fundraising lunch** in Harrogate - held to coincide with International Day of the Girl - was hosted by Womba Kamuhuza, a member of our leadership group (pictured back right). **The event promoted awareness and, along with an incredible 200 mile run by Lynn Achiro (pictured far right), aims to add £600 to the campaign.** If you'd like to host a lunch, film night or other event, please contact Charlotte who can provide any advice and resources you need.



## She has a name: **Monika**



### Monika is fighting child marriage

World Vision works with communities to break down the systems and beliefs that force girls into marriage. Girls and women are empowered as decision makers and agents of change – to say no to child marriage.

Monika, (pictured above and right), an 18-year-old from a rural community in Bangladesh, stood up to child marriage and **not only escaped being a child bride - she is now helping countless other girls facing a similar nightmare.**

### "I did not know what to do"

Rahima\* was just 14 years old when she discovered she was to be married to someone she'd never met. "I did not know what to do," she said. "When I found out, I cried a lot."

Rahima was going to accept her fate - but then she heard about Monika.

Monika also comes from a family where child marriage was seen as normal. She explains, "In various sessions at World Vision, I came to know about the physical and psychological damage child marriage has on a child." Even though both her mother and her sister were married as children, she was able to choose a different path after she shared what she had learned with her family.

But Monika didn't stop there. She decided to take a stand with a group of friends. Now, she and her team are on the frontline of the battle against child marriage by exposing its harms to local families and the authorities. **"So far I have stopped 10 marriages,"** she says. "My team and I believe that child marriage can be prevented if we all work together."

Rahima contacted her and the team visited her home. Monika adds, "When we get information about any child marriage, we immediately inform the local administration. With their help, we stop child marriage through the mobile court as well."

### Free to dream again

Thanks to Monika and her team, who convinced Rahima's parents that child marriage is harmful, Rahima's marriage was stopped. She is now back in school, dreaming of becoming a lawyer – and sharing with other girls what she learned through her experience about the power of speaking up.

*\*Name changed to protect identity*





**Sheyla is just 12 years old** – but that doesn't stop her fighting for change. For girls in Guatemala life is hard. Almost a third are married or partnered before they're 18, and violence is rife. Education levels are low, with only four out of 10 secondary school-aged girls enrolled. "Girls are not respected, and they are put down," says Sheyla. **"But I have learned about our rights: the right to have an identity and education."** She's even met with Guatemala's Vice President to present the needs of their community. [Find out more](#)

# In partnership

We're aiming to reach **six million women** and girls by the end of 2024 – but we can't do this alone. Our impact is bigger when we work together – that's why **we need partners** who can help women and girls achieve their dreams, so they can become the next generation of strong women. **Please get in touch, we'd love to hear from you.**

## Girls deserve to live free from fear – what can you do?



### Invest in women and girls

A donation to the [Strong Women Strong World Fund](#) will help empower women and girls through World Vision's programmes.



### Keep in touch

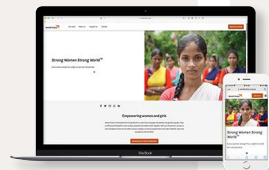
To join our Strong Women Strong World movement and to receive updates about our work and how your support is making a difference, [you can sign up here.](#)

### Online

Why not join us on social media and share some of our amazing stories with your friends?

For more information check out our website

[worldvision.org.uk/strongwomenstrongworld](http://worldvision.org.uk/strongwomenstrongworld)



### Raise awareness

Help us to share the obstacles girls face in the world's hardest places, and inspire more people to take action.

You can forward this newsletter, or a link to our [website](#), to someone you think would appreciate it.



## MIDDLE EAST EMERGENCY

We've all been distressed to see the violence in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Israel, with children and families caught up in the devastating conflict. In times like this, food can be hard to find, water runs out, and healthcare is desperately needed. We're already working in the West Bank and are responding to the most urgent needs. With decades of experience in the area, we're acting right now to support innocent families whose lives have been shattered. [Find out more](#)

**Contact us** Charlotte Maytum – Programme Manager (Strong Women Strong World) - [charlotte.maytum@worldvision.org.uk](mailto:charlotte.maytum@worldvision.org.uk)

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    @WorldVisionUK

At World Vision, our focus is on helping the world's most vulnerable children overcome poverty and experience fullness of life. For over 70 years, we have worked together with communities – of all faiths and none – even in the most dangerous places, inspired by our Christian faith.

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