



BEYOND THE STREETS

LOOKING BACK AT YOUR
IMPACT IN 2021 AND
PLANNING AHEAD FOR
AN INCREDIBLE 2022

RAILWAY
children
Fighting for street children

BUILDING A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR CHILDREN TOGETHER

Welcome to your Railway Children newsletter for 2022, looking back at another difficult year and looking forward to another year of changing children's lives together. Despite the challenges of the last 12 months your support has meant we have achieved some incredible things. Around the world our teams have adapted and evolved to keep vulnerable children safe when they've needed us most.

**THANKS TO YOU, WE'VE REACHED
21,000 CHILDREN WHO HAD NO ONE
ELSE TO CARE FOR AND PROTECT THEM**

As the devastating impact of the pandemic continues to destroy lives and livelihoods around the world we know you'll be there to help the children and families most affected by its impact. We can't thank you enough for everything you do and we hope this newsletter will give you an idea of how your amazing generosity changes lives for children, families and entire communities.

Thank you



Helen Shepard
Editor
Railway Children

PS You can watch our 2021 impact video and find out more about the difference you've made at www.railwaychildren.org.uk/impact2021

HOW YOUR MONEY WAS SPENT LAST YEAR

- HELPING CHILDREN RETURN HOME 36%
- PROVIDING A SAFE PLACE TO STAY 11%
- FINDING AND PROTECTING CHILDREN ON THE STREETS AND IN COMMUNITIES 22%



- STRENGTHENING CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS AND POLICIES 11%
- RAISING MORE FUNDS 20%

*For every **£1** spent on fundraising we can raise a further **£5.40** that goes back into changing children's lives.

ADAPTING AND EVOLVING TO MEET URGENT NEEDS

As second and then third waves of Covid swept across India last year, our teams on the frontline in the country have been able to adapt and respond to the different situations thanks to you. With your support our projects have expanded their focus from operating mainly with children alone at the station to now working within the growing slum communities to keep children and entire families safe. These harsh and dangerous environments leave thousands vulnerable to disease, poor health, struggling to access education and facing a bleak future.

THANKS TO YOU...



**6,508
CHILDREN
AND THEIR
FRAGILE FAMILIES
WERE SUPPORTED
IN 30 SLUM
COMMUNITIES**

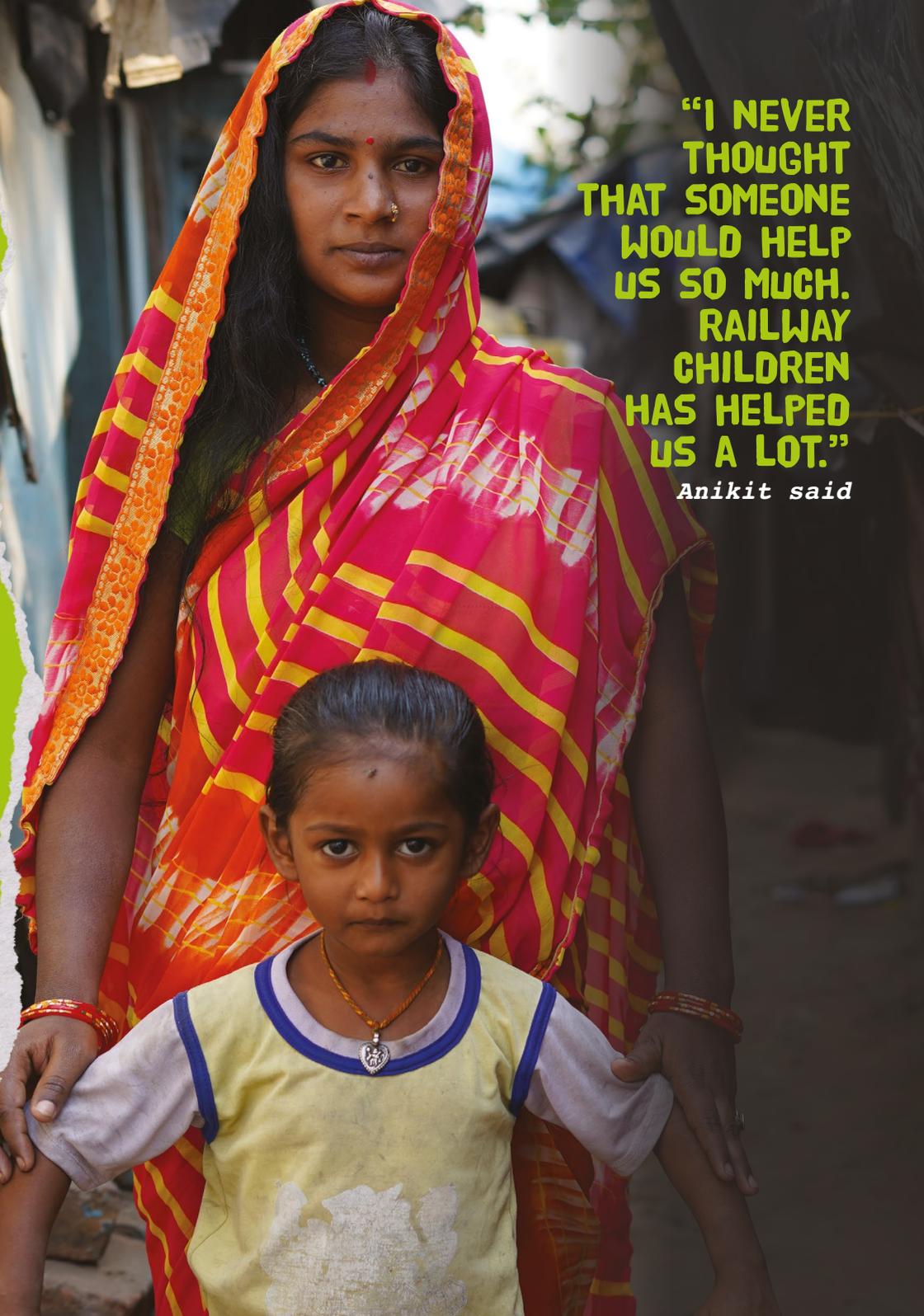


**3,475
FAMILIES
WERE GIVEN
EMERGENCY FOOD
PARCELS AND
ACCESS
TO SOCIAL
SUPPORT**



**3,164 HYGIENE
SAFETY KITS
WERE
DELIVERED
TO FAMILIES
TO PROTECT
THEM FROM
THE VIRUS**

The families we've met in these slums have been suffering extreme hardship, like the mother of two-year-old Suryansh and Divyansh, aged four. Both children were malnourished and their mum Anikit, was struggling to provide for them so we made sure the family got food delivered.

A woman with a bindi and nose ring, wearing a vibrant pink and orange striped sari, holds the hands of a young girl. The girl is wearing a yellow shirt with blue trim and a heart-shaped pendant. They are standing in an outdoor setting, possibly a slum, with a dark background.

**"I NEVER
THOUGHT
THAT SOMEONE
WOULD HELP
US SO MUCH.
RAILWAY
CHILDREN
HAS HELPED
US A LOT."**

Anikit said

A PLACE TO STAY, PLAY, LIVE AND LEARN

As life in India gets back to normal, and train services increase again, our teams are still providing vital outreach at the stations thanks to you, and we're keeping children safe at our shelters where they can stay. 13-year-old Ansh is one of the children currently at the Ghaziabad shelter and he told us about what it's like to be staying there.

"The shelter is just off the side street, a few hundred yards from the main station in Ghaziabad. This is where most of the children staying here are found by the outreach team. When they first arrive here they are often scared, cold and hungry so they get some food and medical care if they need it and then get given a bed in the dormitory.

It is quite simple and just has basic necessities but it is still a lot nicer and safer than sleeping on the streets outside. **The team here makes sure everyone has clean clothes to wear and knows that they are safe.**

While children like me are staying here we have access to lessons every day in the school room. We are taught maths and literacy and there are always books to read but we also get the chance to do some art too. That's my favourite subject and I would like to make it my job – I love drawing and painting. There are special sessions on every week too – at the moment I am doing a karate class every week which is great as well as dance lessons.

When it is time to eat we all come together and for a lot of children they haven't had three hot meals a day for a while so meal times are generally loud and busy.

The Railway Children team is trying to trace my family.



It's not easy as I can't remember the address and I wandered a long way from home before they found me at the station. But while they look for them I know I am safe here and can eat and sleep without fear. Without Railway Children I would still be alone, or even with a gang or in trouble. I'm so lucky that they found me and that I have somewhere to stay."

With your support we've been able to give safety and protection to hundreds of children like Ansh and our projects will continue to do so as India recovers from the pandemic.

EXPANDING OUR UK SAFETY NET FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Despite the challenges of the last year and the ongoing impact of the pandemic, we've been able to keep expanding the reach of our work in the UK thanks to you. With your support we've been able to launch our fourth project, based in Birmingham, so our teams can now reach young people who need us in even more locations.

With your help we've been able to:



- PROVIDE VITAL SUPPORT AND ADVICE TO **952 YOUNG PEOPLE** ACROSS THE UK



- TRAIN **5,147 RAIL WORKERS** ON HOW TO IDENTIFY AND SUPPORT VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE



- LAUNCH A NEW PROJECT IN **BIRMINGHAM** IN ADDITION TO LOCATIONS IN **MANCHESTER, LEEDS AND LONDON**





Lily was 14 when she was referred to us by British Transport Police. She was on their top ten list of missing people and had been reported to them seven times.

She was living in a care home in Leeds – but being from the south of England and a long way from her mum and brother she was very unhappy about this. Lily had been moved for her own protection after she had been exploited, run away frequently and services became increasingly concerned for her safety. But being taken away from her home environment made Lily lash out in the home, being violent towards others and causing damage as well as continually running away.

The teenager has struggled with her mental health and has self-harmed and considered suicide in the past, but was determined to escape so she could drink, take drugs and have fun. We got in touch and when we met, Lily was very different from what we had been expecting. She was bright, lively and bubbly with an engaging personality and keen to talk to us.

She spoke about her family and how much she misses her mum and brother, which was why she kept running away. We helped her understand the risks she was taking as well as reinforcing the knowledge that people are trying to help her.

In more recent visits we can see Lily's mental health is much better and she hasn't run away since March. She says she feels like people are listening to her now and she attends on-site education every day. With our help she has been able to accept the current situation and enjoy being a typical 13-year-old while we help her navigate the obstacles in her future and make sure she is on a better, safer path.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A PROJECT WORKER WITH RAILWAY CHILDREN...

Pavla Holubova has been working on the frontline of Railway Children's services supporting young people every day since the Birmingham project opened in July. She shares with us a typical day in her complex and challenging role...



8.30AM My day starts on public transport – we spend quite a lot of our time travelling – this time on my way to meet a young person in school. Many of the children we support feel safer meeting in school and are more likely to show up there than when we arrange to meet at home. This girl has mental health issues and considered suicide in the past so I'm hoping for a positive session today.

9AM While on the train I answer the phone to the parent of another case – the child has gone missing and mum is very distressed. It's extremely concerning so I get straight on to children's social care to pass on the safeguarding information and speak to a colleague to pick it up as I arrive at school.

9.30AM The girl I've come to meet is in school and feeling really positive so we have a great session. We talk about self-esteem and she has come really far since our last visit which is great to see. At the same time a call comes in to say that the next young person I was supposed to be meeting has not shown up, so I write up the notes and head to the station.



11AM I arrive at Birmingham New Street to hold an awareness session with members of the rail staff there. It's vital they know what to look out for when children are in danger and we help them to spot the signs of mental health issues, grooming and abuse so they can react accordingly.

1PM Once I'm back at the computer I have two online meetings with young people. Some have found this an easier way to communicate since the pandemic and enjoy the barrier of a screen – it allows them to open up a bit more and we've found it works well in many cases. Then another virtual meeting brought people from across numerous organisations together to discuss a young person we support – social services, CAHMS, education authority and a parent – and we all planned how best to offer help.

3.30PM I head back out to meet a young person in a café. This boy prefers being in a neutral environment so we have a catch up over a hot chocolate and he explains how he is still trying to distance himself from a county lines drugs gang that are putting pressure on him. We talk about safety and resilience and I leave hoping he'll be able to keep away from them.

4.30PM At home I catch up with the colleague who dealt with the earlier phone call and I'm happy to hear the girl has been found and is safe. I write up my notes and check I have everything ready for tomorrow when we have an all-day operation with BTP focused on knife crime and how to protect young people on the rail network.

RECOVERING FROM THE PRESENT... AND PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The children and families we support in Tanzania have continued to battle the virus as well as the legacy of poverty and hardship it is leaving in its wake. But thanks to you we've been able to be there to help them plan for a better, brighter future.



WITH YOUR SUPPORT WE REACHED AN INCREDIBLE 3,778 VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE STREETS



828 OF THEM WERE SETTLED INTO SAFE NEW PLACES TO STAY

We were able to offer them food and nutrition, health care, counselling and advice as well as encouraging them to join our centres and shelters where they could find safety and support.

We have continued to recruit and train foster families to offer homes to these children and also taken on **31 more legal advisors** to support them when they have needed help dealing with the police or court systems. You've also helped us train **132 more community champions** who operate throughout the cities offering advice and providing a contact for children on the streets.

Our youth association work has been more vital than ever in the face of the pandemic and our teams have continued bringing young people together to form support groups.

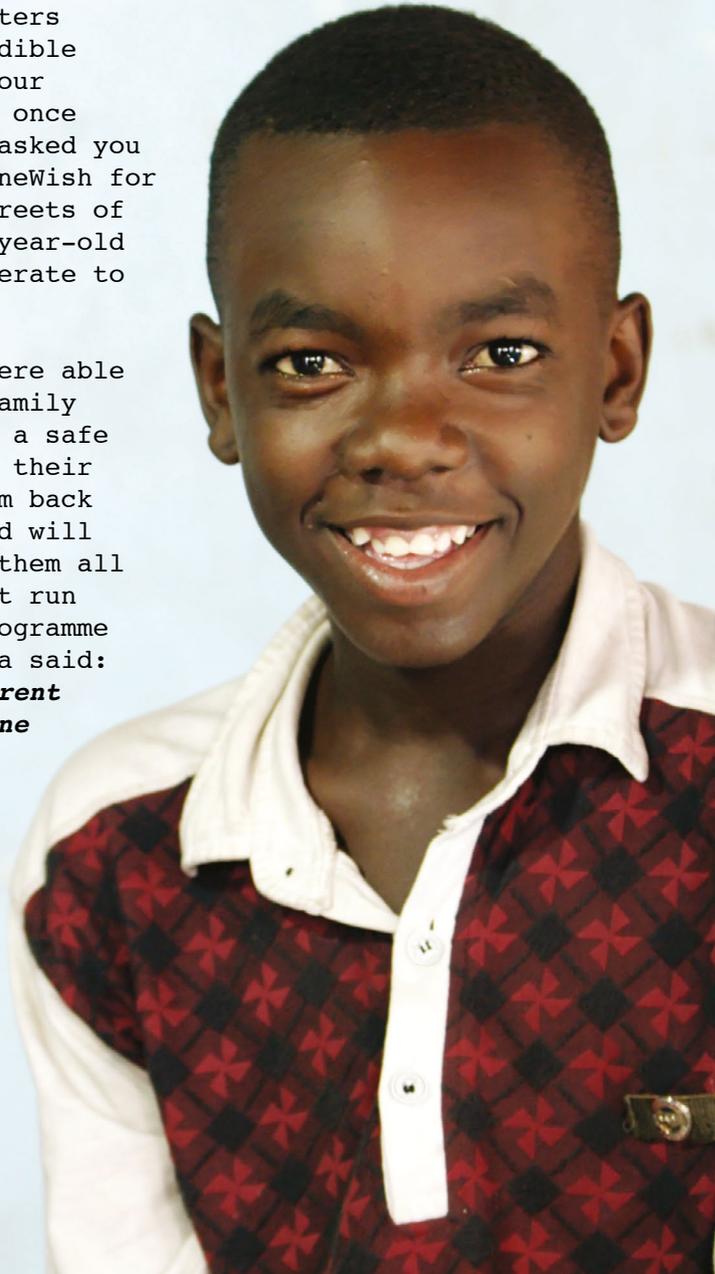
Thanks to you we've been able to provide life skills, business training, apprenticeship placements and business start up grants to 669 young people living on the streets.

A NEW FUTURE FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Our amazing supporters showed their incredible generosity during our Christmas campaign once again in 2021. We asked you to help us #GrantOneWish for children on the streets of Tanzania, like 11-year-old Jamal who was desperate to go back home.

Thanks to you we were able to work with his family and help them offer a safe and stable home to their son. We settled him back with his family and will keep working with them all so we know he won't run away again. Our programme manager Mary Gatama said:

"It is a very different household to the one we first visited. We are so proud of the progress this whole family has made. Thanks to your donations they have a brighter future ahead and will continue to grow and thrive together."



ALONE, HUNGRY, BEATEN AND ABUSED

Shukrani lost her father when she was just five and her mother struggled to provide for her and her siblings. Desperate and hungry she took to the streets at the age of 14. She had no choice but to earn money through sex work. Shukrani started to use drugs and alcohol, stole food and money and fought every day to survive. At 15 she found herself pregnant and was forced to marry an older, abusive man. He often made her and her baby sleep outside with no food and no covers.

Eventually Shukrani escaped from him, deciding instead to take her chances back on the streets. But this was even worse and one night she was beaten so badly she ended up in hospital for three days. The police arrested the man responsible and Shukrani slowly recovered but once out of hospital she felt completely alone with her baby, no support, and constantly in fear. Her use of drugs and alcohol worsened and she lost all hope. Luckily, that's when we met her and our teams have been working with her for 10 years now.

A DECADE OF REPAIR AND RECOVERY

Our teams enrolled Shukrani with our youth association, and helped her access life skills and basic education training as well as counselling and therapy to try and help her recover from her trauma. Once she had studied hard and learnt a trade and business skills, we helped her with a grant to set up her own small shop.

As Tanzania recovers from Covid and its impact, we caught up with some of the young people who have followed our youth association programme and found Shukrani to be thriving - she now supports herself and her children by selling tea and groceries at the bus terminal in Mwanza.



She pays her own rent and has even saved enough to buy some land south of Mwanza where she plans to build a house. The skills we armed Shukrani with through the youth association enabled her to survive the recent challenges and face problems with confidence and determination. She is both content and capable - a far cry from the desperate, fragile girl we met struggling to survive all those years ago.

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

Last year many of our fundraising events were able to go ahead, with different approaches to some and a few date changes too. Through all the changing rules and restrictions our supporters stepped up and helped us raise vital funds for children around the world at the same time as having good fun for a good cause.

150 PEOPLE CLIMBED THE THREE PEAKS IN SEPTEMBER RAISING AN AMAZING £238,000

171 JOINED OUR ADAPTED SLEEP IN EVENT AFTER IT WASN'T POSSIBLE TO SLEEPOUT AND RAISED £11,460

OVER 3,000 PEOPLE AND MORE THAN 100 COMPANIES TOOK PART IN A RANGE OF VIRTUAL EVENTS AS PART OF RAIL AID 2021 RAISING AN INCREDIBLE £716,000



Thanks to you we've been able to keep our events on track and are looking forward to a packed year ahead in 2022. We already have several challenges confirmed and you can find all the details on our website of walks, runs, cycle events and international adventures too. We're taking bookings now for some of your favourite events such as:

- **THE RAILWAY CHILDREN SLEEPOUT 2022**
- **THE YORKSHIRE THREE PEAKS CHALLENGE**
- **RIDE LONDON**
- **THE BRIGHTON MARATHON**

And we're already starting work on...

- **RAIL AID 2022**

WWW.RAILWAYCHILDREN.ORG.UK/EVENTS

Our amazing supporters make us so proud and we love to hear about all the things you do for us. We share as many as possible on our website, at www.railwaychildren.org.uk/spotlight-on-supporters, such as...

KEV JONES WHO RECENTLY MANAGED TO RUN AN INCREDIBLE 70KM CHALLENGE FOR US WITH A BROKEN TOE!

PE-JAE BROOKS WHO RECENTLY TOOK PART IN THE BRIGHTON MARATHON RAISING SPONSORSHIP FOR US



LEAVE THE GIFT OF A NEW LIFE

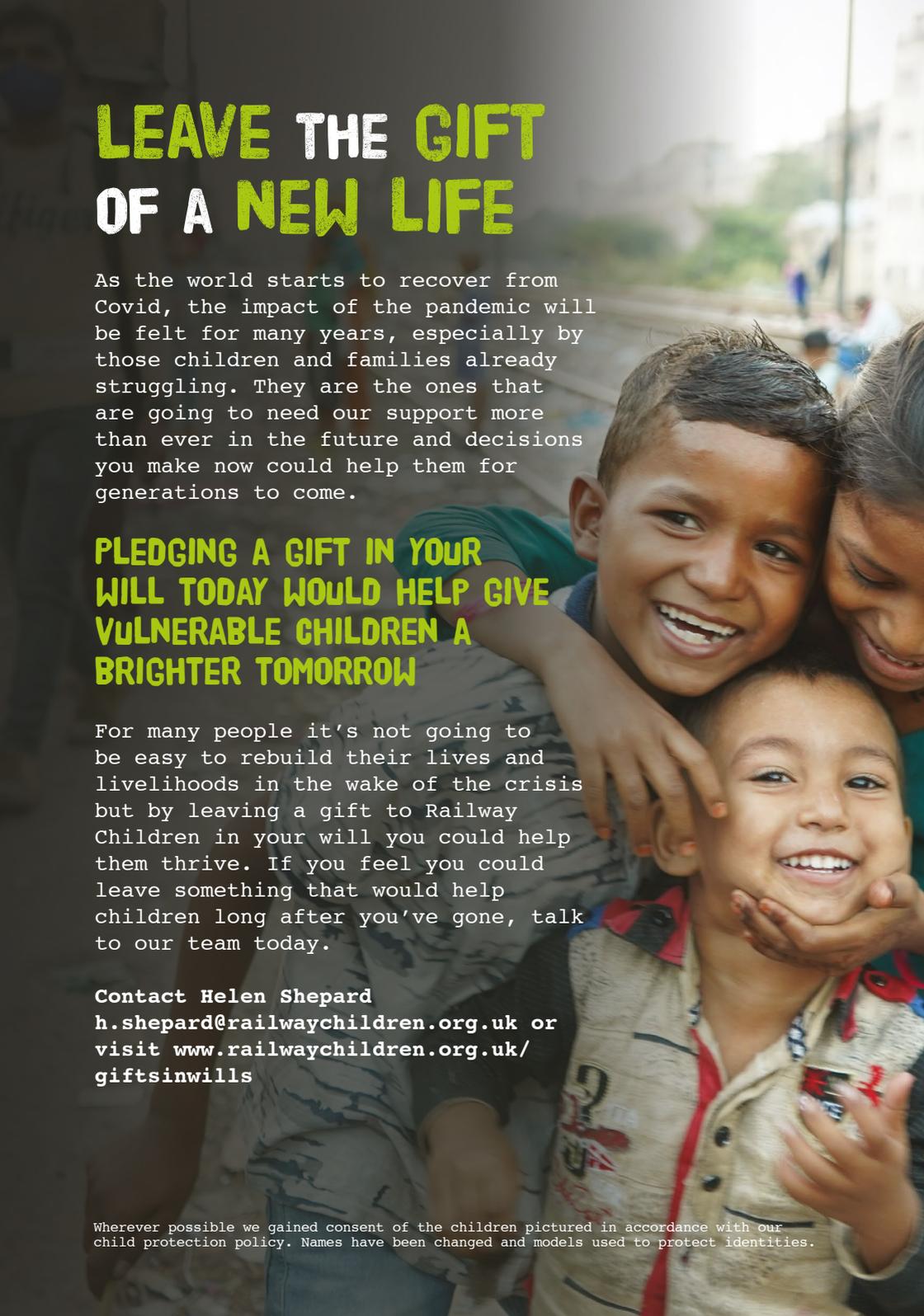
As the world starts to recover from Covid, the impact of the pandemic will be felt for many years, especially by those children and families already struggling. They are the ones that are going to need our support more than ever in the future and decisions you make now could help them for generations to come.

PLEDGING A GIFT IN YOUR WILL TODAY WOULD HELP GIVE VULNERABLE CHILDREN A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

For many people it's not going to be easy to rebuild their lives and livelihoods in the wake of the crisis but by leaving a gift to Railway Children in your will you could help them thrive. If you feel you could leave something that would help children long after you've gone, talk to our team today.

Contact Helen Shepard
h.shepard@railwaychildren.org.uk or
visit [www.railwaychildren.org.uk/](http://www.railwaychildren.org.uk/giftsinwills)
[giftsinwills](http://www.railwaychildren.org.uk/giftsinwills)

Wherever possible we gained consent of the children pictured in accordance with our child protection policy. Names have been changed and models used to protect identities.





YOU MAKE IT HAPPEN

Our supporters are the lifeblood of Railway Children and we can only achieve the incredible impact that we do thanks to you. So we love to get feedback from you about our work, our communications and what interests and inspired you about our work.

We recently shared a supporter survey with you and really appreciate all those that took the time to respond, telling us how they felt about the charity, your responses will help shape the future of our work.

- **11% OF YOU TOLD US YOU HAVE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF BEING OR SEEING A CHILD AT RISK ON THE STREETS**
- **66% OF YOU SAID WORKING IN RAILWAY STATIONS WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF OUR WORK**
- **48% OF YOU WANT TO HEAR MORE FROM THE CHILDREN WE HAVE HELPED**
- **35% OF YOU WANT TO HEAR MORE FROM OUR PROJECT WORKERS**

You play such an important part in everything we do and together we can keep changing children's lives around the world.

PLANNING FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE

After everything we've all been through over the last two years, we're looking forward to building on our successes and making the future even brighter and better for children around the world. We have exciting plans as we come to the end of one strategy and begin the next phase of our mission to reach and protect those that need us.

**WE KNOW YOU'LL JOIN US IN MAKING THIS A
REALITY AND CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH FOR
YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT**

WWW.RAILWAYCHILDREN.ORG.UK/GETINVOLVED

THANK YOU



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