

**'If the children are doing well, the world is doing well.'**

Beloved person,

When we reflect on the lives of children, wherever in the world, we see many contrasts. On the one hand, there is pain and loss: children who experience fear and despair in war zones, who suffer from hunger, have no safe place to sleep, or have to grow up without education and loving care. That deeply affects us. And on the other hand, children repeatedly show how resilient they are: they continue to play, laugh, and radiate hope, even in difficult circumstances. Anyone who looks at children with a loving gaze cannot remain unmoved

On November 20, we celebrate International Children's Rights Day. A day on which we reflect on this Convention adopted by the United Nations in 1989. It states that every child – wherever in the world – has the right to care, education, protection, freedom, and love. Rights that seem so obvious but unfortunately are still far from universal.

We believe that every person is of value - and therefore every child as well. From this ideal, we express the wish that every child may grow up in love and safety. At baptism, we as a community make the promise to create an environment in which a child feels accepted, where they can make mistakes without fear of consequences, where they feel protected and heard. An environment in which a child can flourish. For us, this promise extends beyond our own surroundings. It reaches out to children all over the world - because every child matters.

That is why we collaborate with the WereldWijd voor Kinderen (WWvK) (Worldwide for Children) foundation. This foundation is globally committed to vulnerable children—regardless of their background, religion, or beliefs—with projects that contribute to nutrition, education, medical care, safety, and play. Because every child has the right to more than just survival; they have the right to develop, to play, to dream.

A child longs for protection,  
most of all when there is strife,  
a place to feel at home in,  
where respect is part of life.  
For children raised with love who  
know true peace within their hearts,  
hold promise for the future,  
have been given a good start.<sup>1</sup>

You don't need to come up with grand gestures to make a difference for children worldwide. True involvement begins with the small things: an open conversation with your (grand)child about what is fair, contributing to a local project, participating in a campaign, or simply being mindful of what is happening in the world. During such everyday moments, compassion can grow. And together, we can achieve more than we can alone.

The road to a humane world begins small: with compassion, with trust, and with the willingness to make a difference—even when we feel powerless. This requires balance: between empathy and action, between vulnerability and hope. It starts with the courage to look away. To be moved—and to act. Not in a grandiose or forceful way, but by being brave, determined, loving, and connected with others.

If we see children as people full of potential, we can create a future together in which they can develop to their fullest. It's not just about them. It's also about us. Their well-being is not only their concern; it is our responsibility. Their future is our responsibility.

Let us have the courage to set out together. Not as saviours of the world, but as allies in the pursuit of good. For as Herman van Veen once said: 'If the children are doing well, then the world is doing well.'<sup>12</sup>

With a warm-hearted greeting,

Ellen La Brijn, in collaboration with Jan Pieter Bikerk and Marijke Berk



<sup>1</sup> Children's choir song no. 26 Een toekomst voor elk kind (A future for every child)

<sup>2</sup> The motto of the Herman van Veen Foundation.