



# *African Movement of Working Children and Youth (MAEJT)*

## **Collection of Poems:**

Year 2026





# Introduction

In this collection, children and young workers speak out with poignant sincerity about the hardships they face in their daily lives. They denounce the exploitation they suffer, the repeated violations of their fundamental rights, and the suffering that results.

However, these texts are not limited to expressions of pain: they also bear witness to resilience and tenacious hope.

Through their verses, these young authors express their aspirations, dreams, and ambitions in a rapidly changing world, while making an urgent appeal for respect for their rights and protection of the environment, an essential condition for collective well-being.

These poems, inspired by their own experiences, give voice to an authentic narrative filled with memory, dignity, and hope, inviting every reader to better understand their realities and to take action in support of the fulfilment of their rights.

# Poem:

## Life is a journey.



*I walk on a difficult path  
The stones hurt me, the thorns scratch me  
But I keep going, I don't stop  
Because I know that the future is there.*

*I fall, I get back up  
I cry, I smile  
Life is a journey, I travel it  
With courage, with hope...*

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MYTHONDEKE ÉLIE, 14 YEAR OLD  
WCY/DRC

# Poem:

## Voice of a Vidomingon



*I am a child entrusted,  
A suitcase without a lock, a borrowed heart.  
At dawn, I sweep away the dreams of others,  
At night, I lay my hunger on a worn loincloth.  
I was promised school, I found work,  
I smile to keep going, I cry when no one sees.*

*From market to house, I sell my strength  
too soon,  
Between honking horns and shouting, I grow  
up without an echo.  
I am a WYC, I work to live,  
But I am first and foremost a child, let me  
grow up.*

*Mom thought she was doing the right thing,  
her stomach spoke loudly,  
The guardian counted, not love, but money.  
Hands are hard, words sometimes harder,  
When the stick explains what the mouth  
cannot say.  
Yet my heart beats true, it wants to learn  
and play,  
It wants a clean notebook, not hidden  
wounds.*



***Authorities of the country, hear  
our footsteps,  
Protect our rights, do not look  
away.  
Let schools open to us, let work  
be humane.  
I speak for my people, on behalf  
of the Vidomingon,  
Give us childhood, and we will give  
you the nation.***

# Poem:

## CHILD HERDSMAN



*I am a child from CHAD  
A child who seeks happiness in life*

*Faced with so many difficulties  
following my parents' divorce  
I am forced to work, work every day  
and all the time*

*Work that is not easy for me, for my  
age. It's too much pressure*

*At dawn, I stand in front of the  
herds and cattle  
I lead them to green pastures  
As the sun sets, I make sure the  
herds are full*

*And this, every day.  
I don't dream of luxury  
I don't have time to play with the  
other children*

*I am not enrolled in school  
Yes, this is how I live.*

# Poem:

## Small earth, great care



*The Earth is warm, it needs our care,  
The air we breathe is everywhere.  
When smoke rises and trees fall,  
The world feels sick, from city to city.*

*So plant a tree and save the light,  
Turn off the taps, don't waste anything at night.*

*If we are kind in everything we do,  
Our Earth will remain happy, green, and blue.*

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**GISUBIZO KEVINE, 16 YEAR OLD  
KIGALI, RWANDA**

# Poem:

## Poem: Children's Rights



*A child is not a burden to bear,  
Nor a laborer, nor a desperate soul.  
A child deserves safety, love, and a voice,  
To learn, grow, dream, and make their  
own choices.*

*Protect their laughter, protect their  
days,  
Keep them away from evil and silence.  
When we stand up, when we speak out  
loud,  
We build a strong and proud future.*

*Every child matter, every child must be  
free.  
Today's protection shapes tomorrow's  
destiny.*



**ELIZABETH ODION  
SECRÉTAIRE NATIONALE  
MAEJT NIGERIA**

# Poem:

## The strength of childhood



*I am a child, I am strong  
I work, I struggle, I sleep  
The challenges are many, the  
obstacles are great  
But I don't let myself get down; I get  
back up*

*I am a child, I am free  
I dream, I play, I am happy  
Despite the difficulties, I am alive  
I am a child; I am a hero.*

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**OMER LUHEMBO, 11 YEAR OLD  
WCY FROM DRC**

# Poem:

## Hope in my heart

*I work hard, I sweat and I struggle  
But I don't get discouraged, I keep going  
Because I know that the future is there  
I know I can succeed*

*I am a child, I am a worker  
I am a dreamer, I am a creator  
I will succeed, I will win  
With hope in my heart, I will move  
forward.*

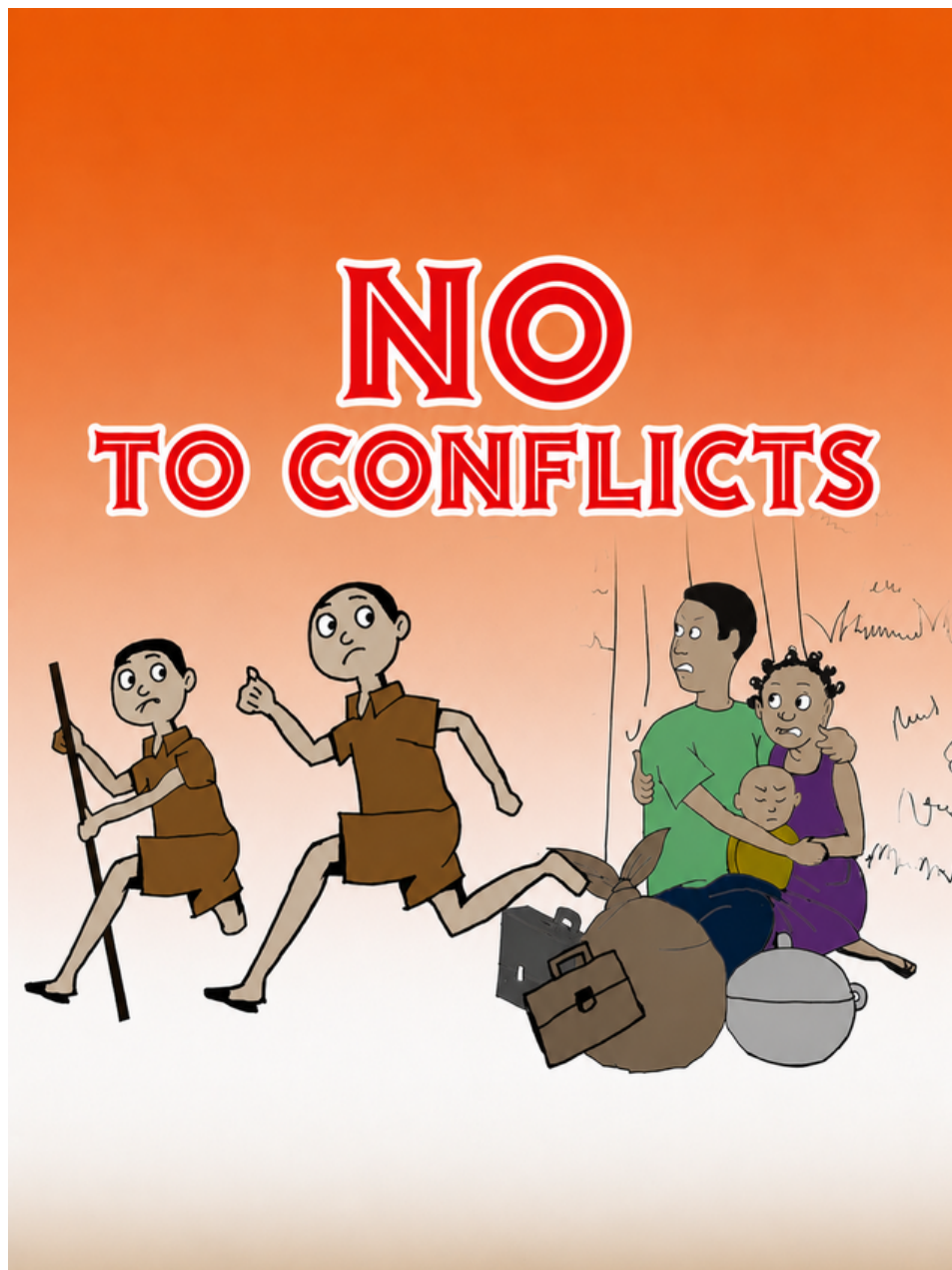


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AHADI BUINGO, 15 YEAR OLD  
WCY FROM DRC

# Poem:

## My future without war



*In my bright and new future,  
I dream of peace for you and me.*

*No weapons, no fear, no angry cries,  
Only smiling hearts and clear skies.*

*We learn to talk, not to fight or hate  
each other,  
To share, to help, to cooperate.*

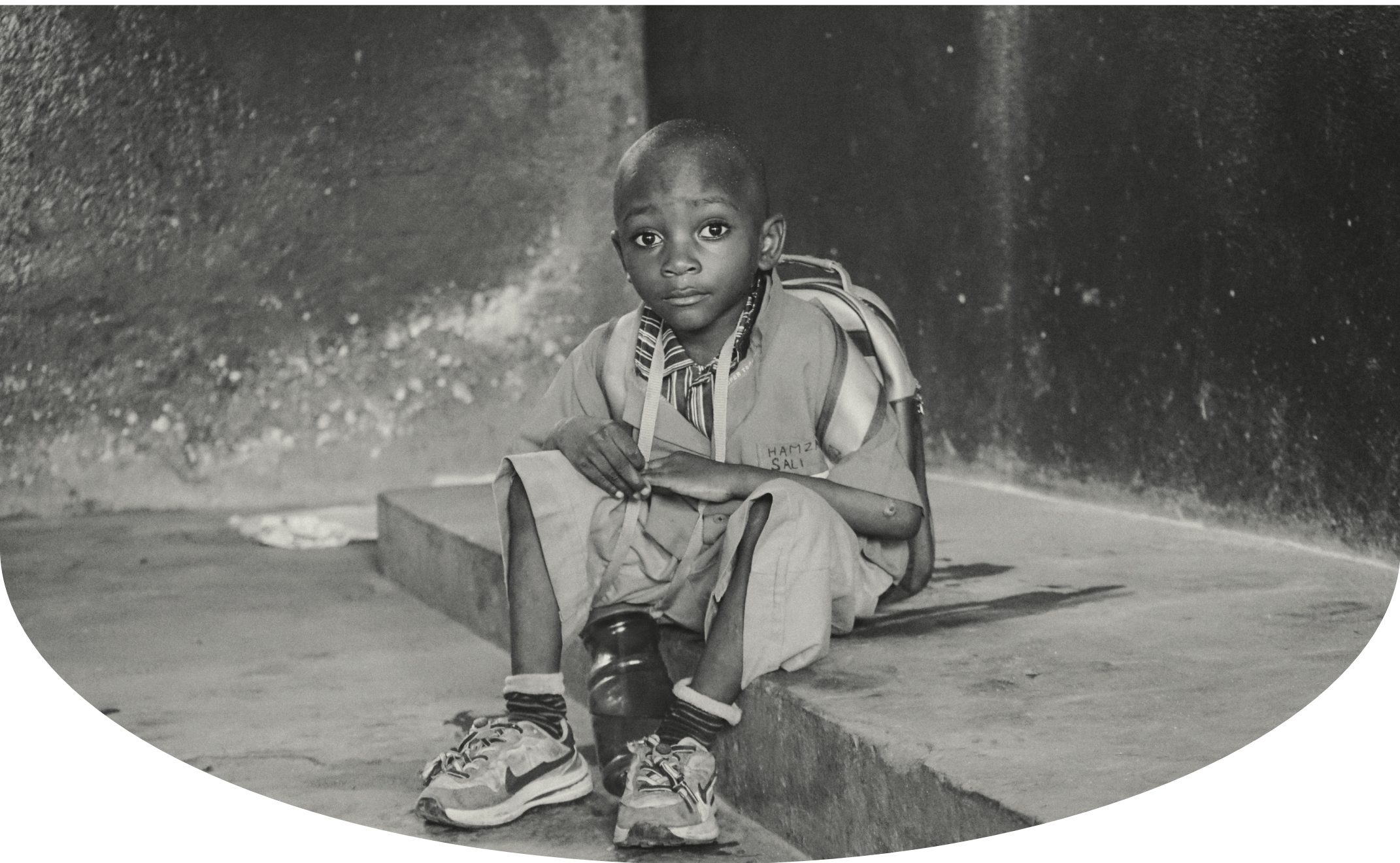
*With love and hope, hand in hand,  
We are building a peaceful and caring  
country.*

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**IGIRANEZA BEULLA, 15 YEAR OLD  
RUHANGO DISTRICT, RWANDA**

# Poem:

## EDUCATION/SCHOOL



*I want to go to school  
From kindergarten to higher education,  
including elementary school with  
preparatory classes, middle school, and  
high school.  
It is a place of knowledge, reflection,  
and ideas  
It is there that we learn the most  
fundamental knowledge about life*

*Dad, Mom, and my friends  
  
Let me go in search of knowledge  
  
Let me grow up with EVERYTHING  
  
Help me to be the master of my future  
  
I will be eternally grateful to you.*

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**CHRISTIAN, 13 YEAR OLD.  
WCY NJAMENA CHAD**

# Poem:

## This is what I do

*I raise my voice to defend children's rights,  
To protect their dreams, to give them light.*

*I stand where silence hides pain,  
And turn their cries into hope once again.*

*I break the chains of hidden wrongs,  
Hands that silence the songs yet to bloom.  
No child should suffer, bleed, or be exploited.*

*I fight for justice, in words and deeds.  
It is my duty, clear and true,  
Protecting children is what I do.*



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**HUNGE GABRIEL SEMETON  
NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER  
MAEJT NIGERIA**

# Poem:

## Our Journey of Hope and Courage



*In Zambia's heart, so warm and bright,  
Central Province shining with light,  
African Movement took a stand,  
An open umbrella, a helping hand.*

*For Kabwe town and Kapiri too,  
Children and youths found dreams anew.*

*Hope has been growing day by day.*

*They learned to speak, to lead, to choose,  
Decision-making power they did not lose.  
Life skills shaped both heart and mind,  
Opening doors of every kind.*

*Mentors rose with hearts so true,  
At thirty years, the movement shone,*

*The ripple spreads, the impact stays,  
Lighting up Zambia's future days.*

*Children and youths now lead the way,  
As agents of change, bold and brave.*

*The vision lives, the dream goes on,  
Passed to the next generation strong.*

*This is our story, proud and clear,  
A journey of hope we hold dear.*

**SANGWANI, ZAMBIE**

