

Eglantyne Jebb



Eglantyne Jebb was the founder of the Worldwide **Save the Children** Alliance. She not only created one of the world's first International development agencies, but her work led directly to the UN's **Rights of the Child**.

In many ways, she seems an unlikely Leader, as she was unsure of her own worth, often seemed influenced by others, and was continually searching to find herself. Yet, the impact she had, the values she espoused, and the way that she achieved what she did, speaks volumes about effective Leadership.

Eglantyne Jebb was born into a well-to-do country family, in Shropshire, England, in 1876. She was one of 6 children of Arthur Jebb of Shropshire, and his wife Eglantyne - who by coincidence was also a Jebb from Killiney, Ireland. It was in 1919 that Eglantyne co-founded the Save The Children movement, the first truly effective international aid organization. Later, in 1923, she drafted a declaration of the Rights of the Child. These five simple statements were endorsed by the League of Nations in 1924. Eventually an extended, seven statement declaration became the UN's "Rights of the Child", now ratified by all but one country on earth – the United States. But that is another story

Biographies

To understand Eglantyne, it is necessary to understand her background and family upbringing. Quoting comments on Eglantyne from the Save the Children (UK) website:

"She was a tomboyish child, leading her brothers and sisters in mock battles in the gardens, and used to enthral them with the stories she made up. She loved to go riding - she preferred to ride with men, she claimed, as women tired too easily - swimming and boating, and would spend ages reading the books in her father's large library. But her mother worried that she seemed to spend a lot of time daydreaming.

The children grew up with a love of the simple country life. Eglantyne enjoyed solitary pursuits, living cheaply and wandering alone in the countryside. She was very fond of ordinary people and hated the effects of the class system: "Respect accorded to [people] should not depend upon the way in which they spend their working hours. In a social sense there should be only one class - the great class of humanity", she said. Eglantyne was very unworldly, and preferred to wear simple, inexpensive clothes".

The best biography of Eglantyne is "Rebel Daughter of a Country House", by Francesca Wilson (George Allen & Unwin, 1967), who analysed hundreds of family letters. Quoting this biography:

"Eglantyne herself was the most inventive of the children. The two younger ones obeyed her implicitly in the endless games of soldiers, the marching, drilling, band-playing and storming of the forts of the 2nd. Lyth Regiment of Light Cavalry. So strong was Eglantyne's personality that she was able to rope in her elders: Bun [her aunt, of whom more below], always ready for fun, became Field Marshall, Em and Lill [her sisters] were sometimes Captains, sometimes demoted to Lieutenants."

The biography also points out that there were many intellectually challenging and "modern" influences on the young Eglantyne. For example, for three years Eglantyne edited the family newspaper, and consistently coaxed articles (letters, poetry, essays) from her entire family.

Family influences

Her family owned a Country House called the Lyth, in Ellesmere, Shropshire. They were a most interesting group of individuals.

Her mother ("Tye") was an avid proponent of the Arts and Industries (Crafts) movement, which helped people prosper via their own craft endeavours, and became "high art", thanks to designers such as William Morris. In fact, Tye's greatest achievement was to stage the first Home Arts Exhibition in London, which was attended by Royalty, Artists and many celebrities.

Her maiden aunt Louisa ("Bun") was almost an institution. She lived with the family at Lyth, as was often the case in Victorian England. Almost despite the formal governesses and tutors, Bun was directly responsible for much of Eglantyne's education. She was strict with her lessons, but not above some really "naughty pranks" – such as taking Eglantyne out of school to go trout poaching! More seriously, Bun was a truly modern thinker, studying closely Darwin's new ideas, actively supporting Votes for Women, yet at the same time being an avid supporter of Tye's Arts and Crafts activities. Bun encouraged Eglantyne to take her education seriously and was one of the principal influences on her decision to study at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford – something of a novel idea for a "well bred" country lady!

Eglantyne's father, Arthur, was a combination of forward thinker and classical Victorian. He was a well-educated and well-read Barrister, with an encyclopaedic knowledge of Anglo-Saxon times. Arthur was seen as a generous man, both of his time and his help. Perhaps a small but telling example is that for

over 50 years the Jebb family celebrated their Christmas lunch with their employees in their quarters. A liberal-minded landlord, Arthur had a passion for debating and democracy. Whilst he had Conservative political leanings, he nonetheless was happy to be in the company of Liberals – who his sister Bun used to invite to garden parties at the Lyth. As far as his children were concerned, he had mixed feelings. On the one hand he encouraged their intellectual, political and artistic pursuits. On the other, he almost hated the idea of his “precious” daughters going to University, not to mention the expense of so doing, whilst he thought they should be simply making a “good” marriage. One wonders whether his sister Bun helped straighten out his thinking ...

Richard (“Dick”), Eglantyne’s brother, was very close to her. He took Greats at Oxford and travelled the world – later to write books about it. He was married to a Canadian woman, Ethel. Dick was a “liberal” conservative, contributing articles to the Morning Post, and writing modern commentary on the British Empire. His books on the “white commonwealth” were considered enlightened and widely read, becoming textbooks at Oxford. Dick was most affectionate to his family, took up many good causes, and continued his father’s tradition in dealing with the employees on the estate. Whilst he was disappointed in his efforts to pursue a political career, he loved the country life, although his children lived all over the world, including Canada and India.

Dorothy (“Dora”) her sister, was a true partner in the setting up of Save the Children. For example, it was Dorothy who first moved the “Fight the Famine Council” in 1915 to set up a separate committee to consider the needs of children. She was the first Secretary of the “Save the Children Fund”. However, she realized she was better in the political arena, and so she turned this post over to Eglantyne. Dorothy studied Moral Science and Economics at Newnham, Cambridge, and married Charles Buxton in 1904. Charlie became a Liberal Member of Parliament in 1910, and it was he who “converted” Eglantyne to Liberalism. By 1917, both Buxton’s had moved on to become firm Socialists, when bearing that label was a sign of care and action for people less fortunate than themselves. They also became Quakers. At that time, Dorothy was also a committed pacifist. Funnily enough, Eglantyne, always rather self-deprecating, saw Dorothy as “superior” to herself in almost every way.

Another of Eglantyne's sisters, Louisa (“Lill”) went to Cambridge, studied Agriculture, and went back home to effectively manage the family farm - an unusual occupation for a “Lady”. She was a Governor of the Agricultural Organization Society (AOS). In 1919 Lill organized the Women's Land Army, an effort for which she received an OBE. In many ways, Lill was the best businessperson in the entire family.

There were more members of the family who led distinguished lives. For example, her cousin Gem ended her career as Principal of Bedford College, London. Her mother’s brother was Richard Jebb, a brilliant Greek scholar.

And there were many other influences. One such was Mrs. Margaret Keynes, who was the mother of Maynard Keynes, the famous economist. Mrs. Keynes was Secretary and driving force of the Cambridge based "Charity Organization Society" (COS), an organization aiming to define the best ways to run charities and aid groups via research and scientific methods. She was the founder of the "Boy's registry" (later the Juvenile Labour Exchange) and a lifelong social activist. The COS is discussed more below.

Oxford

At Oxford from 1895, Eglantyne was an avid student, and an energetic debater. When she first arrived at Lady Margaret Hall, she threw out all of the furniture in her room, believing it too pretentious for a "mere student" - and was only persuaded by the College Vice Principal to put it back on aesthetic grounds! She thoroughly enjoyed the lectures in Political Science from A.L. Smith - something of a University legend. Eglantyne also became a favourite of the principal, Mrs. Wordsworth (the great niece of the poet).

When Eglantyne left University, Arnold Toynbee's widow helped persuade her to go to a teacher training college (Stockwell) in 1898. In itself this was again 'different', as it was unusual for someone of Eglantyne's background to become a teacher. She acknowledged her time at the college was difficult, and she was shocked at the poor health of the student teachers. On the other hand, she felt lucky as the college schooling was progressive and child friendly.

Teaching

In 1899, she started teaching primary students, in Marlborough, Wiltshire. This turned out to be a quite progressive school, using "Froebel methods", and advanced teaching methods. Eglantyne was rather taken aback that the children played war games and was puzzled that they showed no apparent horror at the killing and fighting. The children were at that time knitting things for the soldiers of the Boer War. She always wanted to challenge the children, trying to get her pupils away from books, and to learn from observation and experience. Much to her surprise, her students loved her, as did her principals.

Still, Eglantyne felt she was a failure as a teacher. It was clear to her by then that there must be other ways she could help children.

Christ

Of great importance, it was also at this time that Eglantyne became a committed Christian, partly reflecting her own sense of "despair", but partly also reflecting a true vision of Christ. For the rest of her life she saw this as a pivotal event. In 1901, she stopped working at Marlborough due to ill health, but remained very active in the education of her cousins.

Cambridge

In 1903, Mrs. Keynes employed Eglantyne in the COS – giving her the first real taste of effective charity work, and the opportunity to write a well-received book on poverty in the city called "Cambridge: A Social Study" (Macmillan, 1906). This sets out some forward-thinking ideas and practical suggestions – laying the ground for Eglantyne's focus on education and continuing development programs as keys to helping the disadvantaged. The book, and her work at COS, gave her a good understanding of how to make a charitable organization work. Eglantyne worked at the COS until Spring, 1908. One of her constant companions and helpers through the years was Mrs. Keynes's daughter Margaret, who later married A.V. Hill. Hill became a Fellow of the Royal Society, and a Nobel prize winner. Margaret founded 8 homes for "Old People" in London and wrote a well-regarded book "An Approach to Old Age and its Problems" (Oliver & Bond, 1961). Such were the circles that Eglantyne travelled in all of her life!

For a while Eglantyne confessed in her diaries that she was ill, although she also wrote "My fatigue is a fatigue habit, and as such surely should be subjected to mind cure. I must experiment in order to try to and get stronger". In truth, Eglantyne had a thyroid problem, which became a goitre later on.

A Novel

1910, Eglantyne's mother, Tye, was also once again ill, and decided to live outside England for a while. So, for two years Eglantyne wandered Europe with her mother, visiting various health resorts. Whilst she didn't enjoy this, it did give her a chance to write a long novel, "The Ring Fence", which has many autobiographical sections and detailed pictures of English Country life. In the book, she attacks the attitudes of the "ruling classes" and examines the miseries of a manual labourer of the times. As a work of art, it is too long and prosaic, so it failed, making her feel of even less self-worth. Still, in retrospect it must have served to nudge Eglantyne further along her path.

The Balkans

During 1913, Eglantyne, spurred on by Charles Buxton, Dorothy's husband, went to the Balkans (Skopje and Prizend) to help the Macedonian Relief Fund. Her job was to deliver money raised to alleviate the tragedy. The aim was not just to give relief to the victorious Serbs and their allies, but also

to the largely Muslim Albanians - who as allies of the Turks had lost. This tangled Balkan situation, fraught with longstanding rivalries and religious disagreements, made a major impression on Eglantyne. From the Wilson biography, Eglantyne wrote:

"Unfortunately, religion has become tangled up in politics. Nationalities are so mixed: a man's religion is the readiest label to show to which party he belongs ... To be a Roman Catholic is therefore understood to mean you are not Serbian by blood, that you oppose Serbia and that you will favour any advance that her powerful neighbour (i.e. Austria) may make to her detriment"

She saw the terrible suffering and displacement of refugees, and, in a moment of lucidity during a nasty attack of delirium from influenza, she said "I must get back to England. The people are dying, dying, dying".

On her return to England, she campaigned both politically and to raise money, but to little avail. It was then that her sister Lill gave Eglantyne her next job – to edit the AOS magazine, "The Plough".

At the outbreak of World War I, Eglantyne became a complete pacifist. In 1915 she was forced by ill-health to stop editing the AOS magazine and turned instead to her diaries. Interestingly, she seemed almost to ignore the war and its suffering in her writing.

The Cambridge Magazine

1915, her sister Dorothy became concerned that the British newspapers were only carrying "one side of the war story". So, she got a license from the Government to import "enemy" newspapers, and published a newsletter balancing the facts. It is rumoured that Dorothy directly negotiated the license with Lloyd George, then Prime Minister, such was her determination. She imported more than 100 papers in all, from across the whole of Europe. After publishing a few simple leaflets, Dorothy was invited to include the material in "The Cambridge Magazine", and that became widely followed internationally as a purveyor of accurate news about the state of the war, related to social and economic issues. People such as General Smuts and Maynard Keynes were regular readers.

Eglantyne had operations on her goitre in 1916, and her health improved. During 1917 she volunteered to help Dorothy at "The Cambridge magazine", taking over the Italian, Swiss and French papers. It became clear that not only was the war drawing to a close, but that there were terrible social effects from the allied blockade. Thus, the magazine served not only to increase the two sisters resolve to make a difference, but also made them amongst the most well-informed people on the state of

European society at the war's end. News was bad – with much shortage of food, linen for new-born babies and other daily necessities.

Fight the Famine

The blockade against the defeated German Kaiser and his allies was extended after the 1918 Armistice, at least partly because of the “patriotic” pleas from Lloyd George – to help him win a post war General Election.

The "Fight the Famine Council" was thus started in order to get political agreement to raise the blockade.

Save the Children

April 15th, 1919, Eglantyne's sister Dorothy succeeded in getting this largely politically oriented pressure group to agree to a separate “Save the Children Fund”. This would aim to provide real aid to children across Europe.

On May 19th, Eglantyne, aided by her sister, led a major meeting at the Albert Hall to announce the fund. To quote the Save the Children website again.

“An associate of Eglantyne's describes the scene: "The public arrived supplied with rotten apples destined to be thrown at the head of 'the traitors who wanted to raise money for enemy children'. But they did not insult Eglantyne Jebb; they were forced to listen to her. She began hesitantly, then, gaining by the fervour of her mission, her voice became louder. Did she convince you? It was not by the arguments, but by the passionate conviction for the cause that she defended.”

Not long after that Eglantyne was arrested for handing out photographs of starving Viennese children (Austria was particularly hard hit) in an attempt to end the blockade. Once arrested Eglantyne probably hoped to go to jail to make a point, but instead was fined £5, and ended up persuading the prosecutor to make a donation to the Save the Children Fund! All in all, the launch of the Fund was a big success, and money came in from across the country. Within weeks of starting up, Save was distributing aid in Berlin and Austria.

The first branch was opened in Fife, Scotland in 1919. This was a novel way to build funds via local communities, and in 1920 professional area organizers were employed. By the end of 1921, there were

300 branches across the UK. Unfortunately, necessary cutbacks closed them all in 1924, and it was only in 1944 that the branch structure started to be rebuilt.

Modern methods

It was at this point that Eglantyne showed her true genius for effective aid work. She decided that modern methods of publicity were required and hired professional publicists to conduct a mass advertising campaign.

“We have to devise means”, she wrote “of making known the facts in such a way as to touch the imagination of the world”. She also wrote “we must have the same clear conceptions of its objects and seek to compass them with the same care, the same thoroughness, the same intelligence as are to be found in the best commercial and industrial enterprises”. Consequently, she secured the help of professionals in all fields – doctors, journalists, and business people.

Sceptics were confounded, when an investment of £5,000 brought in £120,000. In the first year, Save the Children raised £400,000 (equivalent to about £8,000,000 in today's money). It was also in 1920 that Save the Children started individual child sponsorship as a way to engage more donors.

Eglantyne also was quoted in 1919 as saying something which became a principle of Save's future work.

"All wars are waged against children"

Universality

Throughout 1919 and 1920, Save the Children received many protests, as they were providing aid to both the victors and the vanquished of World War I. They were also accused of being wrong in allowing Mrs. Lloyd George, wife of the blockade “villain”, to appear as a supporter on their notepaper! Eglantyne replied personally to many of the letters received. The Wilson biography quotes her as saying:

"The SCF pays no regard to politics, race or religion. A child is a child, whether red, white, brown or black"

Pope Benedict XV

During 1919, Eglantyne toured the Balkans once more. Then in December 1919, she had a crucial audience with Pope Benedict XV in Rome. It was during this audience that the Pope unequivocally supported Save the Children, to the extent of declaring Innocents Day (December 28th) a day to collect funds via the Church. He wrote two encyclicals on the subject. Save got support from many other religious groups, ranging from the Jewish community to Theosophists. To quote Eglantyne again:

“The only international language is a child’s cry”.

Save the Children International

It was on January 6th, 1920, that Eglantyne succeeded in starting the International Save the Children Union, in Geneva. The Union’s first major conference was in February, mixing people from all sides of the World War I conflict, but Eglantyne was too ill to attend. Nevertheless, Eglantyne built up excellent relationships with other Geneva-based organizations, including the Red Cross who supported Save’s International foundation.

Eglantyne believed that every country should do its best to help its own people, and not just rely on aid. So as Save became a success across the British Empire - and spread to Ireland, the United States, Scandinavia and many other countries - the focus was not just on relief for war victims, but also for the disadvantaged children of each country. Whilst many other aid agencies (such as Herbert Hoover’s American relief Organization) were helping across Europe, most of the aid was channelled to adults. It was Eglantyne’s firm opinion that Children had the greatest need. She wrote

“Every generation of children, in fact, offers mankind the possibility of rebuilding his ruin of a world”.

Through the children she saw the best hope of lasting peace.

Russian Famine

By August of 1921, the UK Save the Children had raised over £1,000,000, and Central European conditions were slowly getting better. However, at that time a massive famine struck the “breadbasket” Volga region of Russia. Eglantyne and Save needed to go to work with renewed vigour. It was this event that also forced Eglantyne and Dorothy to realise that Save the Children needed to be a permanent organization and could not simply be disbanded once the job of repairing war damage in Europe was done. So, from 1921 to 1923, despite many protests against helping the closed and communist state of Russia, Save the Children swung into action. Press campaign and movies were

made, and feeding centres set up. 157 million meals for 300,000 children were provided during the Russian famine. Save the Children demonstrated their efficiency by proving they could feed a child for a shilling a week ... five pence.

Principles of operation

All along this effort was guided by Eglantyne's principles. Quoting again from the Save the Children website, in 1922 the Fund's first President said:

"... the work of the Save the Children Fund is constructive as well as palliative ... our earnest endeavour is always to ensure that a just proportion of the money with which we are entrusted shall be devoted to works which will bear increase in permanently bettered conditions for children."

The professional approach, and the proven ability to get the funds and aid to where it really needed to be, gave Save the Children a world class and leading reputation. Yet this gave Eglantyne food for thought. If people's attention could only be got when there is a major disaster, how could Save, and more importantly, the children, get permanent support? So, the work of Save needed to change.

Rights of the Child

This led directly to the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, authored by Eglantyne in 1923, and first published in Save's magazine, "The World's Children". This was immediately adopted by the Save the Children International Union, and with Eglantyne's lobbying was then adopted by the League of Nations in 1924. It reads:

"Formulated by the Save the Children International Union, Geneva, 1923, and adopted by the Fifth Assembly of the League of Nations, 1924.

By the present declaration of the Rights of the Child, commonly known as the declaration of Geneva, men and women of all nations, recognizing that mankind owes to the Child the best that it has to give, declare and accept it as their duty that beyond and above all considerations of race, nationality or creed:

(i) THE CHILD must be given the means requisite for its normal development, both materially and spiritually.

(ii) THE CHILD that is hungry must be fed; the child that is sick must be nursed; the child that is backward must be helped; the delinquent child must be reclaimed; and the orphan and waif must be sheltered and succoured.

(iii) THE CHILD must be the first to receive relief in times of distress.

(iv) THE CHILD must be put in a position to earn a livelihood, and must be protected against every form of exploitation.

(v) THE CHILD must be brought up in the consciousness that its talents must be devoted to the service of its fellow-men.”

The 5-paragraph statement later became 7 paragraphs, and in 1959 was the basis for the United Nations “*Declaration on the Rights of the Child*”.

As well as using the Declaration as a mission statement and rallying cry around the world, Save the Children conducted serious research into the most forms of effective aid – always guided by Eglantyne’s belief that “Help must be given in return for help”. Many of the results were published in Save’s “*The World’s Children*”, which became the leading journal on the subject. Summer training schools for Save the Children staff were run in Geneva. And Save organized the first International Child Welfare Congress in 1925.

New approaches

As early as 1913, Eglantyne had suggested settling Macedonian refugees on the land, so in 1925 Save the Children embarked on new projects. One such was the establishment of villages in Bulgaria for refugees. The people were given tools and seeds and encouraged to re-start their lives via self-sufficiency. This was a great success and was a forerunner of many similar development programs for Save and other Agencies. The idea was quickly rolled-out to Albania. And in Hungary, Save’s school offered job training for young people.

In the UK, in 1926 schools were started to help inner city areas, and free school milk was offered at the time of the General Strike. A report published by Save the Children in 1933 confirmed the importance of school meals to children’s nutrition and development – leading to a campaign by Save which eventually got school meals to become mandatory in the UK (in 1944).

Beyond Europe

It was also in 1926 that Eglantyne began to look farther afield. In particular she was interested in China. In 1927, she was quoted in the Wilson biography as writing:

“As there are undoubtedly children who are suffering more in Asia and Africa than in Europe, we should prove the sincerity of our claim to universality by undertaking work in these continents directly we are able to raise sufficient funds for this purpose”

Even though Save the Children had raised over £4,000,000 by the end of 1928, Eglantyne remained haunted that the funds would dry up. She was aware that working beyond Europe could be a risky change in Save's strategy, so wanted to organize an international conference to get the effort moving in the right direction. She started to learn Chinese. Unfortunately, she died before the conference could be run. In fact, partly because of World War II, it was only after 1950 that Save the Children UK was able to devote more of its resources outside Europe.

Eglantyne's death

It was in June 1928 that she had three successive operations. Whilst she was convalescing in a nursing home in Geneva, her poetry of the time suggested she thought she was soon to die. December 17th, 1928, she indeed did die of a stroke. She was buried in St. George's cemetery, Geneva. A memorial service in London, at St. Martin's in the Fields drew a large crowd of distinguished mourners.

Values

Eglantyne was selfless, and tireless in working for the good of others, even when she was not in the best of health. She was a pacifist, a democrat, egalitarian, rather intellectual, and yet she also had a poetic streak.

She was a committed Christian, and whilst she flirted with Christian Science and other novel approaches, she settled on a simple, deeply spiritual Christianity. Yet, she never forced her religion on others. Eglantyne was a true Universalist, in not discriminating between the race, politics or religious faiths of people she worked with or helped. This breadth drew Liberals, Conservatives, Socialists, Catholics, Muslims, Baha'i adherents and many others to follow her.

In the 1920's Eglantyne was reported as saying:

"Relief work does not consist entirely ... in wearisome meetings, wearisome appeals, wearisome statistics, and a yet more wearisome struggle against uninteresting misery. It has its moments of enchantment, its adventures, its unexpected vistas into new worlds".

Other people sometimes saw her as mystical and a daydreamer, yet she was a practical thinker and doer, always seeking action. Eglantyne was for ever looking for real solutions, and not short-term fixes. She worked very hard at everything she tried. A simple example of the effort she put in was when she was helping to edit "The Cambridge Magazine"- it apparently took three people to handle the work when she left.

These values built partly from her family background, her own experiences in the Balkans and elsewhere, and her own keen sense of right and wrong, drove her to want to alleviate the suffering of others wherever she found it. Whilst she always found herself "lacking", she literally wanted to change the world.

Envision

Eglantyne's vision was nothing less than improving the lives of all Children, through a combination of scientific research into development methods, self-help, financial aid and professional management programs. Whilst it seems that in her earlier years she moved from one thing to another, it is also clear that this devotion to the cause of children was her driving force.

She was able to articulate this vision, notably in the "Rights of the Child" and most importantly turn it into concrete and sustainable action plans. It was a living vision, which adapted and changed in its expression in her lifetime and has done so after her death. From the original focus on victims of the War in central Europe, to the self-development efforts in her own country, to seeking to broaden Save's horizons into Africa and Asia – the vision was always evolving.

Enable

Eglantyne laid down very clear principles of action, enabling others to map their own paths and programs, even after her death. To quote Save the Children's website, these can best be summarized as:

- aid should be given in a planned, scientific manner
- aid should be preceded by careful research
- aid should be directed towards families

- aid should be given on the basis of need and not any sectarian basis
- aid should be constructive, self-sustaining
- aid should stimulate self-help
- aid should be pioneering, and able to develop models for others to follow

Eglantyne was thorough, an excellent organizer, and she consistently helped develop practical and long-term oriented programs.

A great action-plan example was her insistence on using modern management methods to run the fledgling Save the Children Fund. Building an effective area management structure in the UK branch system was another, organizational enabler.

There are the examples of International meetings and Conferences which she set up, to achieve specific goals, and not just to “talk politics”.

After inaugurating the International Save the Children Union, the Enabler with arguably the greatest impact was Eglantyne’s Declaration of the Rights of the Child. This was not only an aspirational statement, but it also provided clear rules for action and measurement. It truly changed the way the World thought about and acted upon children’s issues.

Empower

Eglantyne empowered people in many ways. First, and most obviously, through the activities of Save the Children she empowered children (and often their entire families) to escape from their troubled backgrounds.

Second, she empowered the people she worked with. Whilst her first instinct was always to trust the people she employed at Save and elsewhere, she demanded of them what she demanded of herself – thoroughness, professionalism and dedication to the cause. In fact, she could be quite tough minded in “replacing” people that did not perform well. Thus she “executed” empowerment as a two-way contract, giving space for others to act freely, but holding them accountable for the results.

Third, her encounter with the Pope, and her Universalist approach to religions and cultures, demonstrated empowerment across traditional boundaries, getting people to pull together in a common cause - by finding values and programs which they could unite behind.

Finally, the relative decentralization of the Save the Children groups in different Countries meant that each was empowered to pursue the goals it felt most worthy, whilst still following closely the operating principles of the Alliance.

Net, Eglantyne clearly demonstrated the characteristics of “empowerment” Leader – trusting, self-effacing, leading through values and principles, with a powerful personality ... but then holding others accountable, and helping them define the tools needed to do the job.

Energize

Let’s start with simple examples. Eglantyne persuaded the prosecutor at her trial in England to make a donation to Save the Children! She presided over the public launch of the Fund, facing much opposition, and rising to the occasion with an emotional and effective speaking style. She talked the Pope into supporting Save. Eglantyne also encouraged modern publicity methods – even having films translated into Japanese. Whilst controversial, these methods all contributed to income growth for Save and its programs.

More complex: Eglantyne found aid methods which not only gained support amongst potential donors, but also helped the recipients of the aid develop themselves. The donors were energized to help, and the recipients to grow.

More broadly: Once Eglantyne realised that Save the Children needed to be a permanent institution, and the “emergency relief” funds would dry up, she developed the “Rights of the Child” to provide an “energizing” rallying cry to people all over the world. She was then its most active advocate, helping to persuade the League of Nations to adopt the charter. She also started to seek ways to enter China, amongst other places, although this work was cut short by her death.

Often seen as charismatic, yet always seen as practical, Eglantyne seemed to energize everyone she came into contact with.

Aftermath

Save the Children operates in 130 countries across the world. It is one of the world’s largest aid agencies, and one of its most innovative – ranging from individual child sponsorship, to child “work training” schools, to playgroups, to school meals, to land mine removal programs, and to scientifically driven “positive deviance” education and health programs to teach people how to learn for local best

practices. Save the Children still follows Eglantyne's principles, in all the countries the Alliance operates in.

Her principles, in the form of the "Rights of the Child", have also been fully embraced by the United Nations. Few people have left such a positive legacy for the world's social well-being.