



*'Helping young people feel at home in Scotland'  
Youth Homelessness Journey – 20 March 2019*



# The Voices of Street Children and Youth: Alternative Citizenship in Three African Cities



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# Street youth: Becoming citizens?

Street youth as excluded citizens:

- Everyday practices of exclusion from citizenship

Alternative street citizenship:

- Practices and creative spaces of alternative citizenship

Use knowledge exchange to disrupt the discourse:

- Reposition street children as having agency and citizenship.



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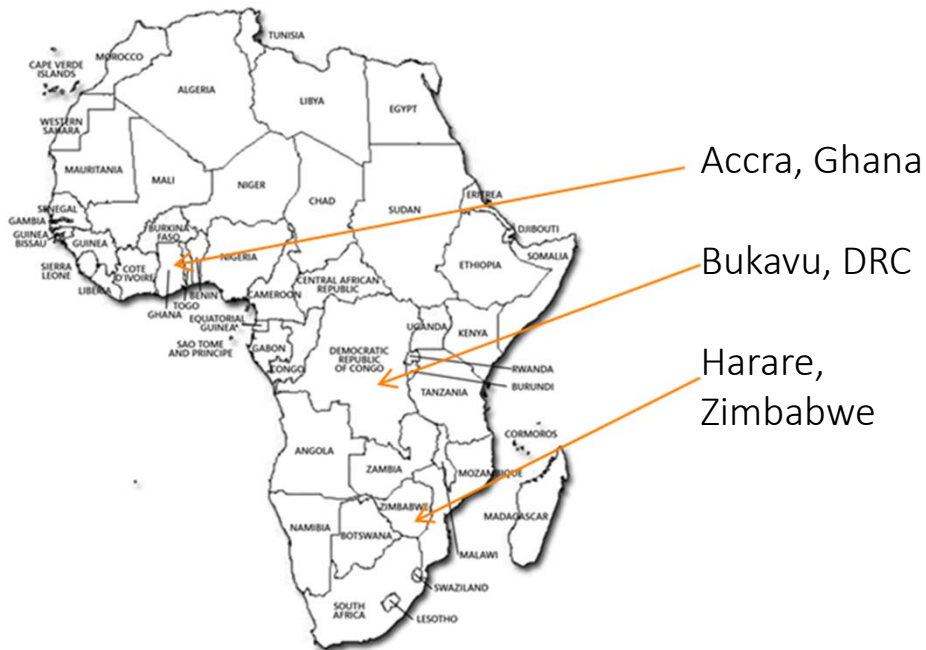
# Street youth as excluded citizens

- Street youth disrupt ideological constructions of citizenship (Beazley and Miller, 2015)
- *Still* out of place disrupting the moral order of cities (Ennew and Swart-Kruger, 2003).
- Missing from legislation; located outside formal systems of education and social systems of family life
- Still suffer violations of their citizenship rights (UN General Comment on Children in Street Situations, 2017).





# Growing up on the streets: the research



- Aims to build a deep insight into the lives of children and youth over time; to challenge blunt conceptualisations of life on the street and inform national and international policy and services.
- Uses a capability approach, adapted for street children (Sen, 1999; Shand, 2014).
- Involves young people aged 14 to 24 over three years: 229 key participants + 399 wider network
- 18 young researchers – their own lives, networks and cities.



# Growing up on the Streets: process and outputs



## Across the duration of the project (2012-2016) in the three cities:

- 2661 weekly interviews: ethnographic reflective accounts
- 198 focus groups, discussing 11 topics among six groups in each city; 10 issues chosen by participants + 1 instigated by the UN on Rights
- Four annual participant surveys (694 surveys in total)
- Qualitative data analysis in NVivo: over 500 codes; 120,000 coded components

## Public and Policy outputs:

- Briefing Papers (English and French), KE Training Pack, online Story Map – details below.



# Excluded citizens: Health







# Excluded citizens: Demolition of housing

Accra Metropolitan Authority regularly mark informal buildings for demolition: assets and social networks are easily eroded.





## Excluded citizens: Barriers to livelihoods

“When the Mayor arrives with police in the area, if he finds that certain members of the group washing cars, he orders the police to take away the number plates of these cars that are being washed. We beg the Mayor, telling him that our life depends on the washing of cars. He never pities us.”  
(Didier, Bukavu)



Informal barber shop, Accra



Car washing Bukavu





# Creating an alternative street youth citizenship



- Citizenship is produced through the everyday practices and spaces of daily life (Kallio & Halki, 2015)
- Street youth engage in a more open conceptualisation of citizenship: one where youth have more fluid forms of belonging and citizenship production (Isin 2008)
- Street citizenship can be complimentary to the formal economy; an equal, but alternative, citizenship (Ugor 2013).



# Alternative street citizenship: rebuilding and creating communities





# Alternative street citizenship: Relational practices of street citizenship

Friendship emerges as an important relationship for the creating of citizenship practices.

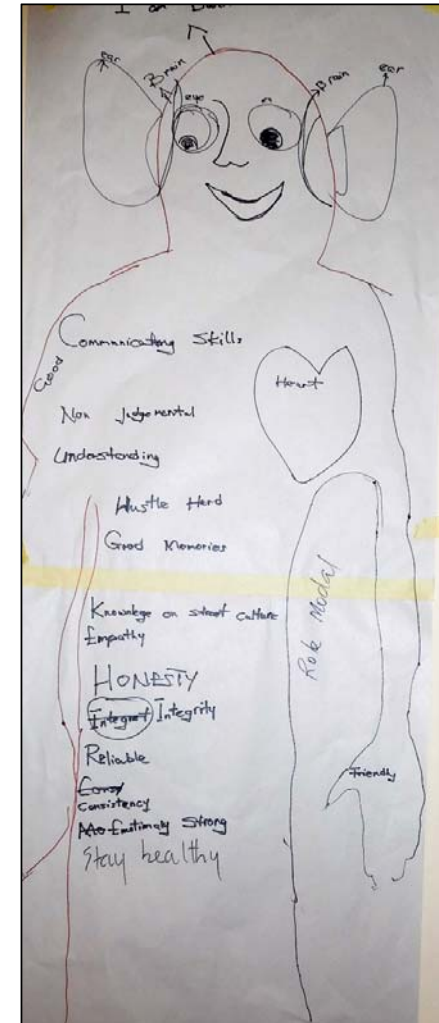






# Enhancing Citizenship through Knowledge Exchange

- Street youth are knowledgeable but lack opportunities to share their knowledge.
- Train and engage street children and policy makers in Knowledge Exchange = facilitate youth to have purposeful engagement





# Expert communicators



Communicators, negotiators  
and supporters



Activist street citizens

- “I had planned to lash those people in authority who have treated me badly with words of insult. ‘You this person, when I was pregnant you beat me and I started bleeding...’ I would have said something that will make the person feel very bad.” (Josephine, Accra)

- “[I learned] how to talk in public and that how you say it will let the person appreciate and accept what you are saying.” (Josephine, Accra)



# Purposeful Engagement with stakeholders



“That day I will never forget in my life. I came from the street and I was meeting people from different organisations and NGOs to sit with them and share my story.” (Eric, Accra)

“People were like crazy – very shocked when I came up with my life story; that I have lived on the streets all my life. .... [They] said that they have changed the way they thought about street children in a positive way, so I think they will do something.” (Jonathan, Accra)





# Transforming Perception of Stakeholders



“My thinking was that the majority will want to go back home. In future I will listen to each [person] and deal with each case on its merits.” (Jacob, Department of Social Welfare, Accra)

“This is a key population that has a lot of potential to positively impact on themselves and the community if offered the right help.” (Richard, Childline Zimbabwe)





# Street citizenship in communities

“I have my friends and some elders around my area if maybe we are in need of something I can go to the Assembly man and discuss it with him. I can discuss with him about the refuse site and place of convenience; I can let him know some of the things that will help us when it should be done. I can discuss with him if we clean the place then issues with malaria and other things will be out of the place.”  
(Constance, Accra)




Constance (below, with her baby) in 2014 and (left) in 2017





# Findings and Engagement materials online

Research with and for young people on the streets


## GROWING UP ON THE STREETS

### Knowledge Exchange

### Training Pack

**Supported training resources for work with street children and youth:**

To build confidence, develop skills and empower them as spokespeople able to inform decisions that affect their lives



[www.streetinvest.org/resources/growing-streets](http://www.streetinvest.org/resources/growing-streets)



Research with and for young people on the streets  
*(“Grandir dans la rue” – Une recherche avec et pour les jeunes des rues)*

## GRANDIR DANS LA RUE

### Kit de formation de l'« échange de connaissances »

**Des ressources de formation illustrées pour le travail avec les enfants et jeunes des rues :**

pour développer leur confiance en eux, leurs compétences, et leur donner les moyens d'être des porte-paroles en mesure d'informer les décisions qui affectent leurs vies.




para assegurar a participação significativa delas, construir sua confiança, desenvolver habilidades, e empoderá-las para se tornarem Delegado ou Delegada capazes de contribuir com as decisões que afetam suas vidas.

**Parte 1**

- O que é Intercâmbio de Conhecimentos?
- O direito de participar
- Os valores que eu trago

**Parte 2**

- Os valores que nós trazemos
- Moldando a nossa mensagem: o que nós queremos dizer?




Research with and for young people on the streets

## THE VOICES OF STREET CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Knowledge Exchange in Three African Cities  
Briefing Paper 6 • October 2015

### KEY POINTS

- Street children and youth are the experts on their own lives.
- Through communication skills development and training, street children and youth can learn to recognise their own knowledge and ability to inform others about street life.
- Engaging with stakeholders builds confidence, respect and self-worth, with positive aspects for young people's daily lives beyond policy and practice.
- Listening to street children and youth can help governments and NGOs to improve the targeting and effectiveness of their services.

### INTRODUCTION

Street children and youth exercise resilience and capabilities on a daily basis, but are often ignored and sometimes harmed through being on the streets. Growing up on the Streets research has been working





Research with and for young people on the streets

## LES VOIX DES ENFANTS ET JEUNES DES RUES

Échange de Connaissances dans Trois Villes Africaines  
Document d'information n°6 • Edité Octobre 2015

### NOTIONS CLÉS

- Les enfants et jeunes des rues sont experts de leurs propres vies.
- A travers de la formation et le développement de leurs compétences en communication, les enfants et jeunes des rues peuvent apprendre à reconnaître qu'ils ont des connaissances propres et être en capacité d'informer les autres personnes de ce qu'est la vie des rues.
- Dialoguer avec des acteurs clés développe leur confiance en eux, le respect et l'estime de soi, et d'autres aspects positifs dans la vie quotidienne des jeunes, en dehors de l'influence sur les politiques et pratiques à leur égard.
- Ecouter les enfants et jeunes des rues peut aider les gouvernements et ONGs à améliorer le ciblage et l'efficacité de leurs services.

### INTRODUCTION

Les enfants et jeunes des rues exercent leur compétences et leur résilience quotidiennement, mais







# Conclusion

- Alternative street citizenship emerges through marginalization and exclusion in the city
- Active citizenship within their own street communities: but often in conflict with notions of a ‘good’ citizen.
- Activist citizenship – disrupt and challenge contemporary thinking and perceptions.
- Civil society, Governments and Policy-makers all have a role to play in fostering true engagement with young people for really transforming adult lives.



Thank you!

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- Participants: 628 street children and youth.
- NGO partner: StreetInvest

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Resources: [www.streetinvest.org/resources/growing-streets](http://www.streetinvest.org/resources/growing-streets)  
Story map: <https://arcg.is/OL8PSm>



Please visit the Story map:  
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# Citizenship and youth journeys



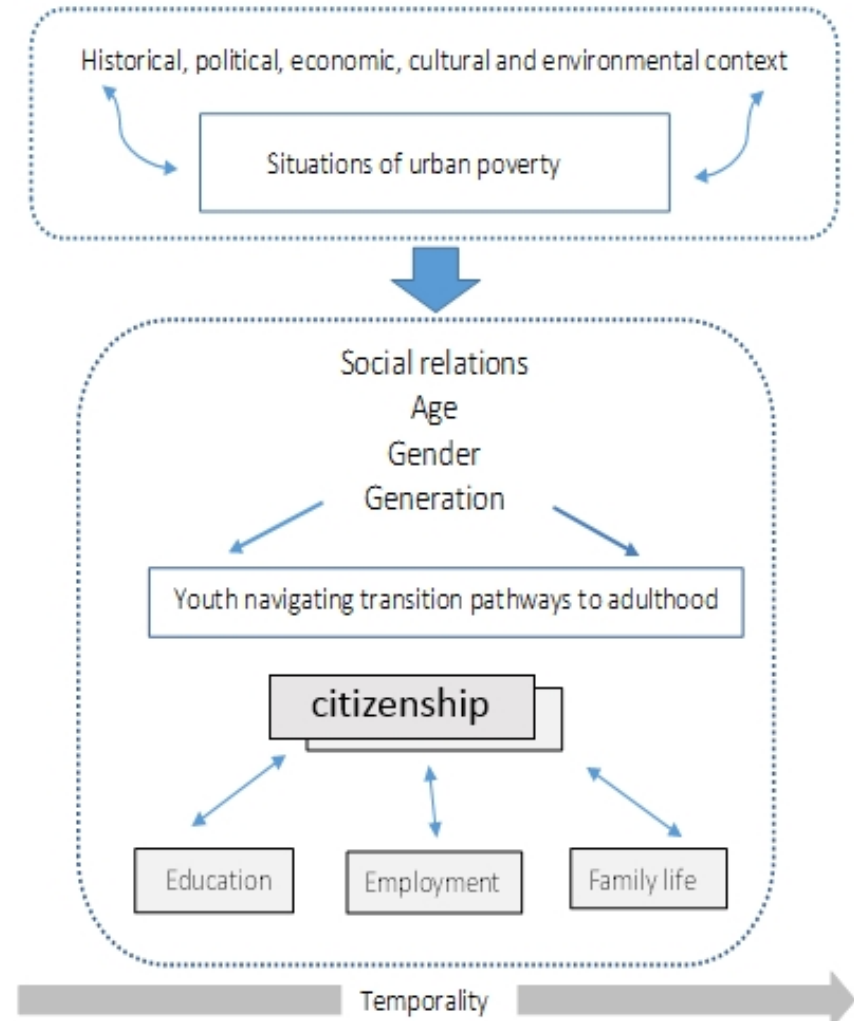
Employment



Family life



Education







# Alternative street citizenship: Relational practices of street citizenship

- Entrepreneurship: games centre and phone charging
- Supporting others on the street with work, a safe place to sleep and somewhere to store items.

