

SLAVERY AND THE STREETS

EXPLORING THE LINKS BETWEEN
MODERN SLAVERY AND CHILDREN
IN STREET SITUATIONS



TOYBOX
Changing the world
for street children

Acknowledgements

With grateful thanks to all the children who shared their stories and thoughts with us. All quotes used have been told directly to Toybox or its partners and translated as accurately as possible.

This report is founded on the experiences of children in street situations, the monitoring and evaluation of Toybox programmes, and the insights and experiences of Toybox and its partners.

Qualitative research carried out to inform the UN General Comment on Children in Street Situations (June 2017) by the Consortium for Street Children has also been used. This report has referenced secondary research that supports our experience.

Please see the Endnotes for the bibliography of all sources.

Written by Consultant Hannah Stevenson Doornbos for Toybox with thanks to Toybox staff and its partners for their input.



FOREWORD

I struggle to comprehend that in 2018 over 40 million people are living and/or working in slavery-like conditions somewhere in the world. Even more devastating is that over ten million of these are children, the equivalent to the entire population of Portugal.

Despite their circumstances the children we work with continuously surprise us with their strength and vibrancy, they are an inspiration to all those who have had the privilege of meeting them. Although we see how exploitation and abuse has become a strand of their story, we don't consider the term 'slavery' does justice to the resilience these children have – and continue to show. But we know that children are only able to be as resilient as the systems around them allow them to be. These children deserve the best possible chance for childhoods free from violence, exploitation and abuse.

I am proud to lead Toybox in working to improve the systems around street-connected children. These improvements will allow these children to reach their full potential. Toybox presents this report as a contribution to the evidence on children affected by modern slavery. We have sought to tell the stories of children through their own words and our hope is that we will amplify the voices of street children whose stories of exploitation are devastating, but whose dreams for the future are still the same as children's everywhere.

Lynne Morris
Chief Executive Officer, Toybox

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recent data reveals that one in four people exploited in modern slavery are children. These ten million children are trafficked and recruited into exploitative labour, forced into the sex trade, or into working for gangs.

Factors and characteristics make some children more vulnerable to abuse than others. Children in street situations are at greater risk of experiencing exploitation and violence every day. Trafficking, exploitative labour and sexual exploitation are some of the everyday experiences of children in street situations. The causal relationship between street-connectedness and modern slavery is one that needs further research, but the recognised drivers of both are overwhelmingly the same. It is clear that addressing these drivers will reduce the vulnerability of children to modern slavery, and consequentially its prevalence.

Poverty and inequality are known vulnerability factors to exploitation for both adults and children. Children who are forced into work by poverty are more at risk of the worst forms of labour and excluded from education as a result of their need to earn an income. Lack of access to education further heightens this vulnerability to exploitation, including both modern slavery and street-connectedness. Gender inequality is a recognised cause of both street-connectedness and modern slavery. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by modern slavery, accounting for 28.7 million – 71% – of the overall total of people affected. Children who experience violence and abuse at home and in school are at greater risk of exploitation through modern slavery and street-connectedness. Research shows that children who are driven into exploitative situations as a result of violence and abuse are likely to experience multiple forms of mistreatment; for example, there is evidence to suggest that high numbers of children within the sex trade or living in street situations have escaped domestic servitude. The discrimination and exclusion experienced by children in street situations because of their street status is a direct cause to their vulnerability of modern slavery, putting them at greater risk of some form of exploitation. Children on the move are also at heightened risk of modern slavery, and particularly trafficking.

Ending violence, abuse and exploitation against children is a precondition for the achievement of several of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably on gender equality, economic empowerment, and the achievement of just and peaceful societies. The UK Government recognises modern slavery as a global crime which impacts untold numbers of children and Toybox is proud of their global leadership in addressing it. However, this recognition must translate into targeted and deliberate efforts to address children's vulnerability to exploitation throughout all UK Aid; to leverage its global leadership in improving accountability; and to invest in research and evidence of children's rights abuses within international development.



AN INTRODUCTION TO MODERN SLAVERY AND CHILDREN IN STREET SITUATIONS

In 2016, 40.3 million men, women and children from every corner of the world were victims of modern slavery. Of these, one in four is a child¹. These ten million children are trafficked and recruited into exploitative labour, forced into the sex trade, into early marriage or coerced to work for armed gangs and groups. They are children for whom childhood will mean violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect.

Children in street situations include ‘children who depend on the street to live and/or work;’ as well as ‘a wider population of children [...] for whom the street plays a vital role in their everyday lives and identities’². While not a homogenous group of children in any context, children in street situations generally have stronger connections with peers and others on the streets than they do with their families or caregivers, even if they still exist on the peripheries of their lives. There is no verifiable estimate for the number of street-connected children in the world today, but it is widely agreed that children in street situations are likely to be engaged in informal labour and unlikely to be regularly attending school. As such, relevant available data helps us to paint a picture of the scale of street-connectedness. On any given day in 2016, 26 million children aged 5-17 years were engaged in service-related labour, including in the informal urban economy³. Amongst those aged 5-14 years, there are 36 million engaged in child labour who are not attending school⁴.

This report seeks to provide a snapshot of how the problem of modern slavery intersects with the lives of children in street situations. It is presented as a contribution to achieving the SDGs, with the hope that its evidence relating to modern slavery can improve and strengthen policy responses, and particularly the inclusion of vulnerable children who are at a greater risk of becoming trapped in modern slavery.

One of the achievements of the SDGs is their acknowledgement of the negative impact of child exploitation and violence on the realisation of sustainable development. In addition to the violation of human rights and dignity, violence and exploitation against children has a financial cost to society that can ripple through generations and counter economic development gains, estimated at anywhere between 2-5% of GDP annually⁵. Working to achieve an end to modern slavery and street connectedness should result in the inclusion of measures to tackle violence, abuse and exploitation against children across all mainstream development programmes.

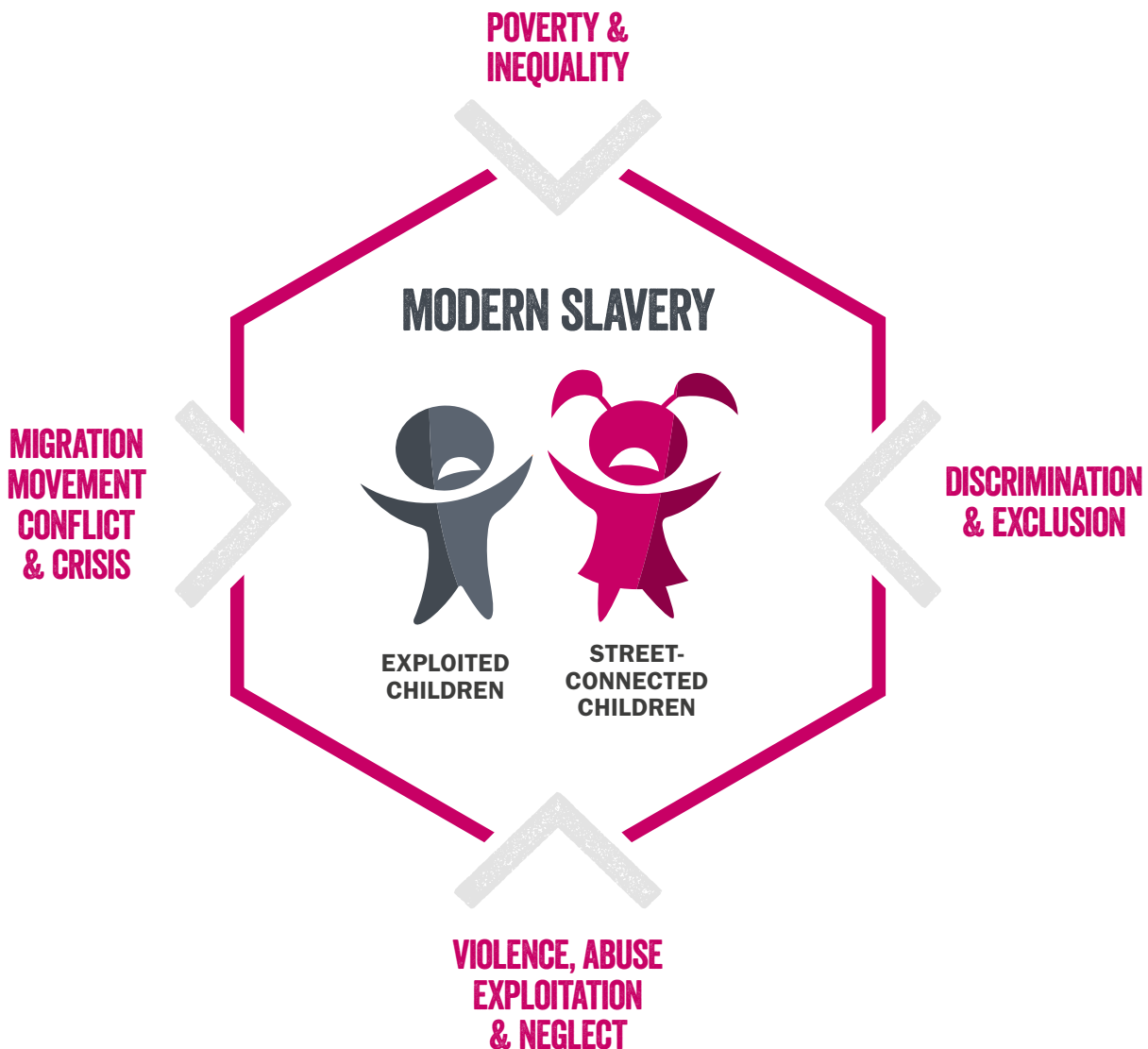
CHILDREN IN STREET SITUATIONS ARE
AT GREATER RISK OF EXPERIENCING
EXPLOITATION AND VIOLENCE EVERY DAY...
CHILDREN WHO EXPERIENCE VIOLENCE AND ABUSE AT HOME
AND IN SCHOOL ARE AT GREATER RISK OF EXPLOITATION
THROUGH MODERN SLAVERY AND STREET-CONNECTEDNESS...

1 : EXPLORING COMMON DRIVERS OF MODERN SLAVERY AND STREET CHILDREN

Although there are some variations between different contexts and forms of exploitation, key push factors that result in children becoming street-connected and/or exploited in modern slavery situations on a global level are broadly the same.

Despite recognition by the United Nations (UN), there is almost no reference to street-connected children in global discourse relating to the SDGs on modern slavery and other forms of violence against children.

Street-connected children are susceptible to becoming involved in modern slavery because living in street situations is a vulnerability to further exploitation. Addressing the common push factors of street-connectedness will reduce the vulnerability of children to modern slavery, and consequentially its prevalence.



	UN Drivers of Street-Connectedness ²	UN Drivers of Modern Slavery ²
POVERTY & INEQUALITY	Inequality (economic, ethnic, gender-based)	Global economic inequality
	Material poverty	Extreme poverty
	Corruption and pro-rich fiscal policies	Corruption
VIOLENCE ABUSE EXPLOITATION & NEGLECT	Violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect at home, in care, or in schools	Violence, abuse or neglect in the home
	Discrimination, as a result of ethnicity, gender , sexuality, disability, health, migratory status, and other moral judgements, including children's resistance to harmful practices (e.g. child marriage and FGM)	Gender inequality
	Inadequate social protection	Weak labour regulations Lack of decent work
	Lack of access to education	Lack of access to education
MIGRATION MOVEMENT CONFLICT & CRISIS	Abrupt destabilisation, including conflict , famine, epidemic, and natural disaster	Social instability and conflict
	Migration and movement	Poorly regulated migration

1.1 : POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

Poverty is a known factor leading to modern slavery for both adults and children¹. While many families express the desire for their children to gain an education, the reality of life in poverty pushes children towards earning an income and often this will be in slavery-like situations. Children who are forced to work by poverty are at higher risk of employment in the most hazardous forms of labour. Lack of access to education increases the vulnerability of children to street-connectedness and modern slavery. Increasing the availability of flexible, informal education, catch-up classes, mobile schools and vocational training can reduce the exposure of children to patterns of exploitation.

“ WE BOTH ARE WORKING, AND EVEN MY DAUGHTER HAS TO WORK TO SUPPORT THE FAMILY. DURING SUCH HIGH INFLATION, IT’S IMPOSSIBLE TO FEED THE FAMILY, IF THE INCOME IS NOT SUFFICIENT. ”

Parent of a school-aged girl, India.

CASE STUDY



Amulya – India

Originally from Bihar, nine year old Amulya has been living in Delhi for five years, along with her parents and three younger siblings. Her father works as a daily labourer, where his work pattern is very irregular and a steady income is unreliable. Amulya’s mother is a housewife and Amulya often helps her with daily chores as well as caring for her siblings. Amulya is also often sent out to collect discarded coal and wood from alongside the railway tracks for fuel.

Toybox’s partner CHETNA observed Amulya undertaking this dangerous task and initiated a conversation with Amulya’s mother about her school attendance. Her response was: “Amulya doesn’t attend school but she helps me with household chores.” The CHETNA team told her mother that they will help her in getting school admission, provided if Amulya is willing to go. Amulya seemed very happy after hearing this however her mother was very reluctant about sending her to school, due to the fact that if she goes to school, there will be no one to take care of the younger siblings or undertake chores. The team met with both Amulya’s parents and explained the importance of an education and how it could help break the cycle of poverty the family has faced for generations. Amulya was admitted in school on the very next day. Now, Amulya regularly goes to school and also comes to the CHETNA education club daily.

Forced child begging is a form of modern slavery particularly prevalent amongst children in street situations. Children may be forced to beg by parents, caregivers or trafficked for the purposes of begging on the streets, including by criminal gangs⁷.

CAPITAL > NEW DELHI
OFFICIAL LANGUAGE > HINDI, ENGLISH
POPULATION > 1.311B (2015)



“ YOU SEE CHILDREN BEGGING ON THE CROSSINGS AND ROADS, BUT BEHIND THEM THERE IS ALWAYS AN ADULT; AN ‘AUNTIE’ OR ‘GRANNY’ WHO IS EXPLOITING THEIR LABOUR. EARNINGS ARE FOR THE PERSON WHO MANAGES THEM AND IF THEY DON’T EARN MONEY THEY GET BEATEN. ”

Social Worker, Guatemala City.

Children in street situations identify their sources of income as begging, working on dumpsites and railway lines collecting rubbish to be sold, acting as porters and messengers, selling produce, second-hand clothes or households items such as buckets in markets or on the streets, guarding vehicles, shining shoes, as well other tasks within the informal, urban sector. Situations of modern slavery are most likely to occur in the informal economy, where many children are employed.

Gender as a driver of vulnerability

Gender inequality is a recognised cause of street-connectedness and modern slavery. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by modern slavery, accounting for 28.7 million – 71% – of the overall total of people affected¹. Girls account for two-thirds of the children aged 5-14 years who perform household chores³. Trafficking similarly affects girls at a greater rate than boys. In 2014, 28% of the total number of detected trafficking victims were children, and 20% of these were girls⁸. Of the total number of people, including children, who were forced into sexual exploitation in 2016, 99.4% were female⁴. Child marriage overwhelmingly affects girls and is more common in contexts where gender inequality is pervasive⁹.

Risks and experiences of modern slavery change and increase with age. Violence against women and children intersect in adolescence as girls increasingly become exposed to types of violence specifically because they are female¹⁰. Research suggests that physical violence for boys generally peaks between 8-11 years, at which point more than half of all boys have experienced physical abuse¹¹. An inclusive response to modern slavery and street-connectedness programming can ensure the different experiences of boys and girls are taken into account and interventions designed to address modern slavery do so in ways that are appropriate to the experiences of exploitation by both genders.

1.2 : VIOLENCE, ABUSE, EXPLOITATION AND NEGLECT

A broad evidence base exists to show when poverty and inequality intersect, children become vulnerable to violence and abuse, exploitation and neglect¹². Children who experience violence and abuse at home and in school are at greater risk of exploitation, including modern slavery and street-connectedness. In contexts where the child protection system is inadequate, children often seek support and refuge in street situations¹³. Family support programmes that take a child rights approach can reduce the vulnerability of children to violence and neglect, which drive both a link to street-connectedness and modern slavery²².

“ MY MOTHER GAVE ME TO A WOMAN WHEN I WAS 14 AND I WORKED WITH HER ALL DAY AND SHE DIDN'T GIVE ME ANY FOOD, I HAD NO BREAKS AND IN THE END SHE DIDN'T PAY ME EITHER. ”

Adolescent girl, Bolivia.

Children's experiences of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect are complex and multifaceted. Different forms of exploitation are interlinked and can be drivers for each other. Research into child trafficking in Uganda found that most trafficked children end up in domestic work, followed by sexual exploitation and then street living¹⁴. An International Labour Organisation (ILO) study of children exploited in the commercial sex trade in Tanzania identified more than 25% of the girls were former domestic workers¹⁵. In several contexts, children in street situations tell of having escaped the exploitation of domestic servitude¹⁶. Children willing to talk about their experiences of sexual exploitation identify coping strategies that exacerbate their vulnerability to further violence and abuse, including substance misuse and alcohol dependency.

“ TO HAVE THE COURAGE TO DO IT, AND NOT TO FEEL ANYTHING, I DRINK BEFOREHAND. THEN I FEEL LIGHT-HEADED AND 'FLOAT'. ”

Adolescent boy, Bolivia.

Edith – Bolivia

When Edith was six, her father died. It was from this point that life for Edith really started to change, as her mother began physically and emotionally mistreating her. For a long time, Edith shut down and just tolerated the abuse, while trying her hardest to protect her younger brother. When Edith was ten, her mother met a new partner who came to live with the family. For a short while the children's situation seemed to improve, but it was not long before the terrible violence and verbal abuse towards them continued – and became even worse.



After her father's death, home was no longer a place of calm or safety for Edith. She began taking the long route home from school to minimise the amount of time she would have to spend there. On her way home one afternoon, Edith met two teenage girls in the park who were getting high on glue, they told her that sniffing the glue would make her feel better and forget her problems. When Edith got home later that afternoon, her mother smelled the glue and beat her even more viciously than usual. She screamed at her mother, berating her for all the abuse she had inflicted and ran from the house. Edith returned to the park where she had met the two girls and they introduced her to "Aunty", who they said would help her earn some money to survive. Aunty was a drug dealer who sold glue in the local area. She invited Edith into her home, gave her food, drink and a bed for the night. For the first time in years, Edith finally felt safe. However, the following morning, Aunty said that she would have to repay her for the hospitality. On her explanation that she had nothing she was told that she could repay her debt by selling glue. Soon Aunty started to threaten Edith as she had not been able to make enough money through selling glue. In desperation, Edith began looking for other ways to repay her debt and had seen some of the older girls earning money as commercial sex workers. Left with no alternative, Edith started selling her ten year old body too.

After nearly two years Edith decided to go home. When her mother realised how she had been earning money, she offered Edith her own room in the house so that she could contribute to the household income from her sex work. It was at this point outreach workers from Toybox's partner Viva became aware of Edith's situation and started working with her and her mother to create a safer environment at home. Through the counselling she received, Edith's mother began to understand that she was sexually exploiting her own her young daughter and soon after Edith stopped working.

In 2016, 4.8 million people were victims of forced sexual exploitation. Of these, 21% were children. Children in street situations are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation². The sexual exploitation of children in street situations is often referred to as 'survival sex' to reflect that it can be sporadic or occasional, as well as a regular form of income earning, and may also be transactional for safety, food or shelter, as well as for cash. Children forced into selling their bodies for survival is one of the worst forms of modern slavery. The ILO's Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182) determines that all children found in any type of commercial sexual activity are considered victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

“ I FELT REALLY BAD, THAT SOMEONE YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW IS TOUCHING YOU IT MAKES YOU FEEL SICK, DOING THIS WITH STRANGERS. ”

Adolescent boy, Bolivia.

1.3 : DISCRIMINATION AND EXCLUSION

Discrimination is one of the primary causes of children ending up in street situations¹⁷. Even though children often move to the streets to escape discrimination, it is also the most common overarching experience of children in street situations across the world². Children in street situations have repeatedly highlighted discrimination by states and the public as a primary concern of theirs and asked for urgent action to counter its impact².

“ONCE PEOPLE ARE FAMILIAR WITH YOU AND HAVE SEEN YOU ON THE STREETS, THEY DON'T WANT TO GIVE YOU WORK.”

Adolescent, Bolivia.

Discrimination can be both direct and indirect, and perpetuated by individuals as well as systems. Exclusion from access to services and other rights is often a consequence of policies and systems that are indirectly discriminatory and can push children to seek refuge in street situations.

Birth registration is a key example of this, where many registration systems require parents to pay fees, identify a fixed address, name of both parents or other inflexible requirements that stigmatise vulnerable families. Children who don't have birth certificates are sometimes unable to enrol in school, access healthcare, and are excluded from social protection measures as well as other basic rights. When children are not registered, it not only increases their vulnerability to exploitation, but does so for the next generation too.

Birth registration is an effective solution which could protect many thousands of children from coming entrapped in modern slavery situations. Donors (including the UK Government) can play a key role in promoting the fulfilment of all children's right to be registered at birth and supporting national governments in their role as duty bearers to provide legal identity for all.

“NOW I HAVE MY BIRTH CERTIFICATE, I DON'T HAVE TO WORK WITH MY DAD IN THE LIME PITS MAKING BRICKS. I CAN GO TO SCHOOL, LIKE MY FRIENDS IN MY VILLAGE.”

Boy aged 10, Guatemala registered by Toybox.

Discrimination and exclusion are also significant drivers towards modern slavery¹. Those who are more likely to become engaged in exploitative labour are economically and socially vulnerable and may come from socially excluded communities or belong to groups that are commonly discriminated against¹⁸. Traffickers, for example, commonly target children who are poor, not in formal education or are living without effective parental care¹⁹. As such, street-connected children are one of the most vulnerable target groups of traffickers²⁰. Stigmatisation of children in slavery-like situations can further increase their exploitation. The discrimination and exclusion children experience in domestic servitude can increase their vulnerability to further means of violence and exploitation²¹.

Discriminatory treatment towards children in conflict with the law is another driver of vulnerability of becoming victim to exploitation. The punitive focus of juvenile justice systems across the world excludes children from rehabilitation and from inclusion in supportive communities which can break cycles of inequality and violence. The criminalisation of status offences that target children in street situations, such as vagrancy, truancy or alcohol use, are further exposing already vulnerable children to further violence and abuse.

Yet systemic discrimination can be disarmed by policy change that enables the protection of all children. The sensitisation by states of frontline service providers, including teachers, social workers, doctors, border staff and police, to the rights of all children to care and protection can transform attitudes, behaviours and experiences. Donors (including the UK Government) can play a key role in holding states to account on whether polices and systems discriminate or protect, including juvenile justice systems that work for the best interests of children.



Daniel – Kenya

17 year old Daniel has two siblings. Together with their parents; they lived in the Central province of Kenya until he left home to begin his life as a street boy back in 2016.

As a teenager, Daniel began to disagree with his parents and after one particular argument Daniel left home.

On arriving in the city, Daniel quickly found himself a way to survive. He carried loads for people and got paid a small fee. At the night, he slept in a neglected stadium that offered cover from strangers and extreme cold. He eventually found himself in the company of other boys – this was one of the best ways to assure security and easier survival, as a team, they protected each other. The boys embarked on begging outside hotels in the city for coins or food, often experiencing harsh treatment such as whipping by hotel guards and local authority police during swoops to keep them off the city streets.

One day Daniel and his friends were taking one of their injured friends to hospital on a cart which resulted in them slowing traffic on a city attracting the attention of the authorities. Whilst most of the boys were able to run away, Daniel and four other boys were arrested for causing disorder and Daniel's journey in the juvenile justice system began. Daniel was arraigned at the Children's Court and remanded at a Juvenile Remand centre until his case was concluded. Toybox's partner PKL supported Daniel by arranging for him to be transferred to a boys' rehabilitation programme, where he was safer and learnt some income generating skills, and by helping trace and reunite him with his family.



Children living with disabilities

Intolerance and discrimination against children with disabilities is a known driver of child exploitation. Children in street situations may also be at risk of developing disabilities as a result of the violence, exploitation and abuse, including substance abuse, they experience². Forced child begging can particularly affect children living with disabilities², who may be considered more likely to achieve a higher income. In some cases, children report cases of physical abuse by traffickers or parents with the intention of causing disability in order to increase the income received from begging⁷. There is a significant gap in evidence relating to the impact of disability on a child's vulnerability and experience of exploitation, including modern slavery and street-connectedness. However, ensuring children living with disabilities have access to inclusive education is a known and critical step to reducing vulnerability. So too is strengthening children's autonomy and capacity to negotiate risk, alongside building a protection system that can foster and enable children's resilience.

1.4 : MIGRATION AND MOVEMENT, CONFLICT AND CRISES

Children on the move are particularly vulnerable to modern slavery, especially those unaccompanied and separated children. Toybox works in communities in Guatemala and El Salvador that see many children trafficked within and across borders, as well as children who become street-connected because of their parents' economic migration. Many of these children are made more vulnerable to forms of exploitation and violence because they lack formal identity documents. The absence of flexibility and coordination between regional child protection systems further exacerbates the vulnerability of children on the move to exposure of exploitation and abuse²².

Children are the second largest category of detected trafficking victims across the world, after women²³. Any situations involving children being moved for the purposes of exploitation are considered to be trafficking, irrespective of whether force is used or the child has agreed to it²⁴. While the number of women trafficked has decreased over the last seven years, the number of trafficked children has increased²⁵. In sub-Saharan Africa and Central America respectively, 64% and 62% of all detected trafficking victims are children²⁶. Trafficking for sexual exploitation occurs predominantly in urban centres⁸, where the most vulnerable children are street-connected.





Yessica – Honduras

Yessica is Honduran, where she grew up in a happy home, despite the poverty of her community. When Yessica was ten, a neighbour approached her and suggested they go to the park. All of a sudden she was pushed to the ground, her mouth was taped and she was forced into a car. After two days of travelling, Yessica found herself in Guatemala, having been trafficked. Her new home was a brothel where she was forced to earn her keep cleaning and doing the laundry and, once she turned 15, she was forced into prostitution.



In time, Yessica became pregnant. When the father of the child found out, he took Yessica to live in his home and arranged for a couple to buy the baby. But Yessica refused to sell her child and, after being beaten to within an inch of her life, she escaped. She made her way to a large town where she gave birth to her daughter, Lorena, on her own on the street. Seven years later, Yessica met Toybox's partner Viva in Guatemala City. Her own lack of birth registration meant she had been unable to register her daughter, but since working with Viva, they have both been able to receive their birth certificates which will help Yessica to get a secure job and Lorena to enrol in school.

Conflict and crises heighten the vulnerability of all groups to exploitation. The forced recruitment of children by armed military groups to work as combatants has been widely documented in conflict areas around the world. The forced recruitment of children by armed gangs in situations of urban conflict, however, is an area too often absent from policy dialogue. As such, it is rarely included in responses to the worst forms of child labour. Like traffickers, criminal gangs use the same deceptive tactics to win the loyalty of vulnerable children.

‘YOU KNOW HOW MARAS (GANGS) APPROACH YOU? YOU ARE AT SCHOOL, HAVING A BAD TIME [BECAUSE YOU LACK SUPPORT TO SUCCEED], AND THEY ASK YOU ‘WHAT’S THE MATTER?’ COME AND HAVE SOMETHING TO EAT.’ THE TACTIC IS TO WIN OVER CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS WITH SOMETHING THAT THEY NEED, BECAUSE OF THE ABSENCE OF CARE IN THEIR FAMILIES AND RESOURCES THAT THEY DON’T HAVE. AND THE APPROACH IS WORKING WELL! THEY ‘WORRY’ ABOUT YOU.’ I THINK THEY ARE MORE EFFECTIVE AT RECRUITMENT THAN ANY OF OUR ORGANISATIONS. ’

Child Psychologist working with a local NGO to support street-connected children, Guatemala.

Failure to address the issue of children affected by armed groups and gangs as a worst form of child labour is in part to do with a lack of reliable data²⁷. The US Trafficking in Persons 2017 report is suggestive of the global scale of the issue in acknowledging children trafficked for illicit gang-related activities, gangs subjecting children to forced labour, or street gangs involved in trafficking in persons in as many as 18 countries, including Sudan, Zambia, and Zimbabwe²⁸. Further, verifiable evidence is urgently needed to better understand the impact of this issue on modern slavery and children in street situations.

‘THEY SAID TO ME, WHEN YOU ARE NINE YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE TO FIRE SOME SHOTS...YOU HAVE TO KILL SOMEONE OR WE WILL KILL YOU. ’

Adolescent boy, Guatemala.

2 : ADDRESSING STREET-CONNECTEDNESS WILL REDUCE MODERN SLAVERY

The factors pushing children into street situations are the same as those that expose children to slavery-like exploitation. Addressing these shared drivers is an effective means of reducing the vulnerability of children to exploitation – from both street-connectedness and modern slavery. Comparatively, addressing modern slavery in isolation will not effectively reach the children most vulnerable to it. Mainstreaming strategies to end all forms of violence against children across all development programmes will ensure the achievement of the SDGs. The failure to recognise the impact of violence against children on wider development goals risks neutralising any gains made.

While the street as a context for childhood is arguably not in a child's best interests, children in street situations have agency and independence and are often choosing the least worst option for their happiness and survival every day within the contexts in which they live. Eradicating modern slavery is a critical part of improving the lives of street-connected children, for whom exploitation is a daily reality. So too is achieving a sustainable and fair global economy that no longer relies on or preserves the exploitation of people, including children.

Children in street situations should be considered within a holistic understanding of the causes and factors that result in their street-connectedness, without denying them their respect and agency. It is important to consider the realities of street-connected children within the policy field of modern slavery, but also within debates relating to worker's rights, flexible, informal and vocational education provision, social protection and childcare support for single parents, including child-headed households, cash-based programming and improving the focus on rehabilitation within juvenile justice systems. Applying a child rights approach throughout development programmes could ensure that children's vulnerabilities are addressed and the systems of protection around at-risk children enable their resilience.



3 : WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Recommendations to the UK Government

1. **Mainstreaming a child rights approach across all UK Aid is the single, most effective way to tackle child exploitation.** Taking a child rights approach will reduce vulnerabilities, tackle the causes of child exploitation and achieve broader children's rights across all the Department For International Development's (DFID) strategic priorities. A child rights approach for DFID should include:
 - a. The requirement for all teams delivering UK Aid to collaborate with the Protecting Children's Hub. This would enable better value for money through capitalising on existing DFID opportunities to tackle child exploitation that are currently failing to address children's rights;
 - b. An inclusive approach to tackling modern slavery, responsive to the ten million children whose experiences of exploitation are characterised by their gender, age, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, street-living-status, etc.
 - c. Strategies to prevent violence against children, rolled out across all UK Aid programmes that affect children's lives, including education, health, protection, livelihoods and others.

2. **Leveraging the UK's position of global leadership on tackling modern slavery to hold other governments to account to reduce violence, abuse and exploitation of children.** Holding governments to account on their responsibility to protect children from exploitation is a key part of ending modern slavery and the discrimination of children in street situations and should include:
 - a. An approach which relates to governments as duty bearers for the promotion and fulfilment of every child's rights, in all circumstances.
 - b. Enabling national data collection that gathers evidence on violence against children alongside the state of the formal child protection system.
 - c. The promotion of measures to end discrimination against street-connected children and other exploited children enacted in law, policy and practice.

3. **Building the evidence base relating to violence, abuse and exploitation of children is critical to achieving the SDGs.** Robust research that evidences the scope and scale of child exploitation is critical to informing the design of effective interventions. Building an effective evidence base should include:
 - a. The inclusion of measures on children's rights in routine data collection to show changes in the drivers of exploitation, and which include vulnerable groups such as street-connected children, including data on the numbers of children in street situations
 - b. Focused research into the ecological drivers of violence, abuse and exploitation against children in schools, at home, at work and on the streets and show the interlinkages between modern slavery and street-connectedness



Recommendations to Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and civil society

4. **Taking a child rights approach is essential for all actors working to end modern slavery and support children in street situations.** Ending modern slavery must be achieved through a process that realises all children's rights, for exploited children as well as for street-connected children. and must include, amongst other things:
 - a. Meaningful, inclusive participation of all children in the identification and design of interventions that affect their lives.
 - b. Advocacy to improve the accountability of states to meet their responsibilities to protect all children and realise their rights. In particular, there should be a focus on children in street situations who too often experience systemic discrimination and exclusion.
 - c. Adaptive management approaches that enable flexible, locally-led responses to the complex ecological causes of child exploitation and include child safeguarding as a regularly assessed risk area.

5. **Evidencing the linkages between modern slavery and children in street situations is crucial to understanding the complexity of both, and improving our response to child exploitation.** Without a thorough understanding of the causes, experiences and consequences of modern slavery and street-connectedness, our response to both cannot be fully effective. Achieving the SDGs requires verifiable data, robust methodologies and evidence-based recommendations for policy responses. Children's voices, opinions and suggestions must play a central role in the collation and content of all evidence relating to their lived experiences.

6. **Advocating for children's rights across different policy areas is key to tackling the discrimination that feeds their exploitation.** Exploited children have repeatedly highlighted discriminatory systems, attitudes and behaviours as having a significant negative impact on their quality of life and the realisation of their rights. The UN General Comment on Children in Street Situations (21) provides guidance on tackling discriminatory laws, policies and practices that foster and cause exploitation of children. NGOs and civil society working with children in street situations should play a critical role in advocating national governments for changes in policies and practice that directly discriminate against vulnerable children. Collaboration and coordination amongst civil society organisations is key to seeing much needed policy change.

CHILDREN WHO ARE FORCED INTO WORK BY POVERTY ARE MORE AT RISK OF THE WORST FORMS OF LABOUR AND EXCLUDED FROM EDUCATION AS A RESULT OF THEIR NEED TO EARN AN INCOME...
THE DISCRIMINATION AND EXCLUSION EXPERIENCED BY CHILDREN IN STREET SITUATIONS BECAUSE OF THEIR STREET STATUS IS A DIRECT CAUSE TO THEIR VULNERABILITY OF MODERN SLAVERY, PUTTING THEM AT GREATER RISK OF SOME FORM OF EXPLOITATION...

Endnotes

- 1 ILO/ Walk Free Foundation 2017. Global estimates of modern slavery: Forced labour and forced marriage International Labour Office (ILO), Geneva, 2017.
- 2 UN General Comment No. 21 (2017) on children in street situations UNCRC/C/GC/21.
- 3 ILO 2017 Global estimates of child labour: Results and trends, 2012-2016 International Labour Office (ILO), Geneva, 2017.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Know Violence in Childhood 2017. Ending Violence in Childhood. Global Report 2017. New Delhi, India.
- 6 UNGA 72nd Session Contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences. Note by the Secretary-General, 17 July 2017.
- 7 Anti-Slavery International 2009. Begging for Change: Research findings and recommendations on forced child begging in Albania/Greece, India and Senegal.
- 8 UNODC 2016. Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016.
- 9 ICRW/ Girls Not Brides 2015. Taking action to address child marriage: the role of different sectors. An Overview.
- 10 Know Violence in Childhood 2017. Ending Violence in Childhood. Global Report 2017. Know Violence in Childhood. New Delhi, India.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Toybox 2017; ECPAT 2014; Thomas de Benitez 2011; UN General Comment No. 21.
- 13 Toybox 2017. Ways of Coping: Children growing up on the streets of Nairobi June 2017 Report.
- 14 UYDL 2009. Trafficking and enslavement of children in Uganda. A form of modern-day slavery. The UN Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery/ Uganda Youth Development.
- 15 ILO-IPEC 2001. Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 12, Tanzania. Children in Prostitution: A Rapid Assessment. Geneva, November 2001.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 See Thomas de Benitez, S. 2011. State of the World's Street Children amongst others, and the UN General Comment 21 for further discussion.
- 18 See Anti-Slavery International 2009.
- 19 IPEC 2007. Rapid assessment on trafficking of children into the worst forms of child labour including child soldiers in Uganda.
- 20 Ainamo, K. 2017. From Streets to Slavery? Vulnerability, resilience and the risk of human trafficking among street children in Nairobi, Kenya. University of Jyväskylä.
- 21 ECPAT 2013. Unseen Vulnerabilities: The link between child labour and sexual exploitation of children. ECPAT International Journal, Issue 8, October 2013.
- 22 Child Rights in the Global Compacts 2017. Recommendations for Protecting, Promoting and Implementing the Human Rights of Children on the Move in the Proposed Global Compacts, June 2017.
- 23 UNODC 2016. Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016.
- 24 UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking of Persons, especially Women and Children, Article 3 (c).
- 25 UNODC 2016. Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Forced recruitment of children by armed groups and armed forces was excluded from the Global Estimates of Modern Slavery (2017). UNODC's estimates of the number of people trafficked fails to include armed groups in urban conflict settings, or children recruited for gang-related activities, including crime. (UNODC 2016).
- 28 United States of America Department of State. Trafficking in Persons Report. June 2017.



TOYBOX
Changing the world
for street children



TOYBOX

Changing the world
for street children

G4 Challenge House, Sherwood Drive, Bletchley,
Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK3 6DP

T: 01908 360050 E: info@toybox.org

www.toybox.org.uk

Charity number: 1084243 Company number: 03963000