



 **STREET LIGHT | ISSUE 9**



TOYBOX

Changing the world
for street children

Welcome to the latest edition of Street Light –Toybox’s mini magazine

Inside this issue, you can read an update from some of Toybox’s projects around the world, including the Street to School project in India and our new education project in Sierra Leone.

According to a 2018 report, globally an estimated 263 million children are out of school.

Poverty remains a key factor determining whether a child can access education, and children who live or work on the streets continue to represent a disproportionate number of those not in school.

As well as poverty, cultural norms and practices

including child marriage, early pregnancy, sexual exploitation and gender-based violence, are all barriers to children around the world, particularly girls, accessing education.

However, you are helping to change all of this. Over the last year, your amazing support has helped Toybox to support over 1,300 children, including 611 girls, to enrol into school or access non-

formal education. One of these children

is 13-year old Pooja, whose story you can read inside.

See inside for more information about Toybox’s education

projects and

to see how you are changing the lives of street children around the world, offering them opportunities to access education and to build brighter futures for themselves, away from the streets.



TOYBOX ON RADIO 4

We are delighted to share with you the exciting news that Toybox is featuring on a BBC Radio Appeal later this year.

Focusing on our new Birth Registration project in Nepal, the Appeal will be presented by the wonderful Reverend Richard Coles – whom some of you may remember voiced our last Appeal in 2016.

Since beginning our work there two years ago, Toybox has become aware of the challenges surrounding birth registration in Nepal. Shockingly, almost 50% of children in the country are not registered. Like those in Latin America, unregistered children in Nepal are some of the most vulnerable. They are denied official citizenship and

are unable to access many of their rights.

With the amount we hope to raise through this Appeal, along with the skills and expertise we have gained delivering the Birth Registration projects in Latin America over the last six years, we are delighted to have the opportunity to expand this life-changing work into a country where we know your support can continue to make an incredible difference.



You can find out more by tuning into our Appeal on BBC Radio 4 on Sunday 10th November at 7.55am and 9.26pm and repeated again at 3.27pm on Thursday 14th November.

A BBC RADIO 4 APPEAL



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MY EDUCATION MY FUTURE

On the streets of Delhi, 13-year old Pooja works as a rag-picker, collecting discarded pieces of plastic, glass and materials - anything that can be bartered or sold. Pooja is the oldest of five siblings and lives with her father, who has learning disabilities, and her grandmother, in one of Delhi's notorious urban slums.

Back in her home village, Pooja used to be able to go to school. However, when her family migrated to the city in search of a better life, Pooja's mother decided not to come with them. This left Pooja to take on the role of both caring for and supporting her family financially, and her education was cut short.

In many of the countries where Toybox works, sadly stories like Pooja's are not uncommon. Sanalu has lived and worked on the streets of Freetown in Sierra Leone for almost 15 years. As a child, she did not have the opportunity to go to school and instead worked on the streets selling food to earn enough money to get by. Here, she met a man who, on the surface offered her protection and a safe place to stay. However, in reality, this man was a pimp who exploited Sanalu and she soon become involved in commercial sex work.

Now 22 and mother to three young children, Sanalu is just one of the thousands of children who have been denied access to education in Sierra Leone, a country where currently almost 50 percent of girls aged between 15 and 24 are illiterate.

Lack of education and illiteracy can affect a girl's future in many ways. Girls who are not educated are more likely to marry or have children early. They are less likely to find safe and secure employment and are at higher risk of exploitation and abuse. Fundamentally, not having access to education disempowers girls by denying them the opportunities and protection they deserve. This, for many, results in a cycle of poverty that limits their future opportunities beyond life on the streets.

Toybox believes education is one of the most effective ways of breaking this cycle and that supporting children, either through access to non-formal education or enrolment into school, is a vital first step in their journey away from the streets.

As well as enabling children to access education, ensuring their rights are protected and they are being kept safe, both at school and in their communities, is a key area of our work. In Kenya and El Salvador, we are training and mentoring girls to become leaders and advocates for change in their communities through Child Rights clubs. We are also offering guidance to children who have been, or are at-risk of being, victims of abuse.

In Sierra Leone, we are supporting children, including girls involved in commercial sex work, to enrol in, and stay in school, by covering the costs of school uniforms and equipment as well as delivering violence-prevention campaigns in schools and across communities, with the hope of protecting vulnerable girls, like Sanalu, from future harm.

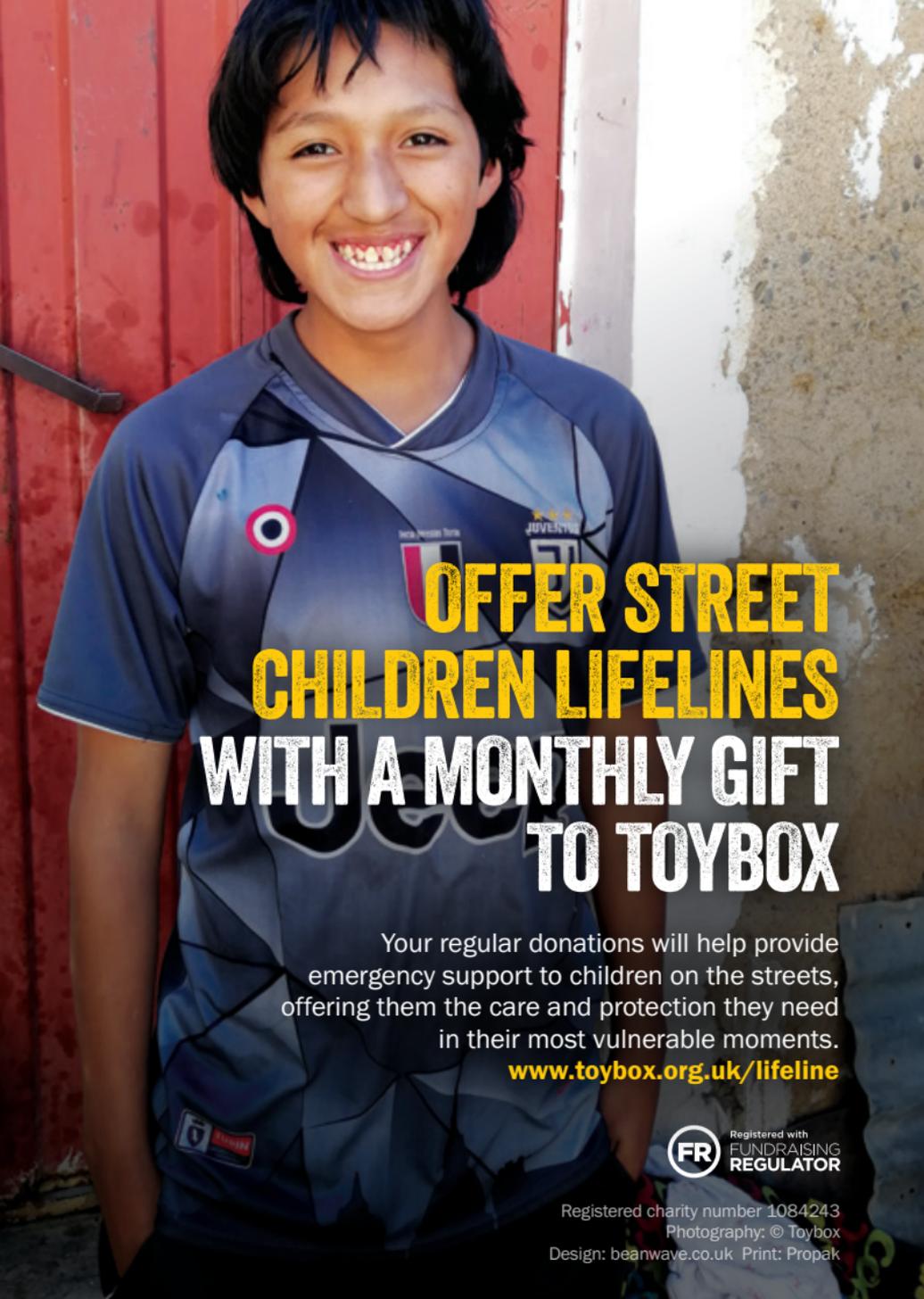
In India, we are educating families in slum communities,

like Pooja's, on the importance of education for both boys and girls, and training teachers on alternative methods of discipline and how to protect children from sexual abuse.

Through the work of the Street to School project, earlier this year Pooja was finally able to re-enrol in school. Since then, her self-esteem has flourished and although she continues to support her family at home, she rarely has to go out on the streets to work. She tells project staff she is determined to now help her younger siblings to enrol into school, and that when she grows up, she wants to become a teacher so she can provide education for poor children, free of cost.

Keep an eye on our supporter magazine over the coming months for further news and updates about our education projects.

*Whilst names have been changed in this article to protect identities, stories are based on real-life experiences, narrated by children and young people in their own words.



**OFFER STREET
CHILDREN LIFELINES
WITH A MONTHLY GIFT
TO TOYBOX**

Your regular donations will help provide emergency support to children on the streets, offering them the care and protection they need in their most vulnerable moments.

www.toybox.org.uk/lifeline



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