



**“I’M HAPPY THAT  
THROUGH THE PHOTOS WE TOOK,  
PEOPLE WHO MAY NEVER HAVE A  
CHANCE TO COME TO WHERE WE  
LIVE CAN KNOW ABOUT OUR LIVES.”**

# HELLO!

## A warm welcome to your latest issue of Street Life.

### You are shielding children from danger

I wanted to start this issue by expressing my sincere gratitude for all your continuing support. Your commitment to ensuring that all children feel safe and secure shines brightly today.

This Easter, you demonstrated unbelievable kindness for the children living at La Terminal market in Guatemala City. With your help, children like Leo have been enjoying a safe space to escape from the intensity of a hostile and threatening environment. A place where they can relax and experience some of the joys of childhood.

You see, life is hard for children growing up in such a dangerous place. As 13-year-old Leo explains: *"In my community, there are lots of thieves around and they get angry and hurt you when you don't have anything of value to give them. The market also has lots of hitmen. Sometimes if someone steals something and gets shot at, you can get hit in the crossfire."*

*Before coming to the project, I had learned how to mistreat people - I was disrespectful even though I was only small. My little brother was also rude, even though he too was only*



*young. I didn't value the time and work of teachers and didn't appreciate all the hard work they used to put in.*

*Now, I feel better. The project has given me the freedom to be free to play with anyone and they have taught me values. I recognise now that I didn't have good friends before. I feel safe at the project."*

Thank you so much for being a strong and protective shield for the children of La Terminal.

### You are bringing hope and opportunity to the streets of Kathmandu

As I write to you today, many parents here in the UK are waiting for news on their child's admission to primary school. It can be a tense time for families as they find out whether they will get their first-choice school.

I was again struck by how wildly different the picture is for a young child living on the streets. As you know, most street children don't have a chance to attend formal school, or if they do, they are often forced to drop out long before completing their education. Without access to this basic human right, many are unable to escape the poverty of their lives or create a better and safer future for themselves.

But through your continuing support and determination, our teams at the education projects are tackling these challenges head-on. We are thrilled to be working in conjunction with a Belgian organisation to start trialling a new mobile school in Nepal which has the potential to help us reach even more children on the streets.

Thanks to your ongoing generosity, we have recently introduced a new set of interactive blackboards on wheels to our education project in Kathmandu. This is an exciting development as it means we can deliver lessons directly on the city streets. Not only are the resources completely street and weatherproof, now our project workers can reach and engage even more street children in Kathmandu, making sure they get the start in life they deserve. I look forward to sharing more with you on this initiative in the coming months.

### You see, you listen and you act

Inside this issue of Street Life, you can read more about an innovative project we ran in Nairobi, Kenya. The Sauti Ya Bazenga (Voice of the Boss) project gave young people on the streets an opportunity to tell their own stories through the medium of photography. As we developed this issue of Street Life, both the photographers and their subjects were consulted on the design and content, to make sure we accurately reflect the realities of their lives. I'm sure you'll agree when you look inside; their photos and captions are truly thought-provoking.

I feel honoured that these wonderful young people have shared such a raw and intimate look into their everyday lives. I'm also so

thankful that incredible supporters like you, continue to speak out and act on the injustices of the world.

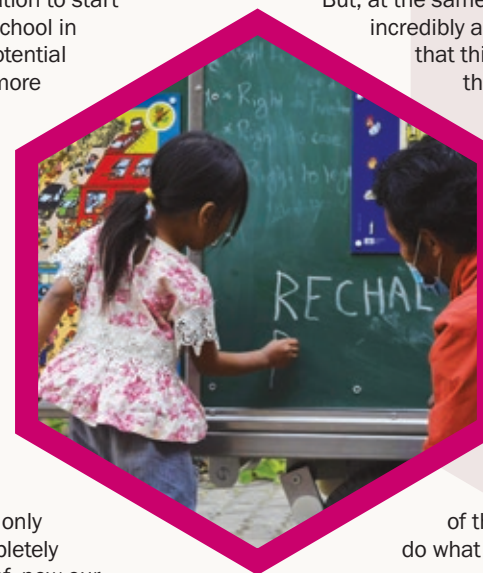
But, at the same time, I'm also left feeling incredibly angry. Angry and appalled that this is the daily reality for the children we work with in Nairobi. No child should be forced to look for food in a rubbish truck or sleep on the streets on a filthy old mattress.

So, I am resolute that on days when things feel tough or challenging at Toybox, these images and captions act as a stark reminder of the reasons why we do what we do.

Thank you so much for making this work possible and for your ongoing compassion for children living on the margins of society. Together we are changing the world for street children and I am so grateful for your support at this time.

Yours,

Lynne Morris OBE  
Toybox CEO



To see all our latest news and for regular updates, please visit our website [www.toybox.org.uk](http://www.toybox.org.uk)



# THE IMPORTANCE OF RAISING CHILDREN'S VOICES

"At Toybox, we believe it's crucial to raise the voices of children and young people in street situations and the Sauti Ya Bazenga project in Nairobi highlights this in action. Children have a right to be listened to and taken seriously and should be given the tools to express their opinion about decisions affecting their lives.

Our experience of working alongside street children shows that they can feel invisible; many are not counted in national census, nor have ID cards, and are typically marginalised in society.

As an agency working for the rights of street children, it is our ongoing responsibility to work with young people in a way which raises their voice, gives them agency and supports them to feel part of the response aimed to assist them, not just subjected to it. It is more direct and meaningful than us speaking for them. It also results in a greater chance of people listening, taking notice, and doing something about the issue. In addition, the process the children go through can also help them to express their own emotions and support them to build confidence and skills."

**Naomi Hall Opiyo**  
Toybox Director of Impact and Programmes

**Okari works for PKL, Toybox's local partner in Nairobi and was involved in running the Sauti Ya Bazenga (Voice of the Boss) project.**

"At the start of the project, a two-day training was conducted for 97 children and young people, aged from 10-26. From this, 38 of the participants were then actively involved in the photo collection aspect of the project.

These children and youth engaged in a six-week photography exercise where they photographed their everyday lives in their bases\* and community. The photos taken were of where they work, sleep, eat, rest, play and what happens around their communities. The children were also responsible for all the captions for their own photos, to help capture their thoughts and feelings about their lives.

Unsurprisingly, as with any project, we encountered some challenges along the way, particularly in relation to the training. As some of the young people we support still use drugs and others had small babies with them they were sometimes unable to fully concentrate. However, they were all eager to tell their stories through photographs as this was both easy and exciting for them. Through the project, I have seen how those involved have improved their interest and general photography skills and are appreciating the power of pictures in telling stories."

*\*Children on the streets in Nairobi live with peers/family in groups in open spaces they identify as safe. These 'bases' are normally located in unused public spaces such as flyovers or disused land.*



**"We love sports, but we do not have a playground, we play in the middle of a roundabout which can easily lead to an accident."**  
- Makena, 17

Working through local partner PKL, Toybox funds regular youth clubs for street children, offering a safe space for children to play and learn. Former street children also attend the sessions to act as positive role models for those currently living on the streets.



**"We will do anything possible to give our children a healthy life. Our wish is to give our children the best life that we can and see them through school."**  
- Faye, 19

Toybox provides access to financial and livelihood support for vulnerable families living in Nairobi. Parents living in informal settlements are supported to start small businesses, enabling them to provide basic needs to their children and reducing the need to send their children out onto the streets to work.

**"We sleep on hard floor on corridors, we have no good blankets or mattress. It's hard especially during rainy days and we get flu."**  
- Mapei, 13

Children on the streets of Nairobi have limited possessions. Through Toybox projects, children have access to warm, clean clothing as well as other essential supplies like blankets to support them in their daily lives.



**"A kilo of the waste papers goes for Ksh 5 and I use the money to buy food."**  
- Omari, 13

**"These are my friends; we sleep at the open building at the back."**  
- Jabari, 16



**"This is where we come to sell our collections."**  
- Keff Keff, 16

Through local partner PKL, Toybox supports young people to enrol in vocational training courses such as carpentry, mechanics, hairdressing and beauty therapy. Through the courses, young people gain the skills required to earn a sustainable living, away from the streets.



**"Even with so much happening in our lives, we always try to accommodate some fun."**  
- Mrefu, 19

Through Toybox projects, children and young people on the streets can relax, make new friends and access the support and guidance of trusted and caring project staff in a safe space.



To see more photos from the project, visit [www.toybox.org.uk/bazenga](http://www.toybox.org.uk/bazenga)



# SNAP-HAPPY

**13-year-old Tumo has been living on the streets since he was just six. In 2021 he met Toybox partner, PKL and has since been involved in a number of Toybox funded projects, including Sauti Ya Bazenga.**

"I came onto the streets in 2015 when my parents' fighting became too much. One evening, my father came home and started beating my mother. This made me so angry and I couldn't stand to watch it anymore, so I decided to run away from home and seek shelter at my friend's street base in the city. He taught me how to survive on the street.

Every morning, I usually wake up at 5am. We have to wake up early before the shops open so we can go and hide our bedding in a safe place. After that, I take my sack and head to a roundabout in town where I collect any recyclables which I could sell for money. Normally, I make between 200 and 300 Kenyan shillings (£1.30 - £1.95) a day.

I met PKL in January 2021 and since then a lot of things have changed. I enjoyed being involved in the photography project and taking pictures of my friends. Just looking at their photos – their poses made me happy. I feel most proud to have been able to teach other base members how to take photos – this was when I realised I could learn quicker than the bigger boys!

Projects like this are so important because you can share your stories with other people – to show people who are far away how your life is, even if they don't come to see where you are. I've been inspired to take more photos in the future because it's easy and fun – and it means something that's in a photo will never be forgotten. It makes me feel happy that photos that we all took can be shown to so many people, although seeing them made me miss one of my friends who went to rehab.

The best thing was that when we were doing the project, we were so happy. We laughed a lot when taking the photos. Sometimes we even forgot we were hungry and we didn't use as many drugs. I felt I could do something productive with my life when I was taking the photos. I'm so grateful to have had this training in photography."

