

THE SSSK NEWSLETTER

APRIL
2015

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THE AGM REPORT

JANUARY
2015

Eloise Haylor

THIS YEAR'S AGM WAS HELD ON 7th JANUARY, HOSTED AT SAVE THE CHILDREN'S LONDON HEAD OFFICES IN FARRINGDON.

Familiar faces came from the Oxford, Edinburgh and St. Paul's Boys' branches. New members representing the successfully re-launched Cambridge branch and the all-new London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine branch were welcomed. All students, together with our guest-speaker, John Wroe, were welcomed by SSSK trustees

and alumnae for a typically informative, inspiring and convivial evening.

Student Presentations

We began with presentations by current student members.

Arjun Paliwal (Oxford)

spoke of his experiences in Kolkata visiting both the Hope Foundation, which is supported by SSSK, and the Young Men's Welfare Society. (You can read more about Arjun's visit to the Hope Foundation in the Jan 2015 newsletter) whilst **Lucy**

Wilson (Cambridge) shared personal and moving recollections from her time in

Nicaragua, in particular her encounter with one young boy, Kenny, which she relates on page 4.

His story is sadly illustrative of the common problems facing many street children across the world

including the powerful role of drugs at a very young age and why 'having a home' and 'being a street-child' often aren't contradictory.

Guest Speaker

We were fortunate to have **John Wroe, Co-Founder and CEO of the Street Child World Cup**, as our guest-speaker this year.

John brought with him the photobooks from the triumphant Rio April 2014 tournament. Featuring a page for each of the 19 teams, these documented the proud participation of over 230 street children; a magnificent, collaborative achievement.

John shared with us some



compelling vignettes from the Street Child World Cup... How the South African team's spontaneous welcome song at the airport, greeting other teams on their arrival, became the anthem of the games. The sense of triumph upon realising that all the teams had actually made it to Brazil, after herculean visa-struggles behind the scenes. The Zimbabwe/ Indonesia match, in which the sense of solidarity between street children on the pitch had so memorably triumphed, over even their sense of competition, as the two teams began celebrating each other's goals as much as their own.

The platform that this World Cup gave street children was huge. An independent advertising specialist estimated the media coverage to have had a reach that was equivalent to \$55million in advertising spend.

One of the Pakistan team's matches was watched by 2 million people around the world, and the team were welcomed home by a crowd of 7000 people.

With this momentum, a subsequent motion was passed in Pakistan's National Assembly that will positively affect the lives of 1.5m street children.

"When they see me on the streets, they see me as a street child, when they see me on the pitch, they see me as a person".

Not only was the Street Child World Cup an empowering and unforgettable experience for all the children who went to Rio, but it was also a profoundly transformational experience for many. Taking on the responsibility and challenge of becoming spokespersons in their countries and across the world, the SCWC empowered these young people to become tenacious advocates for change, ambassadors for the potential that should be recognised and realised in all street-connected children.

Advocacy Update

Next, **SSSK trustee, Natalie Turgut** gave us a very useful and heartening update on legislative advances from the front-line of advocacy at Consortium for Street Children. On page 6, Nat explains why the announcement that the UN will develop a General Comment on Children in Street Situations is so momentous, and the positive action it is hoped it will precipitate in all UN member states over the next decade.

Events Brainstorm

Last, but certainly not least, we broke into small groups to discuss events and

fundraising. As the AGM is currently the only time in the year when all branches are brought together in person, we wanted to seize the opportunity to make the most of the shared enthusiasm with an events brainstorming session. Branches exchanged valuable advice from past events and generated new ideas that ranged from yoga sessions to Strictly-come-dancing, all drawn up into a calendar published on our Facebook page).



Keep in Touch

This year kicked off with plenty of energy and we're looking forward to seeing lots of these ideas put into action. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for updates throughout the year, and do get in touch with one of the trustees if you have any questions, ideas...are going travelling and might be able to visit an SSSK-supported project...or would like to start a new branch!

Eloise is an SSSK trustee and alumna of SPGS/ Oxford branches

ENCOUNTERS

JUNE
2013

Kenny, Nicaragua

Lucy Wilson

MY EXPERIENCE WITH STREET CHILDREN WAS NOT THROUGH AN ORGANISATION, BUT MORE FIRST-HAND MEETING AND WORKING WITH THE CHILDREN WHO LIVED NEAR WHERE I WAS VOLUNTEERING.

I lived in the beautiful Granada, Nicaragua for about four months two years ago, where I was working in a school on the outskirts teaching maths and Spanish.

On one of my first evenings there I met a little boy called Kenny who was about eight and was trying to sell me a beautiful flower he'd made out of a long leaf. I chatted to him for a while before he had to get back to work. The next time I saw him, he came running over to say hello and saw a book I had in my bag, as I had just got back from school. His face literally lit up and he asked if he could have a look.

We ended up reading it together; he read the sounds

he could do and I helped with the rest. His reading age was much lower than his actual age but that was really not uncommon there.

We struck up a deal that I'd do reading with him and he'd teach me how to make the leaf flowers.

I got to know him fairly well, we did a bit of reading whenever I saw him and had a book with me and he told me a bit more about his family. Then one day I saw him walking down the street and shouted out to him, expecting him to run over and give me a hug as he always did. But he was completely different, seemed vacant, and I don't think he could really recognise me.

I knew most of the children by now so I asked them what was up with Kenny and one of them hinted that he was on glue. I had seen some of the other boys with these glass jars containing this yellow substance at the bottom, but to see it first-hand like this and to see

what an effect it had on him really was absolutely horrible. I tried to talk to him but he had sat down and couldn't sit up or engage at all. I stayed with him for a while then he went off with his friends and I felt completely helpless.

During the next few weeks, it was as if he was two different people.

Half the times I saw him he'd run over and be his normal, cheeky self and we'd read or chat and the other half he would be vacant and distant. One of the other children told me that it was because one of the older boys was back from the capital and he was selling the glue. I tried endless times to talk to Kenny but it is like talking to an addict, but even worse because he's so young and doesn't have any other options in life. He takes it to forget.

The worst experience of my whole time there was one night when I was coming home with some of the

volunteers at about 1am, and as I walked past this local pub, I saw Kenny curled up outside on the floor, with not even a blanket over him. I went over straight away, almost in tears, and asked what he was doing. He replied 'mi tía no me permite a regresar porque no he ganado bastante dinero' - 'my aunty won't let me stay because I haven't made enough money'.

There's no reply to that, I just had no idea what to say. He said there was nowhere else to go. I would have got into serious trouble if I'd taken him back to my accommodation and it's also obviously not a good idea to

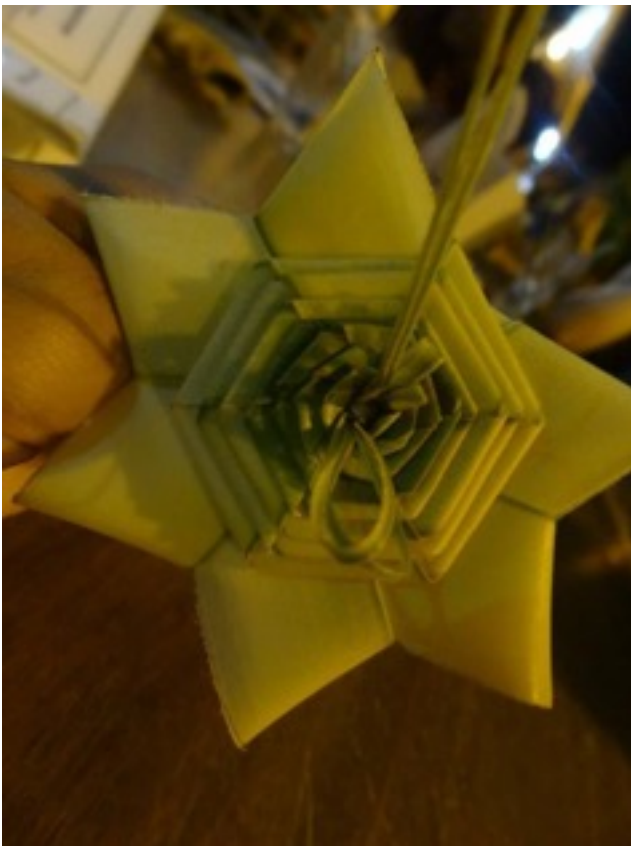
create a dependency when you're going to be leaving. I stayed with him for a while until a policeman came up the road and I went and asked him what to do. He told me there is nothing to do and that I should just leave. He was laughing as he spoke.

I have never felt so helpless in my life and it's really this that made me want to get involved with SSSK, so that no child ever has to sleep on the street, take glue to get by or has to miss school to work.

Kenny and I stayed close

throughout my time there, his reading improved a lot and he gave me an amazing leaf heart on my last day, I promised I'd go back and see him one day.

Lucy is Chair of the Cambridge Branch, and spoke at the January 2015 AGM



ADVOCACY UPDATE



MAY 2014

UNCRC to develop General Comment on Children in Street Situations

Natalie Turgut

NGOs AND GOVERNMENTS HAVE BEEN HELPING STREET CHILDREN FOR MORE THAN THREE DECADES.

We now understand much better the difficulties that street-connected children face and have made a positive difference to the lives of many hundreds of thousands of children around the world. But children continue to flow on to the streets of towns and cities across the globe – and once there, many find it very hard to leave.

We need to scale up our best approaches and we need to be more agile and responsive

- to get better results for more children in street situations and for children at risk of moving on to the streets. This means working together in partnership – civil society, governments, universities, the private

sector, everyone...

But where is the blueprint to guide Governments and the rest of us?

We need guidance from an authoritative source and the only organisation with that credibility at international level is the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

In May 2014 this committee agreed to develop a General Comment on children in street situations. A General Comment is the UN's interpretation of human rights for a particular issue – in this case street children.

The General Comment on Children in Street Situations will be authoritative guidance on how to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in relation to street children.

It is aimed predominantly at

providing detailed guidance to States on how they can support street children.

The General Comment is thus a monumental development at the highest policy level, which will influence policy and practice at international, national and local levels to help bring about positive change in the lives of street-connected children.

It opens up a new panorama for establishing street-connected children as a specific field of attention.

Street children are a complex group to address – often the result of poor economic and social structures deeply embedded within societies but states will soon have detailed guidance that they can use to develop national strategies and plans of action for street children specifically.

CSC will be working on the

General Comment for the next two years, supporting the UN Committee. There will be consultations held with NGOs, street children and governments around the world to get their input so that the General Comment is relevant to street children's lives.

This year on the International Day for Street Children (12th April) we will be promoting an easy-guide on the General Comment to explain the impact that it will have.

Be sure to look out for it and share it on Facebook and Twitter #tweetforthestreet.

Natalie Turgut is SSSK Trustee and Advocacy and Research Officer at Consortium for Street Children



BRANCH SPOTLIGHT



CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge make some noise with successful (re)launch

Corall Friedman

On the 24th of January 2015 we had our Launch Event and first fundraiser of the year! Musical, spoken word and comedy acts from across Cambridge came together for a special night at King's College.

We held a reception with drinks and snacks where we sold our adorable hand-made felt badges for £3 a-piece as an entry ticket.

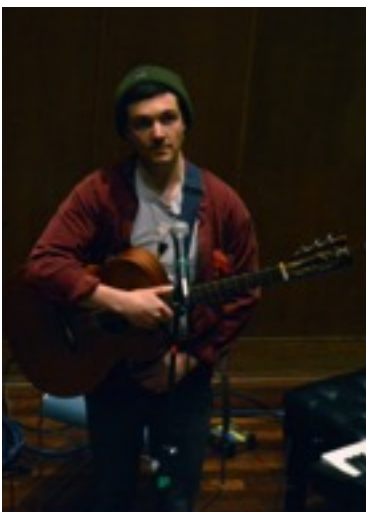
We had a donation bucket too, which raised some extra funds. The event was well attended, with around 50-60 people, and we had 9 top class acts!

A definite highlight was Xanthe Fuller and John Helsby's jazz rendition of Britney Spears' Toxic.

Mike Hood performed some powerful spoken word and we had some amazing original poetry and songs from Rose Sélavý.

We raised £188.60 in total, which we were more than pleased about. We were especially proud of our badges as everyone got to leave with a souvenir and it got people talking about us later on in the bar!

The rest of second term is action-packed for us too- we are holding a glow-in-the-dark Zumbathon as well as a film screening, and a choir night to finish off the term with a bang.



LONDON

SSSK welcomes new branch at London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

Tayma van Pomeran

IT ALL STARTED MID OCTOBER LAST YEAR.

We had our first SSSK meeting, where we talked about how to approach setting up a new branch, which quickly turned into a brainstorming session about what kind of events would work in the small school we are in. We now consist of just three members - Vishna, Salwa and Tayma - but like they say 'three is a crowd' and we are a very enthusiastic crowd.

We started with a bake sale. This was linked to a film screening later that week, where we showed 'Born into

Brothels' to raise awareness of street children and letting people know that we, as a new branch, were there. Later we had a Valentine's lollipop sale where people could order sweets for their loved ones, and from what we have heard it was much appreciated.

For our next event we plan to do a photo exhibition with photos people in the school took of their own encounters with street children.

We have been so lucky with the Trustees from SSSK to help us start off, helping us with any issues and welcoming us into the SSSK community. So far it has

been a thrilling ride in the SSSK train and we all cannot wait for the new events to come and to plan in the following year.



MEET THE LSHTM TEAM



Tayma van Pomeran



Vishna Shah



Salma Hasan

PROJECT VISIT

SEPTEMBER
2014

Visit to KOTO, Vietnam

Alya Sayani

KOTO's PHILOSOPHY 'KNOW ONE, TEACH ONE' WORKS ON THE PREMISE THAT LEARNING SHOULD BE PASSED ON.

This idea is at the heart of the social enterprise that trains former street children in Vietnam for the hospitality industry, encouraging recent graduates to help and mentor new trainees. As well as generating funds through fundraising activities, KOTO supports itself with an enterprise arm which generates funds through a cookery class, a catering service and, significantly, two restaurants at which the

trainees are able to gain valuable real life hospitality experience.

While visiting Vietnam on a gap year trip in September 2014, I was lucky to be able to visit the KOTO training centres and restaurants in both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, and to hear more about what the training programme involves. What really struck me was the care and attention that is invested in helping each student to achieve their independent goals and dreams.

New trainees are each given a small glass bottle

to decorate and personalise with depictions of their dreams for the future.

When entering the training centre in Ho Chi Minh City, I was immediately confronted with a cabinet at the entrance that displays the current class's 'dream bottles', a daily visual reminder of their aspirations for the future. This provides the students with motivation and, crucially, with hope. At the end of the two-year training program the students take part in a graduation ceremony, during which their dream bottles are returned to them.



know one, teach one

Professional skills training is combined at every stage with life and interpersonal skills workshops, as well as English language classes. The students I met during my visit were certainly full of energy, optimism and an eagerness to engage in conversation and practice their English at every opportunity.

A steady influx of international volunteers means that the students are able to develop a clear pronunciation, a real asset within the tourism industry. Those who show particular promise during the training as a whole continue to be mentored by KOTO's committed staff after their graduation, as part of a more extensive leadership programme.

It was impressive and truly inspiring to see the real personal engagement offered by KOTO's staff

and particularly their interest in educating and nurturing each trainee as an individual. KOTO was originally visited by Matthew Parsfield (Oxford SSSK) some five years ago and is a fantastic example of the type of work that SSSK's fundraising activities can continue to support.

Alya Sayani is an alumna of the SPGS and Cambridge branches.

