

Street Child Congress 2016

March 15-18

The Street Child Games aims to challenge perceptions of street children worldwide and demands that street children can access their rights.

An international Congress, took place at the Copacabana Palace Hotel, this ran alongside the sports and gave former street children, and children at risk in Rio, a platform to be heard.

On Friday 18th March, the young people held a General Assembly and presented the outcomes of the Congress to the world.

The Congress enabled the young people to lead the discussion on the issues and fundamental rights abuses they face: legal identity, protection from violence and access to education.

On Friday 18th March, the young people presented their Rio Resolution at the Congress General Assembly to city officials, national governments and the United Nations.

The teams

Argentina

Team Argentina is back in Rio for the Street Child Games. In Argentina, there are more than 14,500 children without parental care. The majority of these children live in the suburbs and city of Buenos Aires. One in every four children in the Buenos Aires suburbs has unfulfilled basic needs, a damaged childhood, substandard living arrangements and violated human rights.

One and a half million children and teenagers aged between 5 and 17 are engaged in economic or domestic activities in order to help their family to survive, which means they are forced to leave their education.

In 2014 team Argentina participated in the Street Child World Cup, and on their return home the team shared their experiences with Minister of Labour and Security, Carlos Tomada at an official reception. A major TV station covered their trip to Rio, leading to offers of assistance and a donation of materials to update their facilities.

TeamArgentina is made up of Martin, Jose and Eduardo.

La Casita is promoting the rights of children and teenagers without parental care, campaigning for their stories, for their aspirations and for the recognition of their right to a childhood.

La Casita was established in the 1980s as an open-door home in order to overcome the institutionalisation of children, where children and teenagers were historically shut away, depersonalised and excluded from family, social and cultural life.

The challenge is still creating child-friendly spaces which advocate the right to family, school, social, sport and cultural life, in the heart of supportive communities, where the child or teenager decides how long his or her stay there will be and is able to take control of their own lives.

Brazil

Team Brazil includeS two boys from Fortaleza, and two girls from the host city of Rio de Janeiro. Team Brazil is championing the national campaign for a new public policy to ensure the rights of children in street situations. The campaign has made significant progress in recent months but requires continued pressure to ensure it is put into practice.

Representing TeamBrazil we have Dinara, Jonas, David, Gabi and Street Child coach Jessica.

Three NGOs support the children representing Brazil in the Street Child Games. *O Pequeno Nazareno* works with street children and their families in the cities of Fortaleza and Recife in north-eastern Brazil. The organisation has grown from a small group of individuals doing outreach work with children on the streets almost 20 years ago to now leading the national campaign for a public policy for street children.

São Martinho, in Rio de Janeiro, supports children on the streets and at risk from their central location by the Lapa Arches, through cultural, sporting and educational activities, employment training and legal support. Since 1984, *São Martinho* has been fighting for the rights of street children. They also support the national campaign and are members of Rio networks supporting the rights of street children.

Street Child United also supports a youth-led initiative in Complexo de Penha, in the North Zone of Rio. Safe Space provides regular football sessions and activities for young people in Penha, providing participants with personal development opportunities - and a place to simply be children.

Burundi

Team Burundi participated in the Street Child Cup in 2014, where they were second. A few players who were in the 2014 squad have returned to Rio de Janeiro to participate in the Street Child Games. One of them is Innocent, who won the Golden Boot two years ago. He did not have a real name until recently. Innocent was just a nickname, which he got from his years on the street.

Today, he wants other children to have a name, legal papers and an identity.

His biggest dream? To start a family to help children in difficult situations.

Meet Innocent, Vianney, Armel and David, the players and ambassadors of Team Burundi. By participating in the Street Child Games they are campaigning for street children to be recognised and treated as national citizens with the right to a legal identity, access to education and protection from violence. The Street Child Games will enable the team to raise awareness in Burundi and across the world of the challenges street children face and inspire those who can implement real change to improve the lives of street children.

Team Burundi is representing the frontline work of New Generation Burundi. It is estimated 5000 children live and work on the streets in Burundi, 3000 of those are in the capital Bujumbura.

Street children and young people in Burundi live in poor conditions – vulnerable to extreme forms of violence including murder and rape, abuse, imprisonment without trial, exploitation and human trafficking. New Generation has worked for more than 15 years to support street

children and develop a new generation of leaders in Burundi. They are committed to support street children through a wide range of programmes including leadership training, social support & access to health care, coaching sessions and awareness campaigns for the specific challenges street children in Burundi face.

Egypt

TeamEgypt is represented by Doaa, Hesham, Nada and Hagar. They are participating in the Street Child Games to challenge the negative perceptions of children on the streets in Egypt; showing society that with the right support and guidance, these children are capable of achieving so much: even representing their country.

Team Egypt is part of *NAFAS*, a grassroots sports organisation in Cairo running outreach activities on the city's streets in parallel with other NGOs. Its aim is to start and manage sports programmes that give street children and young people at risk a place to breathe. This goal is the inspiration for the name *NAFAS*, which means breathe in Arabic. Through sport, participants can receive help tailored to their needs (with social reintegration as the ultimate role). Founded in 2012, over the years *NAFAS* has expanded its outreach. While priority is given to those with more desperate needs, The organisation has a policy not to turn anyone away. Alongside *NAFAS*, the young people of Team Egypt are supported by *FACE* for Children in Need, and the *Banaty Foundation*.

GB

Sam, Liya, Camille from Islington will represent Great Britain at the 2016 Street Child Games.

After participating in the 2014 Street Child World Cup, the team has continued to work to raise awareness of the issues homeless children across the world face.

At the Street Child Games, the team will represent homeless youth and children in care in London, ensuring their voices are heard within a global discussion on the challenges facing the world's growing number of homeless young people.

The team will use their experience and learning at the Street Child Games to provide a continued platform for London youth voices within their community.

Islington Independent Futures

The phenomenon of homeless children and youth is a global issue and ever present in the UK. Government data suggests rough sleeping across England has risen by 55% and the number of young people sleeping rough in London has more than doubled (St Mungo's research). Independent Futures works with all young people who have been looked after by Islington (Islington care leavers) aged 16-21 who are in the process of making the transition from the care system to independent living. Independent Futures also continues to work with Islington care leavers after the age of 21 if they are on a planned programme of education or training.

India

Usha, Hepsiba, Sneha, Ashok and Silambarasan, five teenagers from Chennai's streets will represent India at the first ever Street Child Games in Rio de Janeiro.

"These children have experienced life on the streets", said secretary of Karunalaya, N. Paul

Sunder Singh.

They have been rescued, protected and taught by *Karunalaya Social Service Society*, who is the official Indian partner with Street Child United.

Team India will represent their country and speaking for the rights of street children. Some of the children selected are school drop-outs and a few are sole bread-winners for the family. For instance, Sneha (15 years old) is a class 9 drop-out and works in a shop that weaves mosquito-nets for babies. Her mother has stopped working and her father is an alcoholic. Her aim is to finish Class 10 and she is happy about the opportunity to participate in the Street Child Games, as she will be flying for the first time; but it was very difficult for her to get a passport. Street children don't have an address.

Karunalaya Social Service Society is an NGO dedicated to the rights of street children in Chennai City. Since 1995, *Karunalaya* has been supporting and reintegrating street children with their families in many states of India, even to neighbouring Nepal. *Karunalaya* offers shelter, sports and arts activities to street children and pavement-dwellers, and advocates for the empowerment of Chennai's most marginalised communities.

Mozambique

Raquelina and Anguista are representing Mozambique at the Street Child Games. Team Mozambique's campaign will focus on every child's right to education – a right that every child is entitled to, regardless of gender, or whether or not they have lived on the streets.

The girls are supported by *Meninos Da Mocambique (MDM)*, a Mozambican NGO providing social assistance and health care to children on the streets of Mozambique's cities.

Sports form an important part of MDM's preventative work with girls who may be at risk of life on the streets. They use football to challenge traditional roles which girls become trapped in, as domestic assistants in the home with very little freedom, and to give them the opportunity to play.

Pakistan

Four boys from Karachi will represent their country at the Street Child Games. During the Street Child Games, team Pakistan will be focusing on protection from violence on the streets.

In 2014, following Pakistan's participation in the Street Child World Cup, Azad Foundation secured a commitment from the National assembly in Islamabad for a national protection policy to protect 1.5 million street children.

The Pakistan Squad is made up of Mehr Ali and Salman Hussain, who both represented their country in the 2014 Street Child World Cup, and Naeem and Naseer. Azad Foundation manager Irfan Maqbool is also joining the team and believes all four athletes are motivated to do well in the event.

Named the Pakistan Squad, the group is taking part in the games as part of the *Azad Foundation* – which has been working in Karachi since 2001. The foundation is a leading advocacy and research organisation for children's rights. It provides healthcare and medical assistance to children on the streets, as well as formal and informal education, leisure

activities, shelter and family tracing/reunification. All this work takes place in day care centres, mobile units, safe spaces and transit shelter homes.

Over 6,000 children on the streets of Karachi have benefitted from the work of the Azad Foundation since it was set up.

Pakistan Squad featured in Sky Sports' David Garrido's Diary. This interview was taken before Congress General Assembly and SC Games Final. Dave had big expectations from us and we made him and everyone proud !

Philippines

Team Philippines is back in Rio de Janeiro to participate in the Street Child Games. They campaign for children on the streets to access alternative forms of education ensuring they can continue to develop and be part of the community. The team also wants to raise awareness and understanding of the issues children face on the streets - challenging negative perceptions surrounding street children and promoting the message that children in the streets are the solution to the problems society face.

Team Philippines participated in the Street Child Cup in 2014 with a boys and a girls team. The girls team won silver and now they are back to get some golden medals.

Ronalyn, Crystal and Erica are in Rio representing the Philippines.

Fairplay For All Foundation

The team is supported by a number of organisations working together. Led by the *Fairplay for All Foundation* which works in Payatas, Quezon City, the NGOs assisted each other in building and supporting the team.

Payatas is the location of the largest dumpsite in Metro Manila. The Foundation runs a drop-in centre for street children in the area and coaches football to children from Payatas and also in Kasiglahan, a relocation centre after the dumpsite collapsed in 2000. It is run by Roy Moore and Naomi Tomlinson.