Children on the Streets

Juliett Otieno, UNICEF Kenya
Musa aged 14 years sits with his glue. Two children sleep in the midday sun…
Life on the streets is full of emptiness, you sit and wait, then go and beg, and sit some more....
You take the glue to pass the time faster....
…and play cards....
…sometimes people try to help….
But most children left home because of violence and hunger… most do not know how to trust…. 
Yet the risks of violence and abuse are ever present on the streets, especially for girls…
Mercy Wanjiru
16 years

Left home because of abuse and hunger.

“I miss home, but here I can beg all day and buy something small for myself, nobody takes that away from me.”

She wishes she could become a hairdresser.
Sam Maina, 11 years old, living on the streets in Nairobi since he was 7.

“My father died in 2002 and my mother used to beat me all the time so I ran away.

The last time I ate was yesterday – I took an orange from a dumpster but it was bad.

I would love to go back to school and become a pilot or a singer or actor.”
Alex Wanjohi, living on the streets since 1999 when he was 16 years old

“I dropped out of school at standard four after having a fight with a teacher. There was no money, no food, no clothes at home so I left.

I wish I could become a carpenter.”
Susan Laki, now 21 years, has given birth to two children since she came to live on the streets. One child died at 3 months from pneumonia. The other was taken into care. Her street “husband” beats her but also gives her protection.
Musa and his friends with the lady they call 'Mama'. She lives nearby and with support from the Street Families Trust Fund acts as caregiver to over 100 children.
Her biggest challenge is to try to protect the girls from getting raped.
...beginning a new life...
Rebecca Waithira, aged 10. She used to go to school in the morning but her mother used to send her to beg in the afternoons. She was brought to the Kayole centre and decided to stay. She wants to become a lawyer.
Jedidah Kawira, 13 years. Ran away from home because she was beaten and forced to work instead of going to school. She was rescued and brought to the Kayole centre. She loves being able to study and learn, and wants to become a lawyer.
Agnes Wanja, 14 wants to be a doctor.

Her mother forced her to drop out of school and go to the streets to beg. After her mother died her sister forced her to continue begging.

The city authorities found her and brought her to the Kayole centre.

She loves it because she gets to study and go to school.
Stephen Njenga, 15

One of ten children that his parents could not care for. Not all of them could go to school so he ran away.

He would love to go home and see his mother if only she would let him go back to school.
Kevin Mbugua, 14 would like to become a social worker so that he can help other street children.

He and his mother were thrown out of their home by their father. He ran away from his mother and 7 remand homes until he brought himself back to Kayole voluntarily earlier this year.

He would like to find his mother and let her know where he is.
Agnes Wanjera, 14 with her sister. Their mother used to force them to beg, refused to let them go to school. She said we were her “job”. Agnes persuaded her to give them to the city council who brought them to Kayole. “I love it here, love going to school. I want to be a social worker.”
Chores are assigned to all the children at Kayole as part of their rehabilitation. The children have to want to be here, they have to want to change…
Children at Kayole Centre with Kiki from the Street Children Rehabilitation Trust Fund.

Kiki regularly organizes street outreaches where he and his team go to the streets to talk to kids and explain that they do have options for a better life at the centre.
Thank You