Please cite the Published Version

Street-connectedness and education in Kenya: experiences of formal schooling as rationale for inclusive pedagogies of practice

Su Lyn Corcoran[1], Lilian Aoko Awimbo[2], Kevin Mugwanga[3] and Irene Atieno Aluoch[3]
[1]Education and Social Research Institute, Manchester Metropolitan University
[2]Independent Researcher
[3]Glad's House

Abstract
This paper contributes to the literature on street-connectedness and inclusive education, presenting original research findings from two Kenyan studies aiming to understand street-connected young people's experiences of education. The first focused on transitioning from the street into education or training to explore the challenges of making that transition. The second, on young people who had lived on the street for extended periods of time and were still there at the time of data generation. From these studies, significant understandings emerged concerning: a) education as motivating initial migrations to the street; b) the role of fear, embarrassment and shame in preventing young people going (back) into formal education; and c) how acceptance and support are key to overcoming feelings of not belonging and challenges faced when transitioning from the street into schools. The paper provides empirical evidence that should be considered when planning inclusive education provision for street-connected young people globally.

Keywords: street-connected; inclusion; belonging; Kenya; Collaboration.

International policy agendas, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), prioritise universal access to quality education, positioning school as the place where children 'belong' and education – heralded as improving outcomes and life changes – as a panacea for poverty (Kaneva and Corcoran, accepted; Boyden 2015). However, while education has become globally applicable through international policy and legislation, such as the United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), how it translates into practice is not as straight forward as such policies and related targets suggest. What happens when formal schooling is the problem and young people[1], unable to 'fit' the expectations reinforced by all aspects of the school environment, decide that the opportunities and benefits of being street-connected far outweigh the rewards that are perceived to be inherent to completing their education? What implications do the multiple deprivations and street-connectedness they experience – which should be reflected in policy that distinguishes them as street-connected, but doesn't isolate them from other young people (Thomas de Benitez 2011) – have for how they transition (back) into schools?

Focusing on the social and educational justifications for inclusive education – defined in the broadest terms of equitable quality education for 'all' learners, this paper discusses findings from two projects conducted with street-connected young people (SCYP) in Kenya. Drawing on their experiences of being street-connected, and implications for later transitions into education, it explores the challenges faced by young people in schools that motivated initial migrations to the street and/or prevented them from choosing to go (back) to school, as well as the challenges faced by those supported to leave the street and into education. In focusing on young people's experiences, we aim to forefront the role of (not) belonging in shaping their pathways through education and problematise the power dynamics set up in schools, and societies, that lead to retention issues. Finally, the paper considers and positions the experiences of SCYP within the broader discourse surrounding inclusive education.

Locating street-connectedness

---

[1] In this paper, young people refers to children under 18 years old and/or youth aged 18-28.

SCYP are not a homogenous group and attempts to create a unified category are problematic. Civil society organisations (CSOs) working to support them may focus on the young people's situation as extremely vulnerable – to meet fundraising goals – and depict them as unable to support themselves and in need of our care and concern. On the other hand, SCYP are positioned as troublemakers or tools for political gain who need to be removed from the street (e.g. Wanzala and Adhiambo 2019). This rescue and/or removal binary fails to account for how socially, spatially, and sometimes temporally, complex SCYP's relationships and experiences on and with the interactive space understood as the street are (e.g. Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014; Beazley and Miller 2015; Lucchini 1999; Van Blerk 2005).

In trying to explain their lived realities, it is important to understand that SCYP's experiences are individual and describe a variety of potential opportunities and challenges (Kaneva and Corcoran, accepted; Street Invest 2014-2018). SCYP may live and/or work within this space full-time or part-time, engage in street-based activities all day every day, regularly after school and/or at weekends and holidays, or infrequently. They may be street-connected with, and/or in order to support, parents, in regular contact with families, or without any parental interaction at all. SCYP may be street-connected in their hometowns or in completely different urban centres or countries to where they were born. They may be at risk of exploitation, abuse, and stigmatisation, and/or they may be entrepreneurial, engaged in complex and innovative forms of livelihood generation.

It is possible to conceptualise street-connectedness, in all contexts, as identity-forming (e.g. Borg et al. 2012). A young person's experiences of being and becoming street-connected impact a fluid process of negotiation and renegotiation, as they navigate transient processes of figuring a sense of (not) belonging in relation to the physical space and the communities that reside within and beyond it (e.g. Beazley 2000; Corcoran 2016). SCYP exercise agency in how they both build their relationships and manage how the street monopolises their skills and energies. How they inhabit this space, and transform it into territory defined by their ownership of it, is influenced by the degree to which control over their lives is exercised by them or on them (Lucchini 1999).

If street-connectedness is identity-forming, both young people's reasons for being street-connected and their experiences on the street are characterised by various processes, such as: neglect, cruelty, abandonment, financial opportunity, better nutrition, friendships and kinship ties, belonging to sub-cultures, and/or stigmatisation (e.g. Ayuku et al. 2004; Davies 2008; Wakia 2010). These factors influence their interactions with wider society both on, and for those who choose to make the transition, after they physically leave the street. For example, as Ferguson (2017) explains, the persona of strength and resilience constructed by some SCYP may be put into question if they admit to having little or no education, or cannot write their own name.

The right to education is firmly enshrined within the UNCRC, and the General Comment on Children in Street Situations (UNGC 21) provides definitive international directives for governments about tailoring policy and support programmes for SCYP (United Nations 2017). However, while the general comment is a useful advocacy tool – encouraging governments to distinguish SCYP in policy – there is little research into how these rights are translated at local level, or used to encourage collaboration between CSOs and local authorities for delivering context-appropriate interventions (Lucchini and Stoecklin 2020). While CSOs enable access to education for SCYP in a variety of ways (e.g. EENET 2017), does the formal education system often positioned as the end point of the 'reintegration journey' provide inclusive spaces in which these young people can learn?

The findings discussed within this paper stem from two studies focused on SCYP in Kenya. While they do not focus on the mechanisms through which the right to education is enabled, they explore the experiences of young people with regards to education. The first study (Corcoran 2016), an ESRC-funded[2] doctoral study, explored the experiences of young people transitioning from the street into a variety of education and training placements, to understand the challenges they faced and, indirectly,

---

[2] Grant code ES/J500094/1

the reasons why young people potentially drop out of education weeks, months, and sometimes years after they leave the street. The second, British Academy-funded[3], study (Corcoran et al. 2020a), aimed to understand the opinions and experiences of education of young people who had been street-connected for extended periods of time.

Research Design
The first study: exploring transition experiences
In the first study, I (Su) conducted semi-structured interviews, auto-photography activities, and focus groups with 53 young people supported by three CSOs in two provincial towns – which were not named in the resulting thesis to ensure the participants' anonymity. These young people were attending various education and training placements, but had all initially transitioned into primary or secondary schools after leaving the street. Kenya is currently rolling out a new competency-based curriculum, but all of the participants experienced the previous 8-4-4 education system through the medium of English – eight years of primary school and four each of secondary school and further education.

Using life history interviews (Goodson 2013) as a methodological starting point, semi-structured interviews focused on encouraging participants to think about their lives before they migrated to the street, their lives on the street, and their lives after they left the street. Follow up questions, and later data generation activities using drawings, auto-photography, and image elicitation interviews (Corcoran, 2015a), or focus groups, explored specific experiences of transitioning (back) into schools. CSO staff members joined the interviews to interpret from Kiswahili, Kikuyu or *Sheng*[4] and provide support for the young people should sensitive issues arise during or after the interviews (Corcoran 2016). Care was taken to consider participants' expectations of the research and ensure they understood the project and what their involvement entailed. The interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed.

The second study: street-connected young people's opinions and experiences of education
The first study contributed an understanding of the issues faced by young people in education after leaving the street, but did not explore experiences of those who had lived on the street for extended periods of time. In the second project, we (Kevin, Irene and Lillian) conducted data generation with 21 young people living and working on the street in Mombasa. Su led an *Introduction to qualitative research methods* workshop with Glad's House[5] social work and teaching teams. We (Kevin and Irene) selected methods that could be integrated into our daily programmes of work and piloted the use of walking interviews (e.g. O'Neill and Roberts 2020), drawings, and image elicitation interviews within our social work and education programmes, to generate qualitative data for monitoring and evaluation. Once our NACOSTI[6] research license was issued, we invited 16 young people who had lived on the street for an extended period of time or were born on the street, to street-connected parents, to participate. I (Lillian) conducted focus group activities with six young men who I provided counselling support for on a consultancy basis at Glad's House (Corcoran et al. 2020a).

Recruiting research participants from cohorts of young people who are already clients of a counsellor and/or supported by social work programmes, raises ethical implications - particularly in terms of the client-practitioner relationship. Care was taken so young people did not feel coerced to take part given our roles in supporting them and that they were able to give and withdraw informed consent. One participant withdrew halfway through the project. The participants chose not to be audio-recorded, so hand written notes were made during or after data generation activities. Therefore, while direct quotes

---

[3] Grant code: SRG 170976
[4] A creole mix of Kiswahili and other Kenyan languages used by young people (Githiora 2002)
[5] Glad's House is an organisation in Mombasa that work with street-connected children and youth, www.gladshouse.com.
[6] Research requires ethical approval from a recognised Kenyan research institution and a National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) permit.

are provided for participant responses from the first study, we focus on the observations written in our research diaries for the second.

Exploring street-connected young people's opinions and experiences of education
In both studies, the data was analysed following an inductive bottom up process (e.g. Braun and Clarke 2006), providing insights into how young people position and (re-)position themselves within street-based communities, schools, and wider society. In the first study, this process began with meetings between the researcher and the interpreters at the end of each day of interviews to discuss themes arising and inform follow up interviews. Later, the audio recordings and transcripts were repeatedly revisited to further code the data (Corcoran 2016). In the second project, initial analysis meetings of the research team discussed notes made in research journals to identify themes arising. These discussions continued asynchronously via WhatsApp and email over four months of data generation – locating existing themes in new participant responses as well identifying new themes arising.

The participants form two groups: those who were born to street-connected parents and had always lived there participated in the second study in Mombasa; and those who had dropped out of education – for various reasons – and later migrated to the street participated in both studies. Figuring a sense of belonging was a central theme for both groups. In relation to education, this concerned how acceptance and support helped young people to fit in to new situations while shame and embarrassment associated with being street-connected affected this process. These themes translated into three key categories: the barriers to going (back) to school from the street; the issue of school being the reason for initial migrations to the street; and the challenges that young people face as they make the transition (back) to school.

From street to school: barriers to making the transition
An inability to attend school is often cited as a reason for street-connectedness (e.g. Wakia 2010): because parents cannot afford the resources needed and/or because young people are required to work to support their families financially. However, in Mombasa children do attend school at the same time as living on the street. Participants started school as small children but eventually left because they struggled to keep up with homework expectations or the financial burden of staying in school. Some dropped out because parents pressured them to spend more time on the street begging, but mainly they made the decision for themselves. The money earned brought immediate rewards, while those promised of completing education were less tangible – especially when outreach programmes provided street populations with three meals a day and clothing. There were so many individuals, churches, and businesses, positioning themselves as 'Good Samaritans', the money earned through begging and other street-based income-generating activities was used for other items.

We know from practice that mothers with young children can earn enough to cover basic needs – especially given the access to various feeding programmes – but as their children grow their earnings decrease, encouraging them to have another baby to attract more sympathy. Consequently, teenagers, becoming more and more independent of their street-connected mothers, find it increasingly difficult to earn enough. In Mombasa, three participants revealed how their career aspirations had changed in wanting to become a teacher, train driver, and politician. However, as they were coming to realise the potential benefits of completing their education, there were additional barriers to going (back) to school. In Kenya, learners must return to the level of schooling they left so 14-year-olds, for example, who did not finish Standard 2 (the second year of primary education) must attend classes with cohorts aged seven or eight years old that may also include their younger siblings. It is difficult to admit to having received limited or no education, but for participants in both studies, being identifiable as different from classmates because of advanced age, and knowing they would be at least 20 years old when they finished primary school in Standard 8, reinforced their embarrassment.

Additional self-esteem issues also affected their confidence about going to school. Participants highlighted difficulties of fitting in to wider society, especially when labelled as *chokora* (a negative word for a street child). The stigmatisation they experience influenced the belief that they would be a

target for ridicule from teachers and peers. They also worried about not performing well academically, having to sit down, concentrate, and remain focused on the teachers' lessons for any given length of time, and feared the discipline meted out by teachers. Finally, participants in Mombasa felt that belonging to street-based communities, who provided them with support and friendship, was too important to jeopardise. They disliked being labelled as weak by peers for talking to social workers for example. Therefore, going (back) into education was not an easy decision.

When school is the reason for migrating to the street
Although it was not one of the most common reasons given, participants from both studies (n=9) mentioned problems with teachers as contributing to why they dropped out of school and later migrated to the street. One described his relationship and arguments with a particular teacher that resulted in temporary exclusion from school and his decision to drop out completely. When supported to go back into education, he was determined not to return, choosing vocational training instead. He wanted an income and to become self-reliant: seeing his future career as a way to find his place in society, be dependable, and able to assist others.

> "…being a mechanic is good because if you know and you have that talent…you will see you are doing good and you will be able to help your family and you will be able to be learned and if you have a problem you can solve it."

He was a model apprentice according to his mentor, had great aspirations, was an intelligent and resourceful young man – potentially the most entrepreneurial of all of the participants across the two studies – but he had negative experiences of school.

A second young man's striking drawings revealed his experiences of school (see Corcoran et al. 2020a). In the first, a teacher stands at the chalkboard in front of students sat in rows – representing that the teacher is in charge and thinks he knows what is best for the learners. In the second, the artist drew himself in school uniform, kneeling on the ground holding two large stones aloft as two teachers look on. He was punished because he did not understand and complete the mathematics work set, and subsequently dropped out. In the third image, he is drawn at the edge of the page looking towards a school building, a rucksack on his back. His explanation (translated from Kiswahili and written down during the interview):

> "I was very ambitious when I started school. I had hoped that I would be a very important person in this world. I always worked hard to be what I wanted – to drive a train – but I don't know what happened"

This talented young man regularly attended Glad's House street education programmes and could develop his artistic skills with support, but feared that he would be unable to live up to teachers' expectations if he went back to school. Other participants mentioned dropping out because completing homework was difficult without money for light or time after they completed their chores or worked to provide for their families. One found school boring and not as interesting as the opportunities and autonomy he had on the street. Staying at school therefore, was either not meeting the needs of these young people or they were being actively made to feel that they did not belong in the classroom.

The challenges of transitioning (back) into education
When participants in the first study described first days, weeks or months at new schools, they highlighted the difficulties of: getting used to the length of the school day, concentration, and routine (n=8); learning to write (n=2); meeting academic expectations (n=5); using only English when they spoke other languages (n=3); and adapting their behaviour and styles of learning accordingly (n=11). The process of transitioning to new schools were periods of upheaval as they refigured their place in relation to this new situation. All participants (n=6) attending primary or secondary schools at the time of the first study where they believed they were the only street-connected young person kept aspects of their backgrounds private to be accepted in new schools. One invented a story about living

with an aunt while his mother was sick to explain joining the school mid-year, and another chose to adopt his peers' misconception that his foster mother was his biological parent.

> "I have friends at my new school, but they do not understand. They take me as my good mother's child…I come from far and I am different…They do not understand me, and they do not know me."

Some participants could not reinvent themselves, especially arriving on the first day in a vehicle with the CSO's 'street child' logo. A head teacher introduced one young man to the student body with: "look at this boy, he was a *chokora* and will give you all a challenge". Although he stressed the young man's academic ability, the introduction reflects a deficit attitude towards street-connectedness that preventing him from being accepted immediately. His exam performance eventually afforded him status, respect and friendship and increased self-confidence in his abilities and street-connected history. He acknowledged his time on the street as having "made me stronger".

Peer support was important to the process of settling in. One boy photographed the tree where he sat alone on his first day at school, because he "had no friend" (see also Corcoran 2015a). Another felt that all his previous learning had "left his head" and he could only advance when he made friends. The participants living in residential transitional care centres (n=17) run by the CSOs, or in private boarding schools[7] (n=11) had accessible support networks comprising young people who shared their experiences. However, access to such support groups meant being identifiable as part of that group:

> "if you tell someone your life story they cannot understand you. At [school] everyone knows [the organisation] so they know your life story".

Being "understood" implied support and acceptance, which this girls' peers at a private boarding school did not provide. They refused to work together or share books with academically able young people whose places were paid for by donors to the CSO: "sometimes I wish they did understand us better". The ten other sponsored students did not mention explicitly being accepted by the wider student body, but they all described their "friends" as being part of this group. In contrast, the children attending state maintained primary schools local to the residential centres did not mention not being able to build friendships with peers outside of these centres, but there were complaints about the teachers.

Teachers' attitudes to young people transitioning from the street and into their classrooms also influenced transition experiences, especially the welcome and support provided at new schools, or lack thereof. One boy emphasised not even being shown where the toilets were at his primary school, and a second described being treated no differently to his classmates at another school on his first day when they were all caned for not submitting homework. He talked about the caning during an initial semi-structured interview, and reinforced its importance with a photograph of the tree where it happened for an auto-photography exercise (see also Corcoran 2015a). Teachers' acceptance and support was evident in the emotional and academic support provided and their perceived teaching skills. At the boarding school, one girl mentioned how the teachers "always attended the class", finished teaching the curriculum before the end of the year, and were had positive attitudes towards the CSO-sponsored pupils, despite their not being accepted by their peers.

> "Sometimes the teachers call us together to talk to us ... We are brought together and counselled together. The head teacher, when you don't have anything you tell him, and he will produce for you. The teachers support you better."

For her, being present, teaching effectively and providing additional attention with regular meetings, extended the notion of support with regards to learning.

---

[7] One of the CSOs sought donor-financed sponsorship for academically able students to attend private boarding primary schools.

Of course, the above examples are not representative of all participants' experiences at new schools. Eight participants still living in residential centres in the first study, referred only to their happiness at being (back) at school. However, the majority of the participants in this study described varying levels of support and acceptance from their teachers, friends, and school-based peers.

Street-connectedness and education – a complex relationship
Exploring the findings from these two Kenya-based studies identifies: a) the role of education in motivating initial migrations to the street; b) the role of fear, embarrassment and shame in preventing young people from going (back) into formal education; and c) how acceptance and support are key to overcoming feelings of not belonging and the challenges faced by SCYP transitioning into schools.

SCYP's negative experiences of formal schooling, and how these influence decisions to drop out and later migrate to the street, are represented by the young men who argued with teachers or were punished for not understanding lessons. Other participants described being bored, unable to keep up with work set (especially homework), difficulty working in English when they spoke other languages at home, and their struggles to meet teachers' expectations in terms of discipline and performance. However, while access to education for SCYP is a focus for many organisations working with them, there is limited research into their experiences of school. One study in Western Kenya (Taylor et al. 2019), explores education provision through an intersectional lens of street-connectedness and disability, focusing on SCYP assessed as also having communication disabilities. Taylor et al. describe these as expressive language disorders resulting from neglect, trauma, cruelty, abandonment; or related to language barriers arising from their use predominantly of their mother tongue or *Sheng*, which was also an issue for three of the participants in the first study. Because they are often hidden disabilities, communication disabilities can go unrecognised, or unacknowledged, and Taylor et al.'s participants struggled to navigate 'hostile' school environments and frequent bullying by students and teachers.

Such environments exist for young people who identify as having been street-connected, whether or not they also identify as having a disability or language issues. The general public's negative and stigmatising attitudes to street-connectedness, described by participants in both studies explored in this paper, was evident in schools. For example: the head teacher's surprise and fellow students' initial disbelief of an academically able '*chokora*'; participants in the boarding school struggling to fit in when everyone knew their history; and the young men who re-wrote their back stories when they joined new schools. Street-connectedness was equated to inability and/or being a troublemaker. Such deficit attitudes towards SCYP, also described by Corcoran (2015b) and Dladha and Ogina (2018), have the potential to instil feelings of inadequacy and shame that influence decisions to drop out of school (again) as well as preventing later returns to education. The participants not in school in Mombasa, worried about not performing well academically if they went (back) to school and their peers' negative attitudes towards street-based lives – their embarrassment increasing at the notion of joining classes with much younger peers after being out-of-school for extended periods of time.

SCYP can develop social and emotional attachments to the street, finding belonging, social capital and support through the bonds they share with each other and the sub-cultures they co-construct, often in direct opposition to their treatment by members of the public (e.g. Beazley 2003: Davies 2008). The upheaval of leaving can therefore emote both feelings of hope and self-confidence, as well as 'loneliness, guilt, and disloyalty' that are difficult to overcome when trying to disengage (Karabanow 2008:782). Multiple deprivations experienced over time, and their street-connectedness, impact upon both their relationship with the street and their relative wellbeing (Corcoran and Wakia 2013; Thomas de Benitez 2011), effecting the identity they figure for themselves and their feelings of (not) belonging – or identities of exclusion (Karabanow 2008) – in other situations.

Research focusing on 'looked after' children moving schools in the UK (e.g. Brewin and Statham 2011) or of children with disabilities moving between levels of the education system in Armenia (e.g. Bridge of Home 2011) shows that experiences of settling in to a new school affects relative levels of

wellbeing. In lieu of limited research from countries similar to Kenya, both of these situations highlight the importance of holistic approaches to transitions, specific to the needs of the individual, that are scaffolded in positive relationships between parents, teachers, and students. Taylor et al. (2019:9) suggest that 'experience and familiarity' can change negative and deficit attitudes, which is evident in the responses of the young man introduced to the whole school as *chokora*. Although it is not certain whether he would have been as popular with his peers had he not been academically able, with time he overcame negative stereotypes to build friendships.

In attempting to negotiate their transition into schools, especially within societies that uphold negative views about street-connectedness, the participants emphasise the importance of welcoming learning environments, acceptance and support from teachers, and friendship and peer support as integral to the process. There is therefore a need to think beyond access to education and getting children into school, to long-term strategies that provide effective support systems (e.g. Djone and Suryani 2019). Such frameworks start with building trusting relationships between SCYP and social work teams delivering effective reintegration programmes that strengthen connections with family, school, and the community – building self-confidence and wellbeing (Corcoran and Wakia 2013; Kaime-Atterhög et al. 2007; Volpi 2002) and advocating for the provision of further systems of support. Van Raemdonck and Seedat-Khan (2018) in South Africa reviewed mentorship programmes for young people transitioning into school, with mentorship provided by social work teams as well as peers who have already undertaken the transition. Although successful, such programmes rely on financial investment and changes in education policy and practice agendas.

As the development of inclusive pedagogies of practice takes time (e.g. Lewis et al. 2019), collaboration – especially between schools (Ainscow et al. 2012) – is an important first step to building effective schools and school systems to tackle wider inequalities and enable inclusive, quality education. Given the wealth of experience that CSOs working with SCYP have in providing access to learning (e.g. EENET 2017), such collaborations should also involve a cross-sectoral representation of stakeholders from these organisations, working with teachers to develop effective systems of support. Such collaborative approaches can advocate for different groups of learners (such as SCYP, refugees, or children with hidden disabilities), highlighting the diversity that exists within the student cohort, challenging deficit conceptualisations, and developing teachers' understanding of their students and their associated needs, to encourage learning and minimise barriers to learners developing a sense of belonging. At the local level, the development of inclusive pedagogies of practice could start with collaboration between educators working on education programmes at street-based drop in centres, for example, with teachers in schools to adapt catch-up curricula and after school club activities, as well as effective partnerships for sharing good practice and supporting effective transitions (e.g. Moore 2017; Thomas de Benitez 2013). Such partnerships could be extended to networks of schools and CSOs, in collaboration with local education officers, taking bottom-up, 'beyond schools' approaches (e.g. Ainscow 2020) to addressing the social and economic processes that affect SCYP and their access to and retention in education.

It is not possible to provide a definitive position on whether SCYP should be identified to teachers when they start at a new school. The participants at the boarding school had the support of peers with similar experiences, but those attending schools local to their family homes, especially in rural areas, could not fall back upon these networks if they were not accepted by the wider school community. 'Familial isolation' (Sherry 2004), has been used to describe how it feels to be the only person in a household who has lived on the street (Corcoran 2015b), which can be exacerbated by trying to fit traditional expectations of their behaviour at home after their experiences of street-based autonomy (e.g. Beazley 2000). This isolation extends to feelings of being the only street-connected young person in a school.

In addition to the multiple deprivations associated with a young person's street-connectedness (Thomas de Benitez 2011), they may also identify as being at the intersection of multiple categories of need associated with gender, disability, HIV, forced displacement etc. (e.g. Corcoran et al. 2020b; Ward and Seager 2010). There is therefore a danger to taking a siloed approach to inclusion in

education, where only one category of need is prioritised or funded, or that young people are segregated into alternative education provision because of a perceived deficit in their ability to learn (Miles and Singal 2010). A South African study exploring 'developmental delay' and additional social and emotional challenges faced by SCYP suggested that some of their participants were unable to cope with the demands of mainstream schools (Van Jaarsveld et al. 2011). However, such a position could lead to all SCYP being excluded, especially when the diversity in their population is not recognised and policies for alternative education provision specifically name them (Corcoran 2015b). As Pather (2011) shows, learners with a range of abilities can be included successfully in mainstream settings, even when there are few resources (Stubbs 2008).

Therefore, it is important for teachers to develop an understanding of what it means to be street-connected, but alongside (re)training of the idea that the average child does not exist and every learner brings their own particular backstory and combination of needs to the classroom that they may or may not wish to share. Given that the participants highlighted both positive and negative implications of identifying themselves as having been street-connected, acknowledging, but not necessarily identifying, the potential experiences of individuals within the student body may be an important first step towards change. Developing inclusive pedagogies of practice that scaffold learning from where each student finds themselves to be and considering their individual learning needs – providing a twin track approach to inclusion when special attention is required (e.g. Bouille 2013) – could also reduce the likelihood of negative school experiences and prevent young people from dropping out and migrating to the street. Although there did not appear to be a programme explicitly challenging prejudice directed towards CSO-supported students from their peers at the boarding school, teachers set up a system of regular meetings and support alongside the academic programme for those who were sponsored by the CSO. Effective inclusive practice in schools starts with a process of listening to learners (Ainscow and Messiou 2018) and from that identifying and challenging the limiting assumptions that teachers have about the young people in their classes. A next step at the boarding school would be to build in work with the wider student body to help them 'understand' the young people receiving sponsorship.

For some young people, the street is a space characterised by trauma and violence, but there are also SCYP who run from traumatic experiences at home (e.g. Thomas de Benitez 2007) – making the street a relatively safer space. The role of CSOs is therefore important, as well as difficult. These organisations provide young people with support and opportunities to leave the street, but the development of trusting relationships between SCYP and staff members is difficult when adults have repeatedly let them down (Ferguson 2017). The regular meetings at the boarding school extend this approach as teachers pick up on the work started by the social work team – building trust and forging appropriate relationships between adults and young people previously let down by adults. This system of meetings could be expanded to support and benefit all learners and, in acknowledging and responding to individual difference, change deficit attitudes and potentially prevent young people dropping out of school because of negative experiences.

In order to define and deliver appropriate support for young people, they must be part of that process (Johnson 2017). They are agents who are capable of affecting change in their own situations – especially when they are enabled and encouraged to do so. Lucchini (1993) describes two main competencies developed by SCYP. Instrumental competency refers to the visibly observable attributes of skills, knowledge and abilities engaged in activities like income-generation that young people develop during their time on the street. Symbolic competencies on the other hand are invisible and refer to their abilities to form useful friendships and engage problem-solving capabilities, to ensure survival on the street (*ibid*). SCYP's experiences and capabilities, and the levels of autonomy and skills building they have developed in order to survive on the street are, therefore, as important to the decisions made about their education and wider service provision. Interventions should be culturally responsive, young person-centred, and where possible, young person-led (Ferguson 2017). As Moore (2017) writes of a democratic school educating street-connected young people in the Philippines, when young people are included and invested in a school's decision-making process engagement and retention improve.

Older SCYP, who feel unable to return to mainstream primary schools, or start school for the first time, at an advanced age raise the question of providing additional support as they return to classrooms. In Kenya, returning to school is all that is available, fee free, for a young person under the age of 18. Above 18 years, young people can access vocational training, but below this age, those wishing to access alternative education provision must pay to do so privately. Ensuring that young people leaving the street achieve a minimum level of basic education in line with the SDGs – giving them a foothold in an increasingly competitive labour market – may require that alternative pathways to achieving formal education (basic literacy, numeracy and/or end of Primary/Secondary school certification) be provided in the short term. Three of the four CSOs deliver catch-up curricula at drop-in centres, delivered such that they fit around young people's work on the street, or at their residential centres. These programmes aim to support young people through the transition away from the street and (back) into schools (e.g. Yohannes et al. 2017). However, such accelerated programmes of learning can be effective in helping young people to skip a year or two of school (e.g. Moore 2017). There are young people supported by the CSOs who do choose to go back to school at an advanced age and eventually achieve their Kenya Certificate of Secondary education, but others prefer to choose different education pathways – potentially also continuing their basic education at the CSO centres and registering for national examinations as private candidates.

Conclusions
In both studies, what can be concluded is that there is no one way of working that fits each individual. For example, there were positive and negative aspects to both taking groups of street-connected children to the same primary school or enabling them to attend a school on their own. However, recommendations are possible for support programmes offered by organisations and/or education centres. CSOs working with SCYP have found that those who are (forcibly) removed from the street by police and municipal authorities are much more likely to drop back to the street than remain in residential centres or family homes (e.g. Corcoran and Wakia 2013; Kaime-Atterhög and Ahlberg 2008). Each individual migrates to the street because of a specific combination of motivating factors (e.g. Wakia 2010), and experiences life on the street in their own individual way. Leaving the street, is therefore an ongoing process that starts when a young person is able to visualise a life trajectory for themselves beyond the street (Lucchini 1999); and is successful when they feel listened to, respected, and understood (Kaime-Atterhög and Ahlberg 2008). These young people must therefore make active decisions to leave the street, if they choose to do so at all, and exercise a degree of agency over the process, as they move (back) into family homes or alternative care situations and, later, into schools. Support is needed during this transition period, in addition to time spent in a non-formal education setting, such as Glad's House education programmes, as they prepare to go back into formal classrooms.

It is therefore possible to say that SCYP do not leave the street (Corcoran 2016). They may be physically removed from the space, but their experiences of leaving and continuing through education suggest that street-connectedness is not spatially or temporally constrained. Rather, it is a process of becoming and making sense of the self within the context of the street, and leaving the street is a process of becoming in which street-connected identities continue to be constructed and re-constructed. Individuals transitioning into new communities, figure a sense of belonging in relation to their experiences of the transition and the interactions they have with others in that community. They are therefore able to settle in to schools better when they feel supported and accepted – influencing long-term aspects such as academic performance or the roles that they envision for themselves at home and in society.

Biographies

Irene Atieno Aluoch is a street worker at Glad's house. She has a diploma in community development and counselling and over two years' work experience with street-connected children. Irene works on the Glad's House street education programme, delivering non-formal education at various street-based locations in Mombasa, Kenya. She has been developing her research experience as part of partnerships with Street Invest and Manchester Metropolitan University and is looking at developing the education programme in line with young people's expectations.

Dr Lillian Aoko Awimbo completed her Doctorate as part of a collaborative program delivered by the Kenya Association of Professional Counsellors (KAPC) and the University of Manchester in Counselling Studies 2016. She has been a practicing counsellor for 20 years and has been providing her services to street-connected children supported by Glad's House for 5 years. Lillian is interested in non-directive play therapy and particularly its development for counselling practice with children and young people in the context of Kenya.

Dr Su Lyn Corcoran is a researcher at the Education and Social Science Research Institute at Manchester Metropolitan University and programme officer at the Enabling Education Network where she co-edits the Enabling Education Review. She draws on her experience of teaching science and theory of knowledge in the UK and the international sector, and working with international non-governmental organisations delivering programmes in lower income countries, to take a cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary approach to research. Su is interested in 'blue sky inclusion' (inclusive education in the broadest sense), refugees, street-connectedness, equity in education, youth employment and social justice. Her research is mainly focused on East and Central Africa.

Kelvin Mugwanga has worked for Glad's House for over five years as a social worker supporting street-connected children and youth in Mombasa, Kenya. He has a diploma in community development and social work and specialises in child protection and safeguarding. Kelvin has ethnographic research experience, developed in line with Street Invest's monitoring and evaluation initiatives, and the use of multiple qualitative data generation methods as a result of a second partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University focused on young people's opinions and experiences of education.

References

- Ainscow, M. (2020). Promoting inclusion and equity in education: lessons from international experiences. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, 6(1),7-16.
- Ainscow, M., Dyson, A., Goldrick, S. & West, M. (2012) Making schools effective for all: rethinking the task. *School Leadership & Management*, 32(3),197-213.
- Ainscow, M. & Messiou, K. (2018). Engaging with the views of students to promote inclusion in education. *Journal of Educational Change*, 19,1-17.
- Aptekar, L. & Stoecklin, D. (2014). *Street children and homeless youth: a cross-cultural perspective*. The Netherlands: Springer.
- Ayuku, D., Kaplan, C., Baars, H. & De Vries, M. (2004). Networks and Personal Social Networks of the on-the-street, of-the-street, shelter and School Children in Eldoret, Kenya. *International Social Work*, 47(3),293-311.
- Beazley, H. (2000) Street boys in Yogyakarta: social and spatial exclusion in the public spaces of the city. In S. Watson & G. Bridges (eds.) *Companion to the City* (pp. 472-488). London: Blackwell.
- Beazley, H. (2003). Voices from the margins: Street children's subcultures in Indonesia. *Children's Geographies. 1*(2),181–200.
- Beazley, H. & Miller, M. (2015). The art of not being governed: Street children and youth in Siem Reap, Cambodia, *Politics, Citizenship and Rights*, 7(1),263-289.
- Borg, L., Thompstone, G., Thomas de Benitez, S. & Bell, B. (2012). Child protection systems: challenges and opportunities for addressing specific issues faced by children.

Discussion paper prepared for the global conference: *Protecting children better: theory and practice of child protection systems*. New Delhi, India, November 13-16.

- Bouille, S. (2013). Developing an itinerant teacher system that supports a twin-track approach to inclusive education, Cambodia. *Enabling Education Review*, 2,12-13
- Boyden, J. (2015). Childhood and the policy makers: a comparative perspective on the globalisation of childhood. In A. James & A. Prout (Eds.) *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood. Contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood.* (pp.167-201). Abingdon: Routledge
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2),77-101.
- Brewin, M. & Statham, J. (2011). Supporting the transition from primary school to secondary school for children who are Looked After. *Educational Psychology in Practice: theory, research and practice in educational psychology*. 27(4),365-381.
- Bridge of Hope (2015) *Education transition for children with disabilities in Armenia Research Report*. EENET and Open Society Foundations. https://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/Armenia_transition_research_FINALd.pdf. Accessed January 2019.
- Corcoran, S (2015a). Visualising transitions: the use of auto-photography with formerly street-connected boys in Kenya. In S. Miles & A. Howes (Eds.) *Photography in Educational Research: Critical Reflections from Diverse Contexts* (pp.168-181). London: Routledge
- Corcoran, S. (2015b). Disabling streets or disabling education? Challenging a deficit model of street-connectedness. *Disability and the Global South*, 2(2),613-619
- Corcoran, S. (2016). 'Leaving the street? Exploring transition experiences of street-connected children and youth in Kenya', doctoral thesis, University of Manchester, UK.
- Corcoran, S, Awimbo, Mugwanga, K., Aluoch, I., & Mnengwa Achola, L. (2020a) *(Re-)engaging street-connected youth with education in Mombasa, Kenya*. Glad's House and Manchester Metropolitan University.
- Corcoran, S., Atukunda, C., Ferguson, F., Moliere, F., Pahl, K., Tallio, V., Rubumbura, T., & Wamaya, M. (2020b). *Belonging and Learning: Using co-produced arts methodologies to explore youth participation in contexts of conflict in Kenya, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).* Manchester Metropolitan University.
- Corcoran, S. & Wakia J. (2013). *Evaluating Outcomes: Retrak's use of the Child Status Index to measure wellbeing of street-connected children*. Manchester: Retrak.
- Davies, M. (2008). A Childish Culture?: Shared Understandings, Agency and Intervention: An Anthropological Study of Street Children in Northwest Kenya. *Childhood*, 15(3),309-330.
- Dladha, J. & Ogina, T. (2018). Teachers' perceptions of learners who are street children: a South African case study. *South African Journal of Education* https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v38ns2a1653
- Djone, R. & Suryani, A. (2019). Child Workers and Inclusive education in Indonesia. *The International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives* Vol. 18, No 1, 2019, pp. 48-65
- EENET – Enabling Education Network (2017). *Enabling Education Review 6: Street-Connected Young People and Inclusive Education*. Hyde, UK: Enabling Education Network
- Ferguson, V. (2017). Enabling education for long-term street-connected young people in Kenya. *Enabling Education Review* 6,45-7.
- Githiora, C. (2002). Sheng: peer language, Swahili dialect or emerging Creole? *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 15(2),159-181.
- Goodson, I. (2013). *Developing Narrative Theory*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Kaneva, D. & Corcoran, S. (accepted) Homeless and/or street connected childhoods: contemporary challenges with an international convention frameworks. In M. Perez, M. Tesar, N. Yelland, N. Fairchild & L. Peters (Eds.) *The SAGE handbook of global Childhoods*. London: SAGE

- Kaime-Atterhög, W. & Ahlberg, B. (2008). Are Street Children Beyond Rehabilitation? Understanding the Life Situation of Street Boys through Ethnographic Methods in Nakuru, Kenya, *Children and Youth Services Review* 30,1345-1354.
- Kaime-Atterhög, W., Lindmark, W., Persson, L-A. & Maina Ahlberg, B. (2007). Burning "Centre Bolt": Experiences of sexually transmitted infections and health care seeking behaviour described by street boys in urban Kenya. *Children and Youth Services Review* 29,600–17.
- Karabanow, J. (2008). Getting off the street exploring the processes of young people's street exits. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *51*(6),772-788.
- Johnson, V. (2017). Moving beyond voice in children and young people's participation. *Action Research* 15(1),104-124
- Lewis, I., Corcoran, S., Juma, S., Kaplan, I., Little, D. & Pinnock, H. (2019). Time to stop polishing the brass on the Titanic: Moving beyond 'quick-and-dirty' teacher education for inclusion, towards sustainable theories of change. *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 23(7-8),722-739
- Lucchini, R. (1993). *Street children: A complex reality*. University of Fribourg, Switzerland: Institute for Economic and Social Sciences, Working Paper No. 224.
- Lucchini, R. (1999). *L'enfant de la rue : carriere, identite et sortie de la rue.* Université de Fribourg.
- Lucchini, R. & Stoecklin, D. (2020). *Children in Street Situations*. New York: Springer
- Miles, S. & Singal, N. (2010). The Education for All and inclusive education debate: conflict, contradiction or opportunity? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *14*(1),1-15.
- Moore, R. (2017). Democratic education in the Philippines: What happens when students and teachers run the school together? *Enabling Education Review* 6,7-9
- O'Neill, M. & Roberts, B. (2020). *Walking Methods: Research on the Move.* London: Routledge
- Pather, S. (2011). Evidence on inclusion and support for learners with disabilities in
- mainstream schools in South Africa: off the policy radar? *International Journal of Inclusive Education 15(10),1103-1117*.
- Sherry, M. (2004). 'Overlaps and contradictions between queer theory and disability studies', *Disability & Society*, 19(7):769-783.
- Street Invest (2014-2018). *Growing up on the* Streets. Briefing Papers 1-14. https://www.streetinvest.org/resources/growing-streets. Accessed 12 January 2019.
- Stubbs, S. (2008). *Inclusive Education: Where there are few resources*. Norway: Atlas Alliance
- Taylor, C., Sotiropoulou Drosopoulou, C., Rochus D. & Marshall, J. (2019). Street-connected children with communication disabilities and their caregivers in Western Kenya: experiences, beliefs and needs. *Disability and Rehabilitation.* DOI: 10.1080/09638288.2019.1699174
- Thomas De Benitez, S. (2007). *State of the World's Street Children: Violence.* UK: Consortium for Street Children.
- Thomas De Benitez, S. (2011). *State of the World's Street Children: Research.* UK: Consortium for Street Children.
- Thomas De Benitez, S. (2013). *A Participatory assessment of street to school programmes: global report*. London: AVIVA
- United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (2017). *General Comment No. 21 (2017) on children in street situations.* https://www.streetchildren.org/resources/generalcomment-no-21-2017-on-children-in-street-situations/. Accessed 27 June 2019.
- Van Blerk, L. (2005). 'Negotiating spatial identities: mobile perspectives on street life in Uganda', *Children's geographies*, *3*(1):5-21.
- Van Jaarsveld, A., Vermaak, M. & van Rooyen, C. (2011) The developmental status if street children in Potchefstroom, South Africa. *South African Journal of Occupation Therapy*, **41** (1)**,** 1–5.

- Van Raemdonck, L. & Seedat-Khan, M. (2018). A case study on a generalist service delivery model for street children in Durban, South Africa: Insights from the capability approach *Child & Family Social Work*, 23,297-306.
- Volpi, E. (2003) Street Children: Promising practices and approaches. *World Bank Institute, Working paper 26388*.
- Wakia, J. (2010). *Why are children on the Streets?* Manchester: Retrak.
- Wanzala, J. & Adhiambo, M. (2019). Street children: the problem that refuses to go away despite funding. https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001342774/street-families-future-bleak-as-rehabilitation-flops-and-numbers-rise. Accessed 17 March 2019.
- Ward, C. & Seager, J. (2010) South African street children: a survey and recommendations for services. *Development Southern Africa*, **27** (1)**,** 85–101.
- Yohannes, B., Sintayehu, B., Alebachew, Y. & L. Kay (2017). Catch-up education: The door to future possibilities in Ethiopia *Enabling Education Review* 6,20-21