

# CHILDREN ON THE STREETS OF KITALE

## HEADCOUNT FINDINGS 2015



**children** RAILWAY  
Fighting for street children



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## INTRODUCTION

This report contains findings of the first 'headcount' survey in Kitale, Kenya initiated and organised by Railway Children (RCA) in conjunction with Child Rescue Kenya (CRK), the local government and the police. The survey targeted children and youth connected to the streets of Kitale town. The focus group for this survey was children and youth who live full-time on the streets as well as those who spend a significant amount of time on the streets for work but who may return home in the evenings.

The purpose of conducting the headcount survey is to gain a better understanding of the number of children and youth who are connected to the streets, allowing Railway Children, CRK and other stakeholders in Kitale town to design bespoke programmes that address their diverse needs. The data also provides a baseline against which changes in the number and demographic of the street connected children and youth population may be measured over time.

This headcount survey is purely based on observation, and its data represents the population of children and young people on the streets of Kitale at one particular point in time. This population is subject to periodic shift in size depending on the movement of children and young people across the city. Despite this it is felt the data from this report provides a useful guide to the general size of the population of children and youth who are connected to the streets.

The headcount in Kitale took place between 27th and 31st of July 2015 when four days of counts were conducted. Counts of children and youth were taken during the day and night. The night time component provided the number of children and youth that sleep on the streets; an indication of the number of children and youth who are full-time on the streets and who are completely detached from their families. The numbers quoted in this report, for reasons given later on, are those taken from the final day's/night's counts.



**THANK YOU  
TO ALL THE  
INDIVIDUALS  
WHO CARRIED  
OUT THE  
FIELDWORK!**

## Child Rescue Kenya Work in Kitale

Child Rescue Kenya (CRK) is one of Railway Children's implementing partners in Kenya, based in Kitale town; CRK has been working within Tran-Nzoia county for the last 20 years. CRK works to protect children within the county, seeking to support vulnerable children and youth; children and youth living and working on the streets and neglected and orphaned children. CRK has maintained an open-door policy to cater for all children and youth in need. As a consequence of the open door policy, it has been supporting a high number of children and youth through various targeted interventions. On average 400 street

connected children and youth go through CRK services annually. CRK runs outreach programmes to connect with as many children and youth on the streets as possible. In addition to its daily street work, it runs a drop-in centre near the centre of Kitale where children and youth receive a hot meal and can access showers, basic medical support, games and literacy tuition. For children willing to undergo transition from street life, CRK has a short-term rescue centre that has capacity for 80 children. At the rescue centre children are provided with a safe place to stay and the team works to either reintegrate them with their families or, where reintegration isn't a possibility, children are referred to other long-term care centres.

In support of youth living on the streets, CRK applies the Youth Association Model - a four-stage methodology grounded on the principles of a rights based approach. The model seeks to empower street-working youths and increase their social participation through peer-to-peer support. Railway Children Africa (RCA) supports CRK in its aim of reconnecting children and youth on the streets of Kitale with their families, communities and wider society. Last year CRK estimated that 700 children are connected with the streets in Kitale. This headcount will provide a more informed, up-to-date number of street children and youth in Kitale town.

It is hoped that the findings of this survey will not only inform and benefit RCA and CRK's work in Kitale but other stakeholders within the Trans-Nzoia county, including the government, who together will be in a stronger position to advocate for a more unified approach to supporting children and youth connected to the streets of Kitale.



**AROUND 400  
STREET CONNECTED  
CHILDREN AND  
YOUTH ACCESS CRK  
SERVICES ANNUALLY**

## National Context

Kenya has made significant progress in addressing child rights and making special provisions for children. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC, 1990) have been incorporated into Kenyan law, mainly through the Children Act of 2001 and more recently the Constitution of 2010.

In addition, the government has introduced complimentary programmes such as the provision of free and compulsory primary education, and the Cash Transfer Programme to assist orphans and vulnerable children access their basic needs including an opportunity to obtain basic education.

In support of vulnerable children and children living on the streets, the government of Kenya has established two bodies namely, the Child Welfare Society of Kenya (CWSK) and the Street Families Rehabilitation Trust Fund which the government of Kenya asked to look into the issues of vulnerable children including children living on the streets. Despite the progress made, there have been challenges in addressing child rights issues, specifically in the enforcement of laws and policies including laws that protect children from violence and exploitation. To address this, in 2011, the National Council for Children Services (NCCS) developed a framework for a National Child Protection System. The framework brings together several government ministries, departments, non-state actors, the private sector and other stakeholders under the mandate of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development. The Ministry provides Leadership for the effective implementation of the framework, while NCCS remains with the role of coordination. There is an obvious challenge in terms of both human and financial resources to ensure the effective coordination and the implementation of the framework, these challenges result in the services provided for street connected children being disjointed and largely left to non-state actors.

## VIOLENCE IS ONE OF THE MAJOR CHALLENGES CHILDREN FACE IN KENYA.

A study by UNICEF in 2010 highlights the worrying extent of violence towards children: 32% of females and 18% of male young people (aged 18-24 years) reported experiencing some form of sexual violence before they reached the age of 18. In addition, 66% of females and 73% of males experienced physical violence. The study identifies mothers and fathers as the most common perpetrators of physical violence towards children. For boys, teachers followed by police were the most frequent perpetrators of physical violence. Emotional violence for both females and males was most commonly inflicted on them by parents.

These findings highlight the need for sustainable interventions that tackle the intergenerational aspect of violence towards children.

## KITALE TOWN IS SURROUNDED BY A HIGH CONCENTRATION OF SLUMS



### Kitale town

Kitale town is in Trans-Nzoia county. The county borders Bungoma to the west, Uasin Gishu and Kakamega to the south, Elgeyo Marakwet to the east and West Pokot. These areas face significant levels of civil unrest - and also serious drought periods which contribute to seasonal migration to Trans-Nzoia county. The county is largely agricultural with both large and small scale wheat, maize and dairy farming. The county is fondly referred to as the 'Basket of Kenya' for its role in food production in the country.

Kitale is the largest town and Trans-Nzoia county's administrative capital. Nationally, the county is ranked 21st out of 47 in the poverty index, with a poverty incidence of 41.2 per cent - just falling short of the national poverty incidence of 45.2 per cent<sup>4</sup>. Kitale town itself is surrounded by a high concentration

of slums, where the majority of children on the streets come from. The main slum sites are Kipsongo, Tuwan, Mitume, Matisi and Jamanoor.

According to the Trans-Nzoia Integrated Development Plan County Report (2013-2017), the county is estimated to have a population of 912,602 and the number of children who reportedly need special protection is 3,966 while 988 children are orphaned.

With the devolved government, counties were given a key role in 'protecting and empowering the vulnerable and marginalised members of the county' and enhancing 'allocations to youth to improve their livelihoods' which was outlined in the county's 2013-2017 development plan. These survey findings will provide baseline data against which these implementation plans can be designed and measured.



## METHODOLOGY

The headcount methodology is a technique for collecting quantitative data regarding the numbers of street connected children and youth. Its main aim is to survey this population at a certain point in time within a specific area. The methodology seeks to gain data on all observed street connected children and youth within a geographic locality. It therefore does not use any form of sampling, and nor does it apply averages or estimations.

This technique was pioneered by Patrick Shanahan from the organization Street Invest during his work in Ghana in the 1980s and 1990s and has more recently been used in a UNICEF commissioned study in Addis and Adama in Ethiopia (2010) and in a national headcount in Sierra Leone (2011). The headcount in Sierra Leone has led to a national strategy which is currently being implemented to ensure street connected children, no matter where they are across Sierra Leone, have access to a 'safe adult'. Most recently, the

methodology has also been applied in a Barclays Ghana funded project in Kumasi, Ghana, in 2013.

In summary, a geographical area is divided into at least two different zones and teams of data collectors are allocated to these zones. They will move as a team on foot and count their zones twice, and then swap zones with a different team and carry out the same exercise. They then go back to their original zones and do a final count, and this data is used as the final data since the experience, knowledge and routine of the team in question will be viewed as the most reliable when the final count is conducted. The data from previous dates is used mainly as a validation of the final findings.

Children and youth are counted according to a set of categories that are defined ahead of the count – these typically define children by gender, age and the activities they are involved in when counted. The headcount method builds purely on observation and not on any interaction with children, and as such, the observational skills and experience of the counters are of critical importance.

## Limitations of the Methodology

As with any methodology, head counting has its limitations. It is virtually impossible to know that every child living and working on the street has been accounted for. What the methodology used in this study can verify is that, at the point of counting, the children presented in the final figures were observed on the streets.

Another limitation to head counting is that the method brings some risk of double counting children, since children may move between different areas and therefore may be counted more than once. Furthermore, children may be double counted if they suddenly change activities since different data collectors count children involved in different activities. Lastly, since the method is based on observation, children's ages always need to be estimated, judging from their appearance, and will therefore not always be precise.

The methodology lacks the active participation of the children themselves. However, to have adopted a more participatory approach that

included street connected children in the counting process would have been to run the risk of the results being prejudiced by the children themselves. For example, a street connected child may be predisposed to warn friends to make themselves scarce during the counting process, or mislead the counters as to the areas which the children frequent.

While conducting this survey, the Kitale team relied on the experiences and direction from Railway Children Africa and their implementing partners from Mwanza, Tanzania (Upendo Daima and Caretakers of the Environment (COET)) who have carried out headcounts of street connected children in Mwanza for the past 3 years. It was felt that many of the above listed limitations were manageable and could be minimised through proper planning and consideration, and that the methodology helps significantly in gaining an understanding of the numbers of street connected children and youth on the streets.



## Headcount Planning and Training in Kitale

The planning for the headcount involved obtaining approval from local stakeholders such as the local government and the police and planning for procedures in case of an emergency. Prior mapping of the town was carried out by street workers, applying their knowledge of where the children and youth are found during the day and at night.

A one day training was held for all the headcounters prior to the actual survey. The training focused on explaining the headcount methodology, how to identify the various categories, how to behave and walk during the counting, and finally how to record the data while out on the streets. They also discussed possible risks and how to mitigate against them.

The headcount team consisted of staff members from RCA partners and youth – project beneficiaries who themselves were previously living and working on the streets and who had transitioned to sleeping in a secure place and were now involved in income-generating activities. The team's familiarity with the streets and personal relationships with many of the street connected children and youth communities counted were essential in identifying locations where children and youth spend their time at night.

The participants were divided into five teams, three teams to carry out the day count and two teams to participate in the night count. One TOT (Trainer of Trainers) was placed in each of the teams to oversee quality control. Team leaders were identified with the help of the CRK management. The role of the team leaders was to handle the team allowances, ensure the team members' punctuality and compile the team's data at the end of each day. With the help of street workers, Kitale town was organised into three zones for the day count. Areas where

children and youth move easily during the day were grouped together into the same zones; this was in an effort to reduce the risk of double counting – ie the risk that children would pass between two different zones and be counted by two different teams.

The training was followed by five days of counting. Each daytime team counted their zones twice, i.e. on two consecutive days, then swapped with another team to count a different zone for two days. On the fifth and final day, they returned to their original zone. The data presented in this report is from that last day. The reason for this is that by the final day, each counting team was experienced and well informed about its zone and the preceding days provided an important guide or control against which to monitor numbers. At night, a similar structure was applied.

The schedule for the day counts and the night counts remained the same each day. For the day count the teams went out at 9.30am finishing at 3pm.

The night count was carried out between 8.00 pm to 1.00am. The count was carried out over 4 nights and within two zones.

Between 7.30pm and 10.00pm all the categories were counted but after 10.00pm only the sleeping and sex work categories were counted. Areas where children sleep and are found at night had been mapped ahead of the headcount exercise and divided into two zones. The areas mapped included bars that girls are known to frequent for sex work.

## Documentation and validation

During the field work, counters were each asked to record one of the 4 categories (see below) which enabled them to focus on one aspect. In addition, the leader of each team counted all of the categories to provide a double check and an overview.

This method provoked interesting discussion at the end of each day in terms of which figures were the most reliable. This encouraged participants to think about their style of observation.

Team counting sheets were used to compile agreed figures at the end of each shift.

Data was scrutinised daily by the individual teams as well as by the coordinating team, who then entered results into an Excel spreadsheet.



## Headcount Categories

Each street individual was counted and recorded according to their age and their 'activity' at the time of counting. The 'activity' categories were defined as follows;

- *Fixed business* - a business which has a fixed location but not necessarily a permanent structure
- *Moveable business* - a business which moves around
- *Begging* - Someone who is requesting money or food from locals
- *Jobless* - idle or not trying to make money at the time of counting

The above categories were used both during the day and night counts. During the night counts however the two following additional categories were added;

- *Sex workers* - girls who are observed in locations known for prostitution
- *Sleeping children/youth* - those who are either asleep or apparently settled in their sleeping areas. These children are considered to be living in the streets full-time.

Furthermore, a set of symbols was applied during the count to mark when an individual either had one or more small children, if a girl was pregnant, or both. Another symbol was also added for individuals who had a disability.

The age categories were 0-6, 7-10, 11-14, 15-18 and 19-25 years.

## Considerations in age categories

The method assumed that all children under 18 connected to the streets should be counted - i.e. all children working or spending time on the streets independently of any adults. In general children under 18 who are on the streets and therefore not at school, at home or, for older children, in some form of regulated employment are likely to be street connected to some degree. A child working on the streets is often a vulnerable child, at home as well as in the work place. All these children are counted because they are relevant to our work of preventing children from going to the streets or helping them leave street life. In addition, a child who starts out working on the streets can often get drawn into other aspects of street life and/or start living full-time on the streets.

When it comes to the youth, however, a different distinction was made. It would make the count less relevant if all people aged 19-25 and who work in the relevant areas were counted; these are adults and it is age appropriate for them to work in town areas. Our target population is street youth who are long-term homeless or without a permanent or decent home, and who depend on the streets for their existence. An experienced street worker or a former street youth (both members of our teams) is generally able to tell these youth apart from other young people judging by the location where they spend time, their demeanour, their occupation, their appearance or simply the fact that they are known to them. Therefore, these considerations were made when counting the age category of 19-25 year olds.

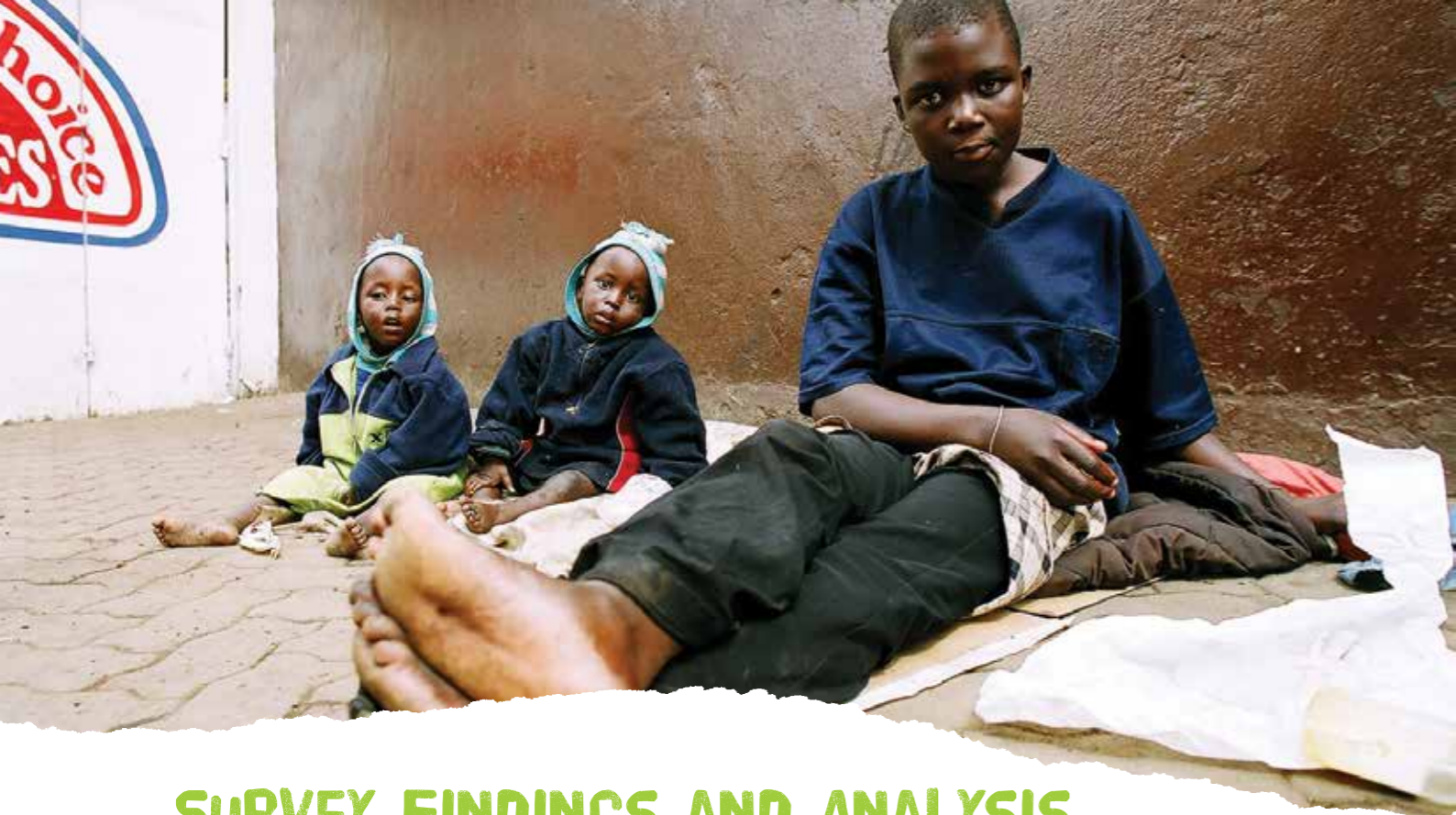
## Factors and Considerations:

It is worth mentioning the specific environmental factors that could have potentially affected the data collected together with the presumptions that were taken during the exercise.

1. One of the challenges faced during the night count was that of heavy rains; however the final day's data used in this report was not affected by rain.
2. There are some areas that the night counters were not able to access for security reasons.
3. It was expected that numbers of children counted on the streets would be higher than the numbers observed. The count was done in the month of July ahead of the harvest, meaning that usually one would expect there to be less food available at home, a reason sometimes cited by children for migrating to the streets themselves in search of food.
4. In June 2015, a few weeks before the headcount, a major market was demolished by the city council. This was an area where children and youth used to congregate and its demolition led some of them to move out and go to nearby slums in fear of arrest.
5. At the time of the headcount there were heavy police patrols at night. The children and youth known to the street workers confided that they were taking cover in the nearby slums to avoid being arrested. This may have affected the number of children and the number of sex workers counted during the night. It is common for police to arrest the girls working on the street at night.
6. After the first night's count, the teams found that children were awake at 11pm, keeping themselves warm around a bonfire. The teams agreed that children/youth found awake after 11pm should be counted in the category of sleeping on the streets since it was unlikely that they would head home after 11pm.
7. Friday was the last day of the headcount and it is this day's data that is presented in the following sections. It is the day which observed the highest number of children and youth connected to the street. This could have been due to several reasons;
  - The headcounting teams after the initial 3 days of information gathering and sharing were more familiar with the streets and knew where to go and find street children.
  - The head counting teams had perfected their observation and identification skills.
  - Friday was also a market day, which could act as a magnet for children to come to town.
  - There was no rain on the last Friday as there had been on previous days.







## SURVEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The following section contains the key findings of the 2015 headcount exercise in Kitale. The findings are presented together with analysis and reflection of street workers based within CRK. Their experiences from the fieldwork as well as prior experiences help contextualize the findings and provide insights behind the numbers of children on the streets in their town.

### NUMBER OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH LIVING AND WORKING ON THE STREETS

Day time – Males		
Age category	Male (Count of individuals)	Male (% distribution)
Age 0 – 6	5	1%
Age 7 – 10	34	5%
Age 11 – 14	114	16%
Age 15 – 18	183	26%
Age 19 – 25	371	52%
<b>Total</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>100%</b>

Day time – Females		
Age category	Female (Count of individuals)	Female (% distribution)
Age 0 – 6	3	3%
Age 7 – 10	4	4%
Age 11 – 14	7	8%
Age 15 – 18	28	31%
Age 19 – 25	47	53%
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100%</b>

Night time – Males		
Age category	Male (Count of individuals)	Male (% distribution)
Age 0 – 6	24	5%
Age 7 – 10	63	14%
Age 11 – 14	150	34%
Age 15 – 18	117	26%
Age 19 – 25	92	21%
<b>Total</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>100%</b>

Night time – Females		
Age category	Female (Count of individuals)	Female (% distribution)
Age 0 – 6	1	2%
Age 7 – 10	0	0%
Age 11 – 14	2	5%
Age 15 – 18	20	48%
Age 19 – 25	19	45%
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100%</b>

The main aim of the headcount is to indicate the size of the population of children and youth who are sleeping, living, and working on the streets of Kitale town.

The headcount identified a total number of 796 (707-M; 89-F) children and youth living/or working on the streets during the day.

During the night a total of 488 children and youth were identified as either spending time or working on the streets, this number includes 247 (54%) (243-M;4-F) children and youth who were recorded as sleeping on the streets of Kitale.

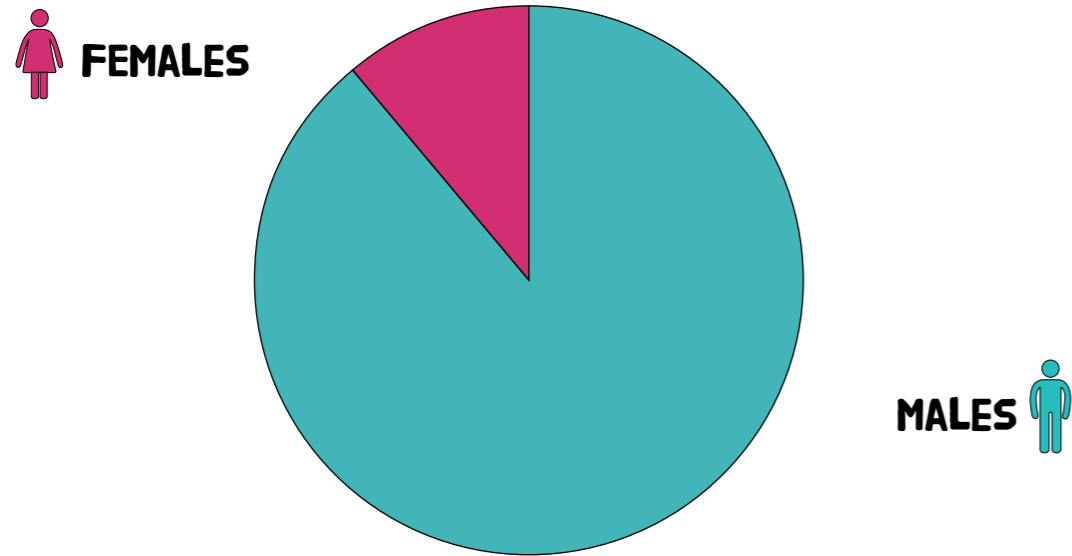
These numbers represent children and youth who were counted at specific times and in specific streets and it has to be assumed that a number of children and youth were not counted. Numbers of children in the daytime, early and late night time (including sleeping children) have been presented separately. It is assumed that many of the 488 children and youth counted at night are included in the 796 counted in the day.

It should be noted that the number of children and youth seen during the evening hours has been collected separately from those who were found sleeping on the street later in the night. This is to avoid double counting as we assume that some of the children counted in the evening involved in activities will also be those sleeping on the streets. These data sets are however presented together under the heading “night” throughout the report for the sake of simplicity.

### Gender Distribution

Of the total 796 children and youth counted during the day, 89% were male and 11% were female (707-M; 89-F). The highest representation (371 or 52%) of males was observed in the age category of 19-25, same for female (47 or 53%). In the night count, of the total 488 children and youth counted, 446 (91%) were male and the remaining 42 (9%) female, with the highest representation of males from the night count 150 (34%) falling within the 11-14 age category and with the majority of females 39 (93%) between the ages of 15 and 25.

### GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF STREET CONNECTED YOUTH AND CHILDREN ON THE STREETS OF KITALE



### Girls with small children or who are pregnant

Of the females counted on the streets in the day, 17 had at least one child – all 17 females were within the 15-25 age category, two of these young women were also pregnant. A further two females were observed to be pregnant but did not have existing children.

In the night count two females, each with at least one child, were counted.

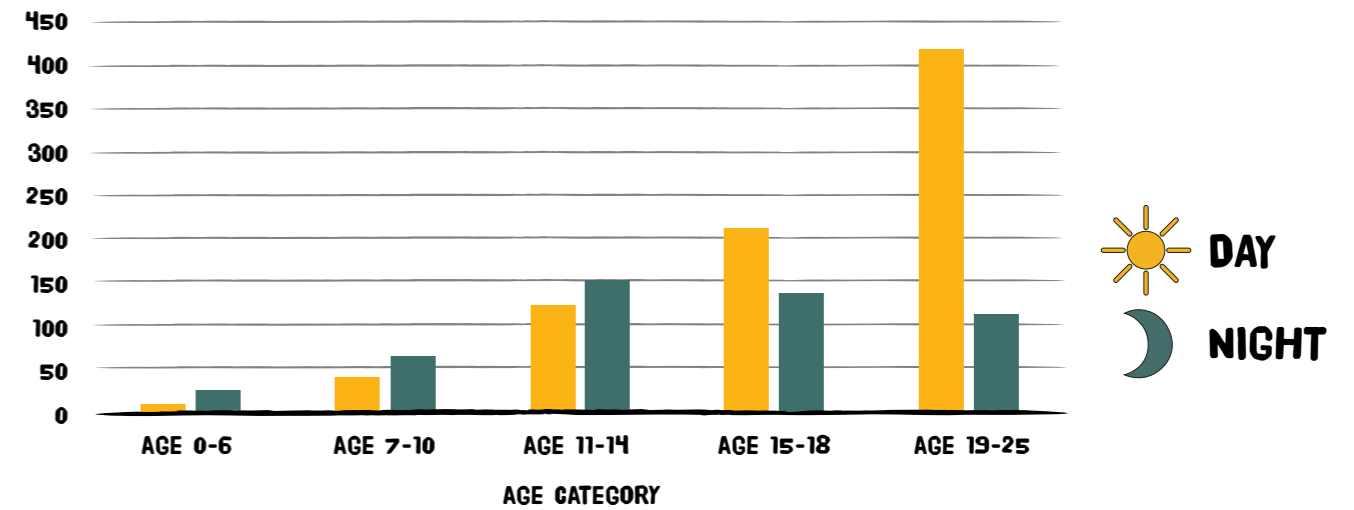
**17 FEMALES  
COUNTED ON THE  
STREETS DURING  
THE DAY HAD  
CHILDREN**





**TWO THIRDS OF CHILDREN FOUND SLEEPING ON THE STREETS WERE 11 TO 18 YEARS OLD**

### Age Distribution



The most commonly represented age category was 19-25 years accounting for (418) 53% of the total number of children and youth observed during the day (371-M; 47-F). This was followed by 27% (211) falling into the 15-18 year old age category (183-M;28-F).

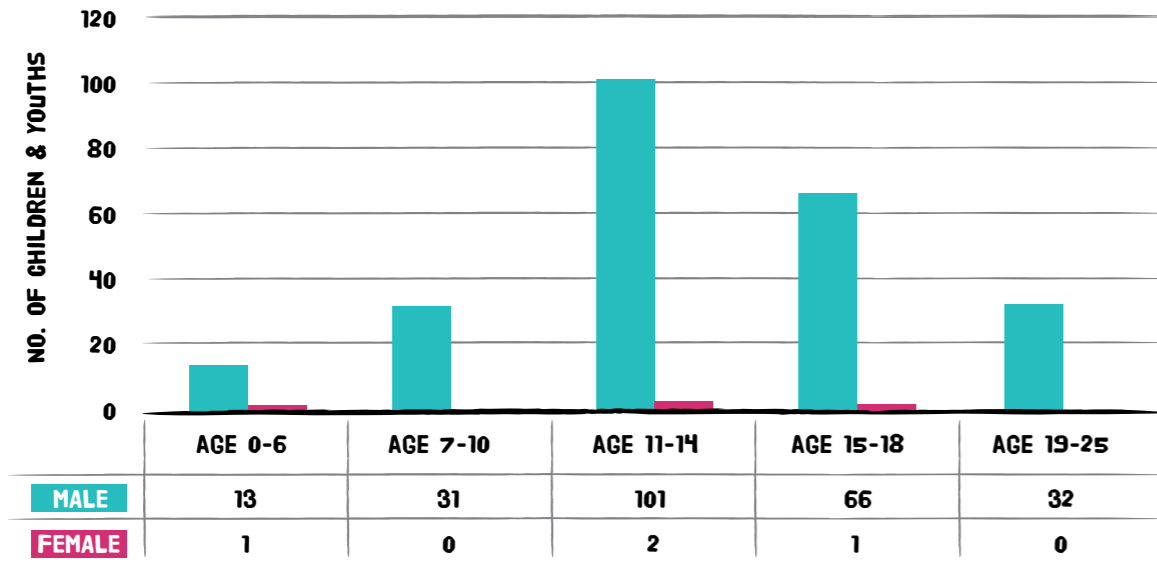
For the night count the highest represented age category was 11-14 with 31% (111) of all children and youth counted falling into this category (92-M;19-F), followed by 23% (137) falling into the 15-18 category (117-M;20-F).

Around two thirds (69%) of those children found sleeping on the streets were between the ages of 11 and 18 years old, nearly all of them (98%) were male.

In comparing the day and night age data there was a 34% increase in the number of children between the ages of 0 to 14 counted at night (150) compared to during the day (114). During the day 21% were between the age 0-14 years while at night 49% of the total were in the 0-14 age range. This could be interpreted to mean there are higher numbers of younger children sleeping on the streets than the older children/youth, the older children/youth could be coming to town for the purpose of making money and who then return back to the nearby slums. Equally, there appear to be a number of younger children that are sleeping on the streets at night but are not visible on the streets during the day time.

## Sleeping Children

### AGE AND GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH FOUND SLEEPING ON THE STREETS OF KITALE



247 children were counted sleeping on the streets. The vast majority (243 or 98%) of these were boys, and 4 were girls. Of the 247, 148 (60%) children were under the age of 15, with the most commonly represented (42%) age category being 11-14 years (101 children). This is not a surprising finding; it correlates with the fact that most children rescued from the streets are of this age. Within the 0-6 age category 14 (5%) children were recorded, these children were not accompanied by an adult.

## Sex Work

This category was only counted during the night shifts and comprises girls who are seen in areas common for sex work and whose clothes, demeanour and behaviour indicate that they are engaged in sex work. In all areas, we only counted girls outdoors; the counting teams did not enter the guesthouses or bars that are commonly used for sex work. 35 youth, all females were counted; 16 (45%) were aged 15-18 years and 19 (54%) were aged 19-25 years.

Street workers have reported that several guesthouses in town are run as brothels. Rooms are provided to female sex workers and then money earned as a result is shared between the landlady and the girls.

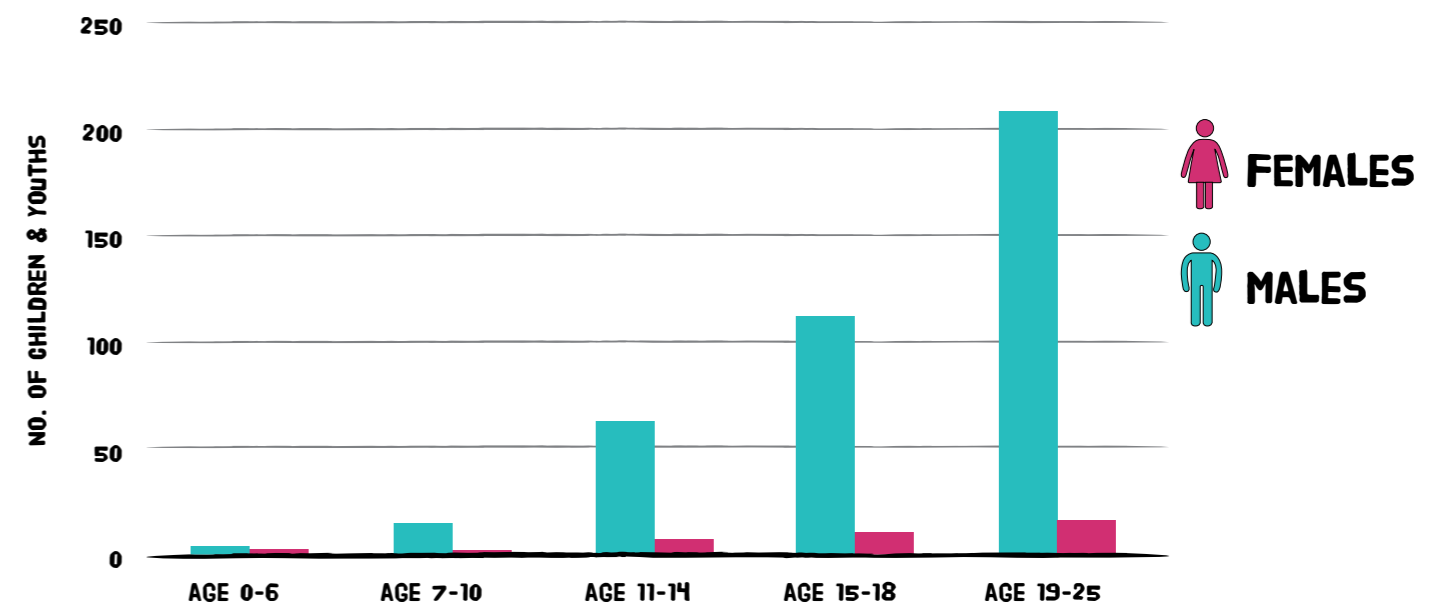
## Jobless

This category represents children and youth who were idle/not involved in a specific activity when counted. During the day, the jobless category was the highest represented category comprising of 439 (55%) (401-M and 38-F). The highest number 225 (51%) in this category were in the 19-25 age range. They were found around the dumpsites and on the streets.

During the night count, 169 (35%) youth and children were counted as jobless. The majority (166 or 98%) were male and only three were female. With the highest number 46 (28%) falling within the 15-18 age category, however this activity was fairly evenly distributed amongst the three oldest age categories: 11-14 years old (21%); 15-18 years old (28%); and 19-25 years old (27%).

From our working experience, we know that children seen at this late hour will often sleep on the streets.

### DAYTIME - NUMBER OF JOBLESS STREET CONNECTED CHILDREN AND YOUTH, THEIR GENDER AND AGE DISTRIBUTION IN KITALE

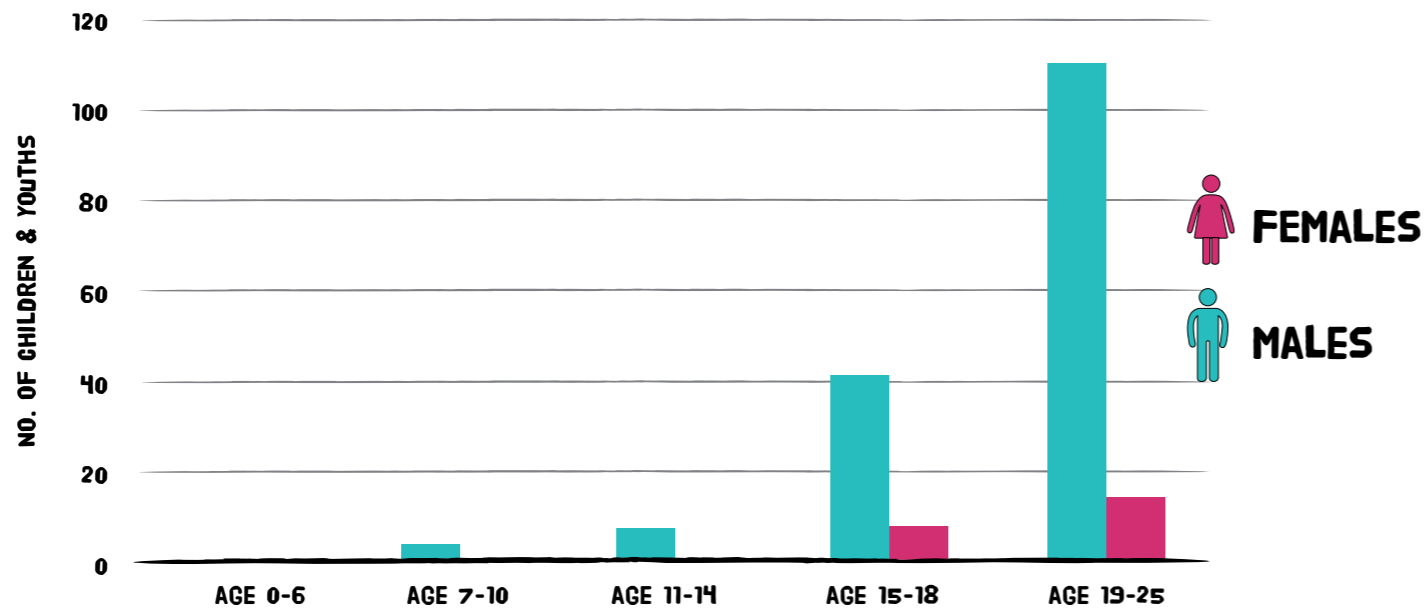


### Fixed Business

Fixed business was the second highest represented category, comprising 185 or 23%(163-M; 22-F) of the total children and youth counted during the day. Across the age categories of children and youth in fixed businesses, the most prominent was 19-25 years where it was found that 125 (68%) (111-M; 14-F) youth were working in fixed businesses. They were selling fruit, second hand clothes or sweets or working in garages or motorcycle repair sheds.

In the night, 12 children and youth were counted in fixed businesses, all were male; 8 (67%) were categorised in the 11-14 age group and 4 (33%) in the 19-25 age category.

### DAYTIME - NUMBER OF STREET CONNECTED CHILDREN AND YOUTH INVOLVED IN FIXED BUSINESS, THEIR GENDER AND AGE DISTRIBUTION IN KITALE



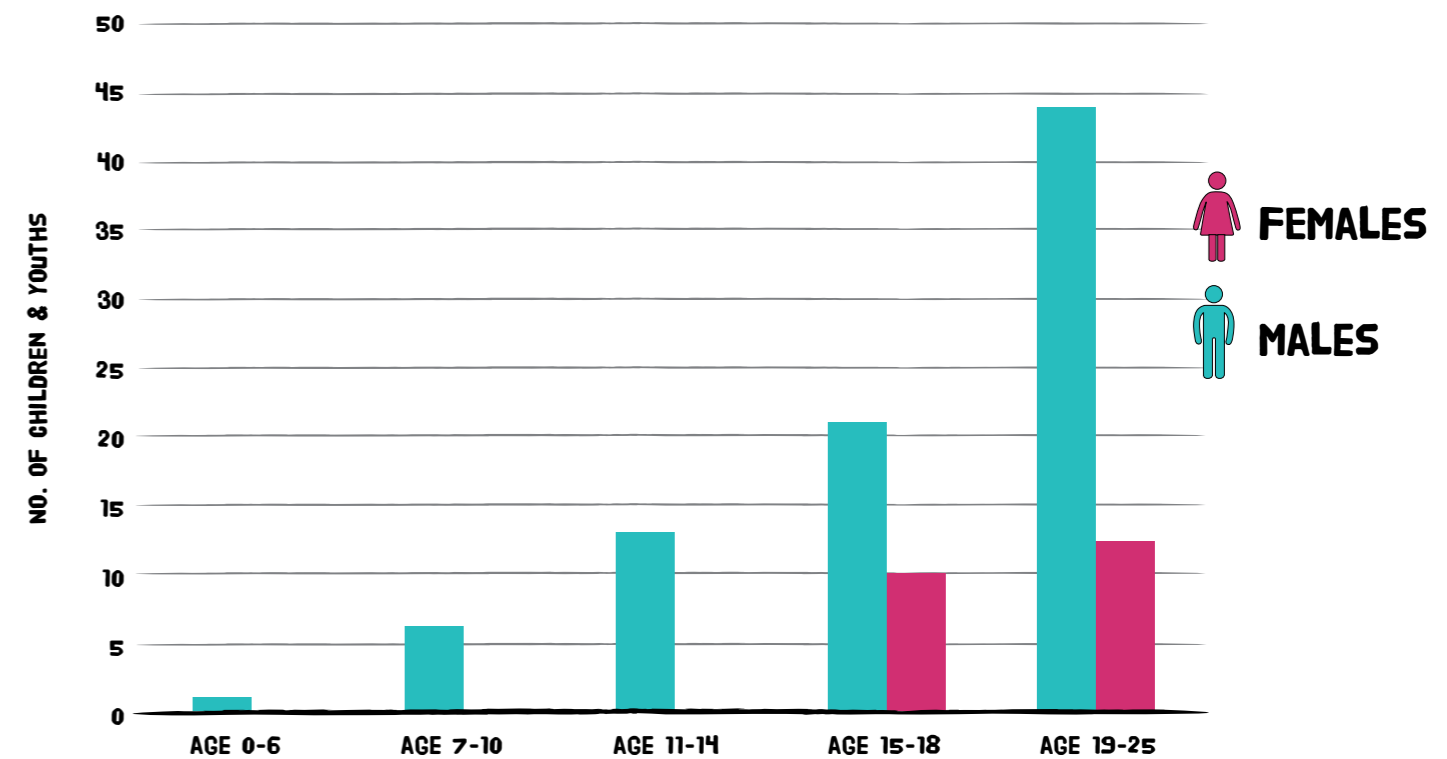
### Moveable business

104 (85-M;19-F) (13%) children and youth were involved in moveable businesses, with almost half of these, 51 (49%), being below the age of 18. The teams observed that these children and youth are often moving around alone selling different items such as tomatoes, bananas, and plastic bags.

Furthermore, some of the younger children in this category are those who move around the city collecting scrap metals and plastics to sell as recycling materials. In market areas, young boys selling plastic bags and offering to carry the bags of shoppers was a common sight.

At night, 18 children and youth were recorded in this category - all male. No females were recorded in this age category in the night count. All children were above the age of 11; 3 (17%) in the 11-14 age category, 5(28%) between the ages of 15-18 and 10 (56%) in the 19-25 age category.

### DAYTIME - STREET CONNECTED CHILDREN AND YOUTH INVOLVED IN MOVEABLE BUSINESS AND THEIR GENDER AND AGE DISTRIBUTION IN KITALE

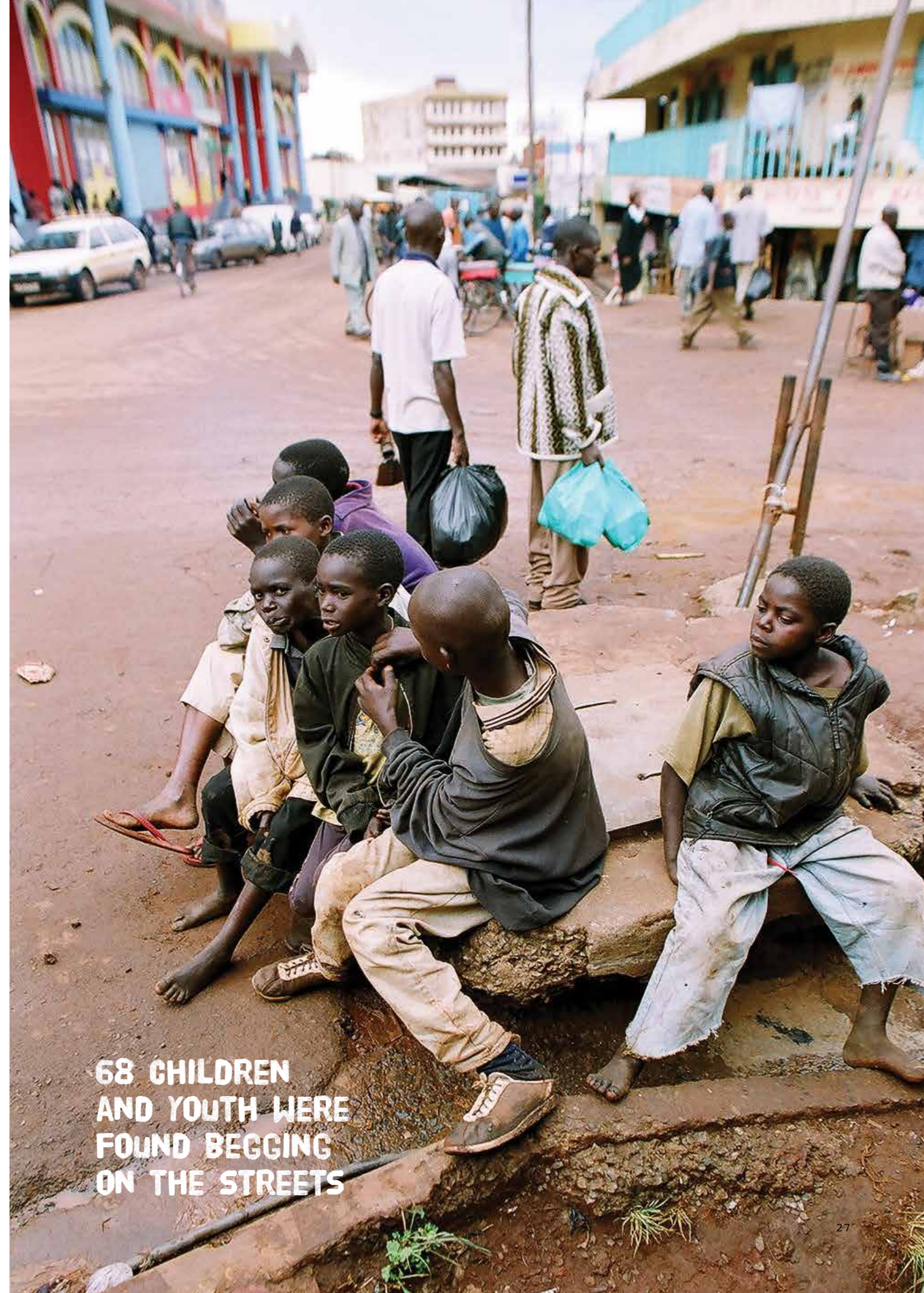
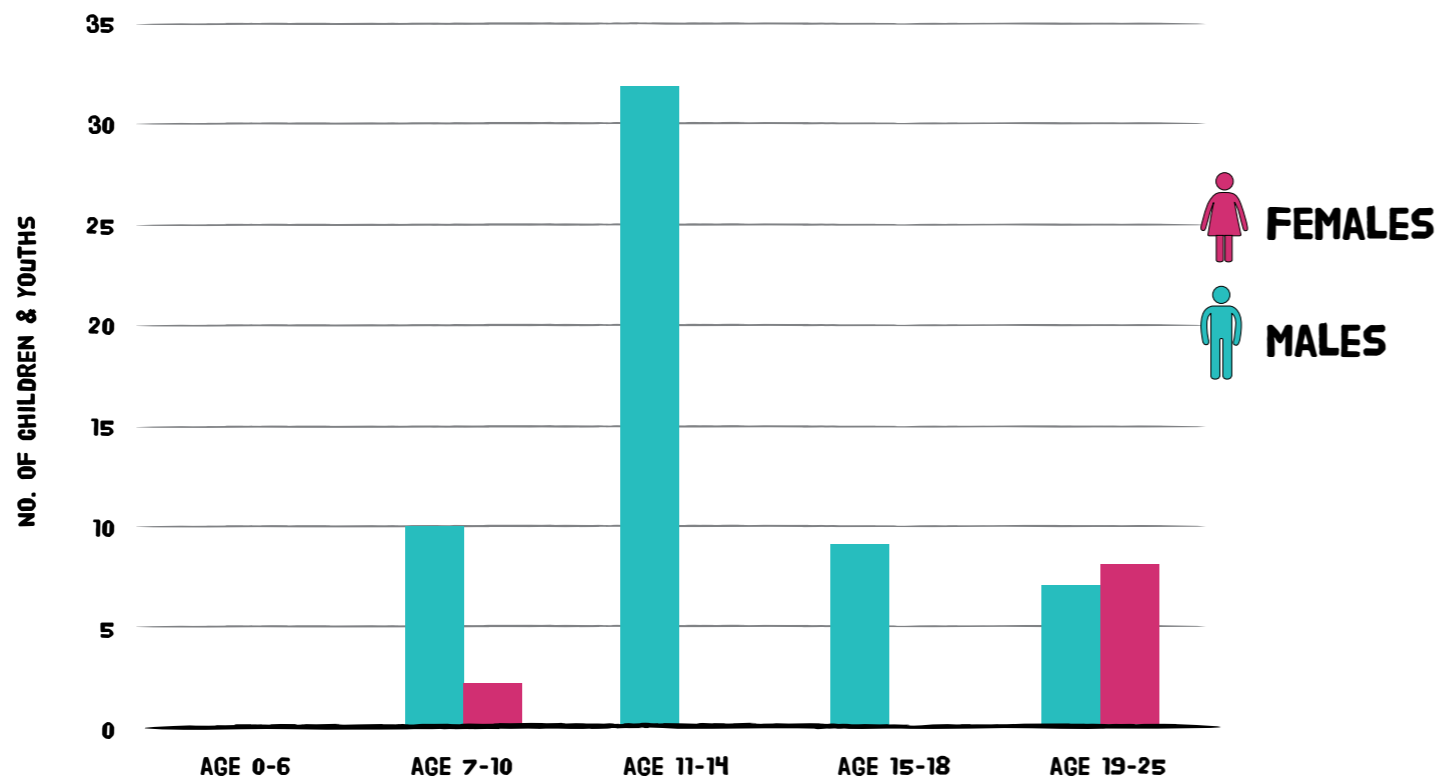


### Begging

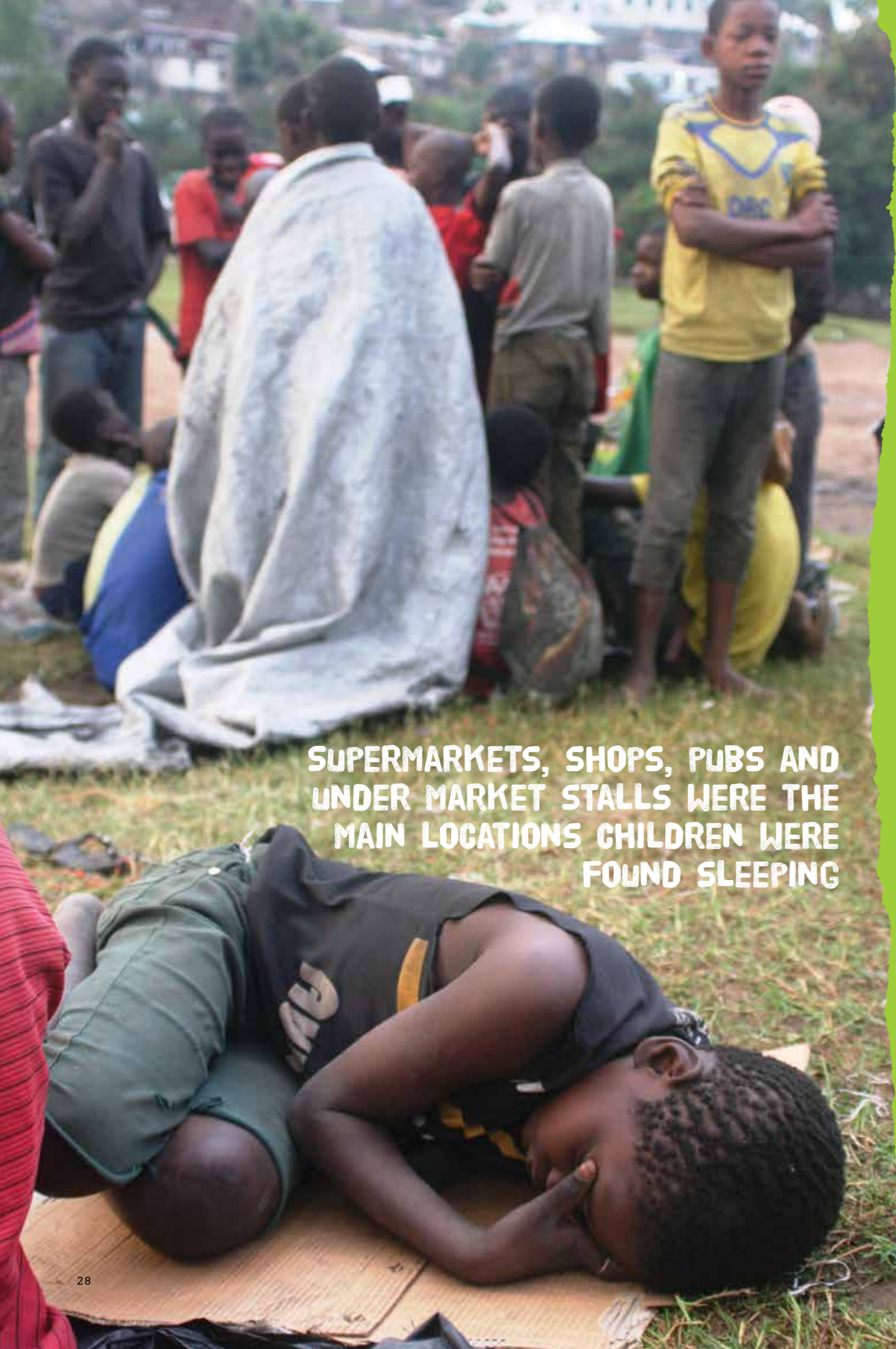
In the daytime, 68 (9%) children (58-M; 10-F) and youth were begging on the streets. Across the age categories of children and youth begging on the streets, boys aged 11-14 were the most commonly represented, with 32 counted (55%). There were fewer older youth begging.

During the night count, only 7 children were counted in this category, all of them males; 5 (71%) of them under the age of 14 years and 2 (29%) in the age 19-25 age category.

### DAYTIME - NUMBER OF STREET CONNECTED CHILDREN AND YOUTH FOUND BEGGING ON THE STREETS OF KITALE; THEIR GENDER AND AGE DISTRIBUTION



68 CHILDREN AND YOUTH WERE FOUND BEGGING ON THE STREETS



**SUPERMARKETS, SHOPS, PUBS AND UNDER MARKET STALLS WERE THE MAIN LOCATIONS CHILDREN WERE FOUND SLEEPING**

## DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The final part of this report seeks to explain, interpret and analyze some of the findings highlighted above. The analysis is informed by the experiences and expertise of the street workers who have worked in the field for a number of years.

### Numbers of street connected children and youth on the streets of Kitale

The higher number of youth found on the streets during the day, as opposed to children is consistent with the headcount exercises we have done in Mwanza, Tanzania, and is in line with the typical demographic we expect to find in the street connected population in East Africa. This was a surprise however to some of the project workers whose impression was that the population of younger children would be higher than that of youth. The team was indeed expecting to find a greater number of children on the streets than we did, given that we have supported several hundred children per year in Kitale and we are well aware we do not reach out to the entire population. With the devolved government structure, there have been efforts at the county level to “clean-up” the streets by way of conducting round-ups of children. This might be a reason why children are not as numerous as we may have expected for fear of arrests by either the city council and/or the police.

During the headcount there were police patrols going on at night which could again have led to fewer children and youth being visible on the streets due to fear of arrest. As is always the case when applying the headcount methodology, the numbers presented here are a conservative estimate of the total numbers of street connected children and youth in Kitale on that particular day.

### Children and youth living full-time on the streets of Kitale

We expect that we missed some children and youth sleeping on the streets since some of the areas known by the street workers where children sleep were inaccessible for security reasons.

The main areas where children and youth were observed to be sleeping included along the corridors/verandas of supermarkets, shops, pubs and under the market stalls. Most children sleeping on the streets were found to sleep in fairly open places that are well lit; this might be so that they feel safe at night. A few were found sleeping in more hidden areas such as under the market stalls.

Only 4 females were observed sleeping on the streets; this included one young mother with a small child.

### Gender distribution

The high male representation of children and youth on the street was not surprising. It corresponds with the monthly data that is collected by Child Rescue Kenya (CRK) both at the drop-in centre and at their rescue centre where 70% of the children referred from the streets are male.

However, in contrast, the majority of the children referred to CRK rescue centre by the Child Protection Office are female, these are mainly children who are rescued from a risky home situation.

It must be noted that the actual numbers of young sex workers (all females) are far higher than those recorded in this count. This survey will be complemented by a 'Ghetto Count' in Kitale. The scope of a 'Ghetto Count' includes entering into some of the guesthouses (run as brothels) where girls reside; this is a method which has been tried and tested by Railway Children in Mwanza, Tanzania. The methodology involves working with existing street connected youth known to the programme to assist in quantifying the street population in areas where security is a greater risk, including but not exclusively the guesthouses mentioned above.

In addition, given the cultural context in Kitale, we would expect to see more male children on the streets compared to female children. In a study on factors that lead to migration patterns among street connected children in the western region of Kenya - which includes Kitale; it observed that there were more male than female children on the streets. This was partly explained by cultural beliefs and breakdown of the extended family system. For example, one of the key informants in that study observed the cultural practice in the western region of Kenya; it is believed that children belong to the father. In a situation where the father leaves the family and the children are left behind with the mother, or in the situation where a child is born out of wedlock and the mother marries or remarries there is usually a reluctance for the new husband to accept responsibility for the male children. The reason for this is that male children present a long-term responsibility of not just care, but fathers are also expected to provide land for them. Conversely, female children can be seen as an investment since they will likely benefit from a bride price. CRK reports support this assertion. Their data shows that over 50% of children who come to the streets are running away from a step-parent situation, where they are discriminated against and face violence. These findings could be interpreted in a number of ways; that girls are less inclined to leave home, are more likely to persevere in an unstable situation and/or are afraid of going to the streets. We also understand that girls are less visible on the streets. The ghetto count will give us greater insights as to the numbers of street connected girls in Kitale.

### Age distribution

The age distributions proved surprising for field workers who expected the 11-14 age group to be the most highly represented as this is the most visible age group on the streets of Kitale. In reality, this age group represented just 16% of boys and 8% of girls observed during the day.



A 'GHETTO  
COUNT' IN  
KITALE WILL  
GIVE GREATER  
INSIGHT  
INTO STREET  
CONNECTED  
GIRLS



## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that a survey targeting the surrounding Kitale slums is carried out. This would complement the data collected in this headcount and help build an even more reliable picture of the number of street connected children and youth within Kitale town. Street workers' observations suggest that many of these children in the slum areas are of school age but, instead of going to school, they spend most of their time on the streets. Data to confirm this observation would further strengthen the case for preventative work targeting children who are at risk of becoming full-time on the streets. This can be achieved through the planned 'ghetto count'.

Over half (60%) of the street connected children (majority males) found sleeping on the street at night were under 15 years old. These are children who are significantly detached from their families and who are likely to be living full-time on the streets. There is a need to prioritise these children to assist them in accessing interventions from the CRK programme. Interventions such as regular night street work to identify these children could be useful.

As indicated above, the numbers of children and youth observed during the night is only a proportion of the actual figures. Many of the females, especially those involved in commercial sex work, are less visible both during the night and day, basing themselves in bars and guest houses. The Ghetto count is a method used by the RCA team in Mwanza, Tanzania. This survey method involves entering the premises frequented by street youth, thus giving a more realistic picture of the numbers of females connected to the streets – a Ghetto Count is planned for Kitale in May 2016.

Kitale is a small town, with at least 39 organisations working in one way or another with vulnerable children and youth. A more coordinated approach would help reach more children in need effectively and maximise the use of available resources. It is recommended to carry out a mapping exercise and or stakeholder analysis of the various stakeholders' to strengthen collaboration in support of the children and youth of Kitale.

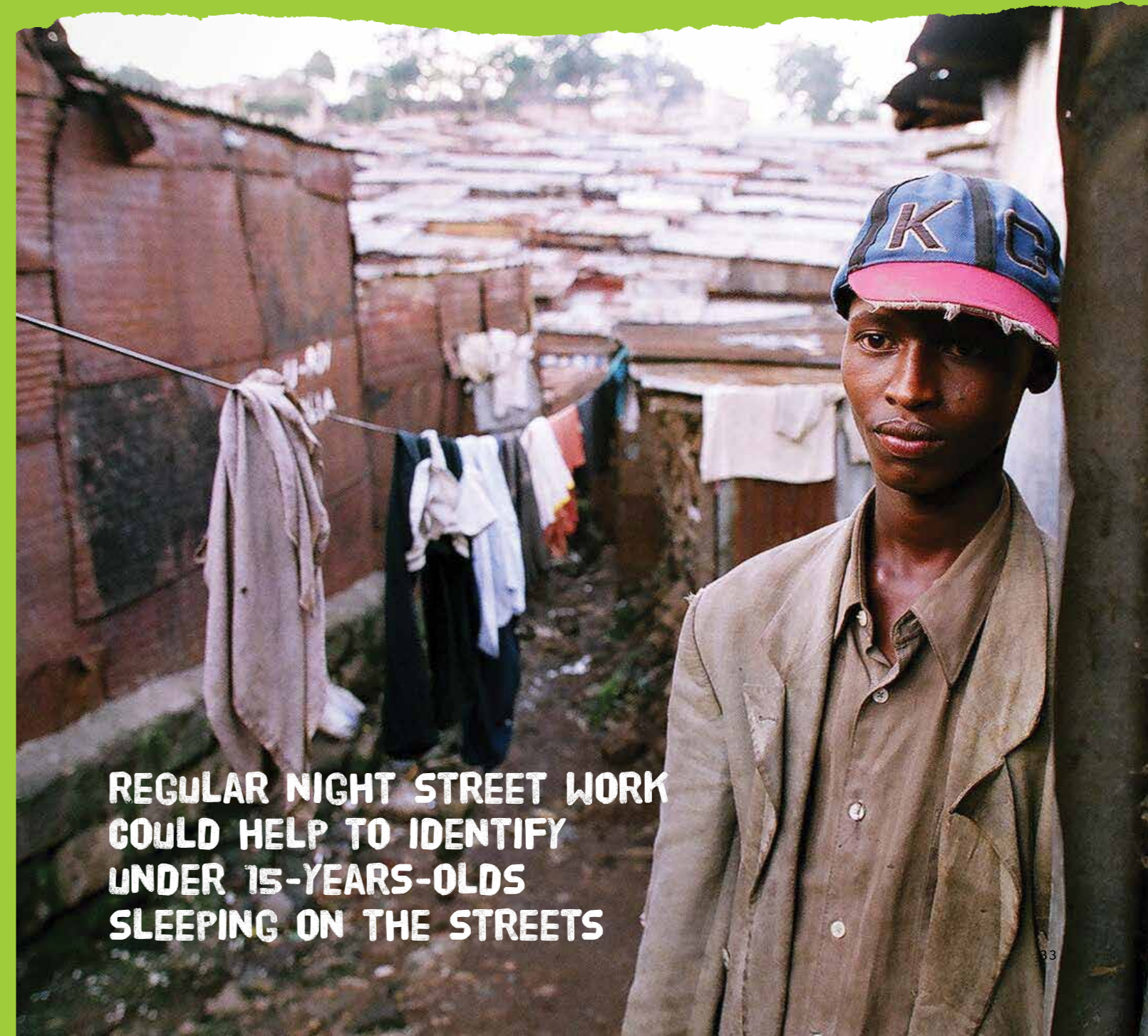
From interactions with the children on the streets of Kitale, street workers have established that children regularly move between Kitale and Eldoret. Eldoret is a large town 39 miles from Kitale. In instances when there are round-ups by Police in Kitale town, children will move to Eldoret as they wait for the situation to improve, and vice versa.

It is recommended that relationships and networks with street children/youth organisations based in Eldoret town are set-up to better facilitate collaboration and a more frequent and effective information exchange.

### Youth 19-25

The survey shows a high number of youth on the streets. Currently there are no organisations in Kitale that we know of working to support this age group, and the available government programmes for youth are still inaccessible to the youth on the streets due to their lack of government issued identity cards. There is a need to intensify the work with this age group, not only for economic empowerment purposes but to increase programmes that promote behavioral change and develop life skills

including parenting support. This can form an important part of CRK's preventative work, so that the youths themselves are less likely to end up on the streets. With support from RC, CRK is working with youth on the streets to support them in acquiring National ID cards to try and increase their chances for employment and other economic empowerment opportunities. CRK's focus has been economic empowerment but there is a need for more emphasis on the life skills aspect to make the services more sustainable over time.



**REGULAR NIGHT STREET WORK  
COULD HELP TO IDENTIFY  
UNDER 15-YEAR-OLDS  
SLEEPING ON THE STREETS**

# APPENDICES

## Day Zones

ZONE A: CENTRAL	ZONE B: RAILWAY	ZONE C: GARAGE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elgon view</li> <li>• Museum</li> <li>• Garage-behind Trans national</li> <li>• Opposite Cmc</li> <li>• Coop Bank</li> <li>• Behind Alkara</li> <li>• Posta</li> <li>• Vision Gate</li> <li>• Old Police</li> <li>• Kamkunji</li> <li>• Suam</li> <li>• BP Stage and market</li> <li>• Wafush</li> <li>• Rajani</li> <li>• Jalaram</li> <li>• Tuskys</li> <li>• Club 100</li> <li>• Shimo</li> <li>• Nyayo Market</li> <li>• Khetias</li> <li>• Mothers pharmacy</li> <li>• Main Market</li> <li>• Laini moja</li> <li>• Prison</li> <li>• Soko samaki</li> <li>• Booster</li> <li>• Chanuka</li> <li>• Lodwar stage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Along the railway line</li> <li>• Street Smart</li> <li>• Blacks</li> <li>• Kangaroo</li> <li>• Muthurwa</li> <li>• Mosque</li> <li>• Kapenguria stage</li> <li>• Assis base via railways to lions</li> <li>• KFA to Muthuru</li> <li>• Laini moja to section 19</li> <li>• Stadium market to Swara to Section 6</li> <li>• Emmaculate to Carwash</li> <li>• Lions</li> <li>• District Hospital</li> <li>• KCC</li> <li>• Showground</li> <li>• Museum</li> <li>• Deep C</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eco Bank to Tuskys</li> <li>• Behind Equity bank</li> <li>• CMC</li> <li>• Nakumatt</li> <li>• Highview</li> <li>• County Assembly</li> <li>• Postbank</li> <li>• Kahuroko bar</li> <li>• Garages</li> <li>• Westfields</li> <li>• Kipsongo highway to chetoto primary</li> <li>• Machijioni</li> <li>• Supaloaf</li> <li>• Midroad</li> <li>• Union primary</li> <li>• Transmart</li> <li>• Ambwere</li> <li>• DC residence</li> <li>• Kitale high view hotel</li> <li>• Court</li> <li>• Bongo</li> <li>• Tuskys</li> </ul>

## Night Zones

ZONE A: CENTRAL	ZONE B:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision Gate</li> <li>• Old Police</li> <li>• Behind Co-op Bank</li> <li>• Lilian Hotel</li> <li>• Opposite Lilian hotel-Vibandah</li> <li>• Front and Behind Suam Supermarket</li> <li>• Jalaram Wholesale Verandah</li> <li>• Climax Bar stage</li> <li>• Express Bus Stage</li> <li>• Railway Station</li> <li>• Khetias roundabout</li> <li>• Rajan Wholesalers veranda</li> <li>• Between Laini moja and Chanuka</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eco bank</li> <li>• Suam Hardware</li> <li>• Highview hotel</li> <li>• Eco bank back street</li> <li>• Bongo</li> <li>• Villa</li> <li>• Mwisho Mwisho bar</li> <li>• Bongo-Villa back streets</li> <li>• Barclays Bank</li> <li>• Tuskys</li> <li>• Khetias Supermarket</li> <li>• Oil Libya</li> <li>• Garage</li> <li>• Kipsongi Technical road</li> <li>• Liaini Moja</li> <li>• V-pack</li> <li>• U-pack back street</li> </ul>

# HEADCOUNT PARTICIPANTS

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**Child Rescue Kenya**  
Transforming Children's Lives

**children** RAILWAY  
The word "children" is in a bold, lowercase sans-serif font. The letter "i" is replaced by a green silhouette of a child. A horizontal green line is positioned below the word "children".

**Fighting for street children**