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**The Voices of Street Educators Working for the Successful Trajectory of Girls in
Street Situations: A Rights-Based Approach**

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ABSTRACT

“She is worthy, even if others negate it. She needs to know and proclaim that she is worthy. It is important, she needs to love herself.”

The United Nations defines a street child as “*any boy or girl for whom the street in the widest sense of the word has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood, and who is inadequately protected, supervised or directed by responsible adults*” (OHCHR, 2012). Most research on street children is focused on boys, the more visible gender, however street girls are at a higher risk. When these children go through non-governmental organization (NGO) services and are later reintegrated into society, many remain marginalized because they continue to live outside the economic, educational, and social standards of society. Therefore, it is important to consider and learn from the trajectory of success stories.

The strengths these children have to endure major life events and trauma all on their own at such a young age is remarkable and yet rarely discussed when analyzing literature on street children. In order to realize rights, it is essential to recognize what ‘*doing well*’ means functionally. This is an exploratory study, researching how street-educators describe good and bad trajectories for girls in street situations. It is qualitative and not meant to generalize, but rather to focus on the case study microcosms of the street-child NGOs visited in Peru and Brazil. This research refers to the human rights framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). In addition, it compares it to two domestic laws in Peru and Brazil, and analyzes to what extent the responses from these NGOs are grounded in this rights-based approach. This research observes how these rights are operationalized in the work of street-educators with street girls.

This pilot research explores the perceptions of street educators on the successful trajectory for girls in street situations. This is in order to analyze how their vision is reflected and implemented in helping these girls better realize their rights. Common themes discussed in this paper include the right to love, right to hope, self-esteem, resilience, the female position, the role of street educators, and the need for more comprehensive help and resources in this field.

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INTRODUCTION

Street Children

The United Nations defines a street child as “*any boy or girl for whom the street in the widest sense of the word has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood, and who is inadequately protected, supervised or directed by responsible adults.*”¹ However, rather than labeling these youth as ‘*street children,*’ the term, “*children in street situations,*” is heavily used because it implies that the current situation is temporary and changeable and does not make the street a label that characterizes the child.² The term “*children connected to the street*” is also used to describe those children for whom the street is their central point, where they develop their identity and spend much of their daily lives.³ In this document, the girls will be described as “*girls in street situations,*” to avoid the label of being inherently part of the “*street*” and describe it within the context of a situation that can change.

Children who run away from home usually leave, not to reach a goal, but in order to escape a problem. It is much more common for a child to escape from their home than to have the child’s parents kick them out the house. Instead of finding safety, love and support, the home has become an uncomfortable place where there is fear.⁴ Negative factors that may influence a child’s decision to run away from home include: domestic violence, alcoholism, low income, poor quality of education, neglect and abuse, lack of mother-father role and presence, and violence and gangs in their neighborhood. Aspects that attract a child to go to the street are: fleeing from turmoil at home, freedom, economic independence, friendship, promiscuity, drugs and an attraction to the city and entertainment offered by the street such as video games and parties.⁵ In addition, the stage of adolescence leads to the construction of identity where youths’

1 OHCHR, (2012). *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the protection and promotion of the rights of children working and/or living on the street.* Retrieved from <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/crc.pdf>

2 Graham, M. Laura. (2011). *HELPING THE CHILDREN OF THE STREETS OF LIMA.* Instituto del Perú. Retrieved from http://institutodelperu.org.pe/descargas/laura_graham_final.pdf : 4

3 Meincke, Anne Louise. (2012). “*Children’s Voices: OHCHR Study on The Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children Living and/or Working on the Streets.* Consortium for Street Children. Retrieved from <http://www.streetchildrenresources.org/resources/childrens-voices-ohchr-study-on-the-promotion-and-protection-of-the-rights-of-children-living-andor-working-on-the-streets/>: 4

4 Strehl, Talinay. (2010). *Street-Working and Street-Living Children in Peru: Conditions and Current Interventions.* Foundation for International Research on Working Children (IREWOC). Retrieved from https://www.essex.ac.uk/armcdcon/story_id/Street%20Children%20Peru_Strehl_IREWOC_2010.pdf: 33

5 Ibid., 131

autonomy is increased. It is therefore healthy and expected for adolescents to distance themselves from parents in order to better develop their identity.⁶ However, the streets are not conducive to a proper form of identity development.

For children in street situations, life on the streets may be seen as more attractive than at home. On the streets, they may be getting a more nutritious diet, more money, more friends, more freedom, and even better amenities such as a toilet, things that oftentimes are not accessible at home.⁷ Not only do they get more material goods outside of the home, but they also form groups that substitute for the social construct of the family in order to fill a need for a sense of belonging. If not approached, many children do not receive the help they need. Moreover, even though they may have more material goods, they lack basic rights such as medical care or enrollment to school because they have no ID or parental permission.⁸ They make day-to-day decisions based on survival and do not plan for the future. Their priorities are adaptive and their decisions do not always reflect what they would truly want if they were able to think in a less-stressful environment.⁹

The negative perception of children in street situations creates labels that undermine them as incompetent, vulnerable and powerless rather than as agents of change.¹⁰ They are stigmatized as criminals, drug addicts and vagrants, even if this is not how they truly conduct themselves.¹¹ Dowdy states that these youth are “*demonized and labeled dangerous, but also seen as in need of service and protection,*” an interesting oxymoronic dynamic.¹² Living on the streets endangers the development and lives of children because it encourages emotional instability and social

6 Guido, Amelia & Morales, Hugo & Mendoza, Raul & Chang, Maritza, & Cardenas, Mario. (2006). *Las niñas, las adolescentes, y la la calle: Diagnóstico Situacional de un grupo de niñas y adolescentes mujeres en situación de vulnerabilidad en lima metropolitana*. Municipalidad Metropolitana de Lima Gerencia de Desarrollo Social: 6

7 Bolton, A. T. (2012). *A Rua e Nossa (The Street is Ours): In Search of Childhood and Rights on the Streets of Guarulhos, Brazil* (Ph.D.). University of California, Riverside, United States -- California. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/1286750588/abstract>: 294

8 Graham, L (2011). *Helping the Children of the Streets of Lima*. Instituto del Perú Lima. Retrieved from: http://institutodelperu.org.pe/descargas/laura_graham_final.pdf: 11

9 Schimmel, N. (2006). *Freedom and Autonomy of Street Children*. International Journal Of Children's Rights, 14(3), 211-234. doi:10.1163/157181806778458121: 226

10 Lieten, G. K., & Strehl, T. (2015). *Victims and Agents*. In *Child Street Life* (pp. 1–5). Springer International Publishing. Retrieved from http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-11722-5_1: 3

11 Rosenblatt, F. F. (2012). *A Youth Justice Approach to the Street Children Phenomenon in Brazil: A Critical Review*. Youth Justice, 12(3), 229–244. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1473225412461214>: 235

12 Dowdy, C. S. (2012). *Youth, music, and agency: Undoing race, poverty and violence in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil* (Ph.D.). American University, United States -- District of Columbia. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/926193318/abstract>: 17

disconnection.¹³ One study found that street life might lock in certain characteristics, especially during the vital teenage years of identity construction. In addition to risking their lives on the streets, children work in a street culture where they meet prostitutes, drug addicts, and thieves and are socialized in an environment that schools them in counterproductive ways.¹⁴ Children in street situations are said to have a code of the streets that they ascribe to in order to survive, however, these informal rules govern their actions in negative ways.

Children in street situations describe searching for themselves and for freedom, but instead are hit with reality and become addicted, dependent, and a slave to the false freedom the street supplies, or a “*prisoner of the street.*”¹⁵ Although children in street situations feel that they gain some freedom and agency on the streets, it ultimately only further marginalizes and alienates them from realizing their rights.¹⁶ One study states that when youth are asked to predict what they would be doing as an adult, few had predictions that matched their hopes.¹⁷ There was cognitive dissonance of the child hoping to reach a goal, yet predicting something way below that standard due to the harsh reality of not being able to achieve it. A huge difficulty of working in this subfield is that the target population of children in street situations needs to be convinced that their lifestyle is in fact not the best one for them. This is a unique challenge to this field, for many children avoid having services “*change their lives.*” It is especially difficult to try and change those who are not open to and do not want change. These children are neglected and search for their rights on the streets, however, in the end, the streets just become a death sentence for them.¹⁸

13 Schimmel, N. (2006). *Freedom and Autonomy of Street Children*. International Journal Of Children's Rights, 14(3), 211-234. doi:10.1163/157181806778458121: 212

14 Schimmel N (2008) *A Humanistic Approach to Caring for Street Children: The Importance of Emotionally Intimate and Supportive Relationships for the Successful Rehabilitation of Street Children*. Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies: An International Interdisciplinary Journal for Research, Policy and Care 3(3): 214-220: 216

15 Bolton, A. T. (2012). *A Rua e Nossa (The Street is Ours): In Search of Childhood and Rights on the Streets of Guarulhos, Brazil* (Ph.D.). University of California, Riverside, United States -- California. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/1286750588/abstract: 242>

16 Ibid., 187

17 Raffaelli, M., & Koller, S. H. (2005). *Future Expectations of Brazilian Street Youth*. Journal of Adolescence, 28(2), 249–262. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2005.02.007>: 258

18 Bolton, A. T. (2012). *A Rua e Nossa (The Street is Ours): In Search of Childhood and Rights on the Streets of Guarulhos, Brazil* (Ph.D.). University of California, Riverside, United States -- California. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/1286750588/abstract: 311>

The needs of children in street situations are more emotional in nature than material. They feel that society discriminates against them and does not accept them. Children in street situations usually run away from home, due to a lack of emotional and moral support from their families, in hopes of finding a more supportive environment in the streets.¹⁹ The deterioration of family relationships is a big problem with children in street situations. According to a quantitative report, 67% of children in street situations are not living in their homes due to family problems.²⁰ 84% of children living with their families do not use drugs, while 62% living without families are found to consume drugs and alcohol.²¹ Although children try to replace their family with their friends on the street, they still choose family over friends when asked what is most important. In fact, the family can often be the reason why the child chooses to change; girls (45%) more so than boys (30%) mentioned the importance of the family as a motivation to leave the streets.²²

The decision to leave the streets must come from a change in the way that they see themselves, a change in identity.²³ They must drop their old lifestyles and norms in order to embrace an entirely new person with new friends, new behaviors and ultimately, a new identity. This is the hardest thing to accomplish because it is as if they are dying to their old self in order to become an entirely new person. Sometimes they stated having “*role residual*” or “*hangover identity*” and needing to be very conscious and intentional in maintaining their new selves.²⁴ Leaving the streets is described as a return to the “*institution of life*” that they once tried to escape.²⁵ Once they left the streets, the children described that they were finally ‘people’; they got their human dignity back and were now acknowledged in this new identity of theirs.²⁶ They

19 Ibid., 215

20 Strehl, Talinay. (2010). *Street-Working and Street-Living Children in Peru: Conditions and Current Interventions*. Foundation for International Research on Working Children (IREWOC). Retrieved from https://www.essex.ac.uk/armedcon/story_id/Street%20Children%20Peru_Strehl_IREWOC_2010.pdf: 30

21 Ibid., 41

22 Invernizzi, A. (2003). *Street-Working Children and Adolescents in Lima Work as an Agent of Socialization*. *Childhood*, 10(3), 319–341. <http://doi.org/10.1177/09075682030103005>

23 Rosenblatt, F. F. (2012). *A Youth Justice Approach to the Street Children Phenomenon in Brazil: A Critical Review*. *Youth Justice*, 12(3), 229–244. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1473225412461214>: 240

24 Bolton, A. T. (2012). *A Rua e Nossa (The Street is Ours): In Search of Childhood and Rights on the Streets of Guarulhos, Brazil* (Ph.D.). University of California, Riverside, United States -- California. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/1286750588/abstract:227>

25 Ibid., 249

26 Ibid., 246

expressed wanting to be regarded as a person, not as a statistic. This points out how dehumanizing the streets can be for the self-view of these youth and their worth as rightful citizens in society.

Despite possessing many strengths and being reintegrated into society, children in street situations remain marginalized because they continue to live outside the economic, educational, and social standards of society.²⁷ Marginalization is not just something that happens to people, but that happens within people through their own belittlement of their perspectives and choices that reinforce their exclusion.²⁸ They feel a strong sense of inadequacy and, for this reason, empowering their self-esteem is vital to the welfare of these girls in street situations.

*“Today in order to be accepted, you have to be perfect. And we lost so much time on the street and now we see ourselves as almost useless, completely outside of the standard of society and so we are kind of excluded... And then the fear comes because you’ve already been in prison, you don’t have education, you’re black, you’re poor, you’re an ex-drug addict, you’ve had trouble with the law, you’re semi-literate...”*²⁹ (Bolton, 2012, pg 249).

The strengths that these children have to endure major life events and trauma all on their own at such a young age is in fact remarkable and something very rarely discussed when analyzing children in street situations. They are usually seen as deprived and in need, rather than as agents of change that decide to live on the streets because it was their best option. Their strengths remain unexplored by many researchers. The difficult circumstances that these children endure shows that, in many ways, children in street situations possess even more strengths than those children who remain in abusive homes and do not have the courage to escape. These children are not passive victims and yet they cannot be fully active agents due to the constraining situation of survival that they are in. Therefore, these children are in a position where they must create different ways of surviving amidst the injustices and marginalization that they face on every front.³⁰

27 Ibid., 240

28 Swift, A. (1997). *Children for Social Change: Education for Citizenship of Street and Working Children in Brazil*. Nottingham [England]: Educational Heretics Press: 17

29 Bolton, A. T. (2012). *A Rua e Nossa (The Street is Ours): In Search of Childhood and Rights on the Streets of Guarulhos, Brazil* (Ph.D.). University of California, Riverside, United States -- California. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/1286750588/abstract; 249>

30 Ibid., 303

Halperin,³¹ states that youth have long been the drivers of social movements and social change in history around the world, for they possess the strengths to do so with their energy, stamina and optimism. In other words, “*youth are architects of culture.*”³² Children in street situations have internal barriers to their autonomy and consciousness because of the weight they bare of survival.³³ However, it is important for children to be able to construct a different reality than the one that they currently are in, for they live absorbed in their current situations and lose sight of empowerment, or “*their capacity to transform their conditions and have healthier lives.*”³⁴

Gender Inequality

Most research on children in street situations is focused on boys, the more visible gender. According to Lusk,³⁵ most street services are geared for boys, leaving girls especially vulnerable to exploitation.³⁶ Girls in street situations are at a higher risk of negative outcomes than their male counterparts and more likely to come from dysfunctional homes.³⁷ Compared to boys, girls experience more traumas at home and keep in less contact with their families once they are on the street.³⁸ In one study, two thirds of the girls wished that their parents would change.³⁹ In

31 Halperin, Rhoda H. and Suzanne Scheld. (2007). *Introduction: Youth Engage the City and Global Culture*. City & Society 19 (2169-178).

32 Dowdy, C. S. (2012). *Youth, music, and agency: Undoing race, poverty and violence in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil* (Ph.D.). American University, United States -- District of Columbia. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/926193318/abstract: 11>

33 Ibid., 87

34 Rodrigues, T. (2010). *Non-Formal Education and Street Youth Empowerment: Pedagogy and Practice of Two Brazilian Non-Governmental Organizations* (M.A.). University of Ottawa (Canada), Canada. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/761386438/abstract: 85>

35 Lusk MW. (1989). *Street children programs in Latin America*. Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare 16: 55–77.

36 Campos, R., Raffaelli, M., Ude, W., Greco, M., Ruff, A., Rolf, J., ... Group, S. Y. S. (1994). *Social Networks and Daily Activities of Street Youth in Belo Horizonte, Brazil*. Child Development, 65(2), 319–330. <http://doi.org/10.2307/1131386>: 328

37 Raffaelli, M., Koller, S. H., Reppold, C. T., Kuschick, M. B., Krum, F. M. B., Bandeira, D. R., & Simões, C. (2000). *Gender differences in Brazilian street youth's family circumstances and experiences on the street*. Child Abuse & Neglect, 24(11), 1431–1441. [http://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134\(00\)00202-7](http://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(00)00202-7): 1432

38 Benitez, Sarah Thomas de & Hiddleston, Trish. (2011). *Research Paper on the promotion and protection of the rights of children working and/or living on the street*. OHCHR 2011. Global Study. Retrieved from <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Children/Study/Consultation/GlobalResearchPaperbySarahThomasdeBenitez.doc>: 24

39 Raffaelli, M., Koller, S. H., Reppold, C. T., Kuschick, M. B., Krum, F. M. B., Bandeira, D. R., & Simões, C. (2000). *Gender differences in Brazilian street youth's family circumstances and experiences on the street*. Child Abuse & Neglect, 24(11), 1431–1441. [http://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134\(00\)00202-7](http://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(00)00202-7): 1435

addition, girls' number one reason for leaving their home was sexual abuse.⁴⁰ The family situation is especially difficult for girls because, not only are they leaving their homes, but they are also breaking rigid cultural and gender norms by turning to the streets. They choose the lesser of two evils when they decide to leave the home.⁴¹ Specific attention should be given to girls on the street, especially for young mothers to prevent this cycle being repeated.⁴²

The higher risk for girls in street situations can also be seen in the work that they tend to engage in. When compared to boys, a higher percentage of girls work long hours, such as 10-20 hours a day.⁴³ This may be because girls tend to have domestic work, which not only pays less than the minimum wages boys make in the public sphere, but also confines them to the private sphere, adding to their 'invisibility' factor.⁴⁴ According to gender norms, girls belong in the private sphere and boys in the public sphere.⁴⁵ Girls are therefore more invisible to receiving service and are a neglected group because they are not seen as much; 'out of sight, out of mind.'

Girls in street situations also seem to experience less personal autonomy because of their sex-appeal and are very quick to get a boyfriend who "protects" them against the almost certain sexual violence on the streets.⁴⁶ Girls in street situations suffer a double form of invisibility. Not only is their presence neglected, but also the stigma regarding their existence replaces their personhood with prejudices.⁴⁷ Many girls in street situations go on to work in prostitution, a work that inherently teaches oneself to devalue their worth and sell their bodies.⁴⁸ Street

40 Cubillos, R. H. (2002). *Braving the streets of Brazil: Children, their rights, and the roles of local NGOs in northeast Brazil* (Ph.D.). University of Southern California, United States -- California. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/305522340/abstract: 149>

41 Raffaelli, M., Koller, S. H., Reppold, C. T., Kuschick, M. B., Krum, F. M. B., Bandeira, D. R., & Simões, C. (2000). *Gender differences in Brazilian street youth's family circumstances and experiences on the street*. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 24(11), 1431–1441. [http://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134\(00\)00202-7](http://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(00)00202-7): 1438

42 Strehl, Talinay. (2010). *Street-Working and Street-Living Children in Peru: Conditions and Current Interventions*. Foundation for International Research on Working Children (IREWOC). Retrieved from https://www.essex.ac.uk/armedcon/story_id/Street%20Children%20Peru_Strehl_IREWOC_2010.pdf: 138

43 Wright & Pyne (2002). *Gender Dimensions of Child Labor and Street Children in Brazil*. The World Bank. Retrieved from <http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/abs/10.1596/1813-9450-2897: 6>

44 Ibid., 8

45 Ibid., 12

46 Bolton, A. T. (2012). *A Rua e Nossa (The Street is Ours): In Search of Childhood and Rights on the Streets of Guarulhos, Brazil* (Ph.D.). University of California, Riverside, United States -- California. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/1286750588/abstract: 176>

47 Ibid., 70

48 Cubillos, R. H. (2002). *Braving the streets of Brazil: Children, their rights, and the roles of local NGOs in northeast Brazil* (Ph.D.). University of Southern California, United States -- California. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/305522340/abstract: 125>

educators, from NGOs, begin their work by first empowering the girls, for the girl must recognize herself as worthy of living with dignity and as an agent with desires that have value.⁴⁹

When girls discussed their future, they expressed the desire to not live on the streets and to "*be someone*" in life and have a better job.⁵⁰ They also said that they wanted to change their personality or behavior to become better people in the future and have better relationships with their families. They highly valued social recognition, especially coming from people connected to their families, even if this recognition remained focused on external factors rather than on their unconditional internal qualities.⁵¹

Females have a stronger ripple effect in generational change and breaking the cycle of poverty in their families, for they are presumed responsible for the next generation and are an integral social part of their communities.⁵² They are the only ones who can '*reproduce poverty*' and are therefore a key factor for any societal solutions. In addition to gender, Moeller also states that the race of the young women cannot be separated from their situation, for it is overwhelmingly afro-descendant adolescent girls who are in the position of needing support in education and employment.⁵³ This therefore cannot be a color-blind discourse, for race is interwoven within the lives and circumstances of these girls.

Peruvian Context

It is estimated that six years ago there were 40 million children living on the streets of Latin America (UNICEF, 2011), about 8,000-12,000 of them in Peru. According to the National Institute of Family Welfare (INABIF, 2001), it is estimated that most children in street situations

49 Rodrigues, T. (2010). *Non-Formal Education and Street Youth Empowerment: Pedagogy and Practice of Two Brazilian Non-Governmental Organizations* (M.A.). University of Ottawa (Canada), Canada. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/761386438/abstract:69>

50 Strehl, Talinay. (2010). *Street-Working and Street-Living Children in Peru: Conditions and Current Interventions*. Foundation for International Research on Working Children (IREWOC). Retrieved from https://www.essex.ac.uk/armadcon/story_id/Street%20Children%20Peru_Strehl_IREWOC_2010.pdf: 78

51 Guido, Amelia & Morales, Hugo & Mendoza, Raul & Chang, Maritza, & Cardenas, Mario. (2006). *Las niñas, las adolescentes, y la la calle: Diagnóstico Situacional de un grupo de niñas y adolescentes mujeres en situación de vulnerabilidad en lima metropolitana*. Municipalidad Metropolitana de Lima Gerencia de Desarrollo Social: 101

52 Moeller, K. (2014). *Searching for Adolescent Girls in Brazil: The Transnational Politics of Poverty in "The Girl Effect."* *Feminist Studies*, 40(3), 575–601:591

53 Ibid., 589

in Peru are located in the capital, Lima.⁵⁴ It is considered that children growing up in Peru live in the most critical conditions in Latin America because of poverty.⁵⁵ Although poverty is not the obvious or most direct reason for why a child leaves the home, it is often a root for the problem causing the direct reasons.⁵⁶

In 1990, Peru signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) at the United Nations and pledged to take action to protect the rights of the child and their development. The code specifically mentions children in street situations in Article 40 which says that "*children and adolescents living on the street have the right to participate in programs for comprehensive care aimed at eliminating begging, ensure education and physical and mental development.*"⁵⁷ In February 2009, a survey was conducted with 27 NGOs that worked with children living on the streets of Lima and Cusco and all respondents agreed that there was an urgent need to assess the effectiveness of interventions with children in the streets. They also emphasized the need to investigate the characteristics of these children and their perceptions about their life situations.⁵⁸

Peruvians tend to see children on the streets with a reactive perception as criminals, beggars or a threat to society. It has been reported that even people whose duty it is to help these children, such as police, doctors and teachers, tend to discriminate and see them as dangerous. As a result of this perception, children often hide from the police, do not seek help in medical clinics or leave school, marginalizing themselves even further.⁵⁹

Brazilian Context

Youth are the future, they are the leaders of tomorrow and therefore it is important to reverse stereotypes labeling youth in street situations and capitalize on their strengths to

54 Guido, Amelia & Morales, Hugo & Mendoza, Raul & Chang, Maritza, & Cardenas, Mario. (2006). *Las niñas, las adolescentes, y la la calle: Diagnóstico Situacional de un grupo de niñas y adolescentes mujeres en situación de vulnerabilidad en lima metropolitana*. Municipalidad Metropolitana de Lima Gerencia de Desarrollo Social: 13

55 Bengtson, Nina. (2011). *The Street Child's Process to Leave the Streets of Lima*, Peru, Retrieved from: <http://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=downloadFile&recordId=2096263&fileId=2154679>: pg 10.

56 Graham, L (2011). *Helping the Children of the Streets of Lima*. Instituto del Perú Lima. Retrieved from: http://institutodelperu.org.pe/descargas/laura_graham_final.pdf: 7

57 Ibid., 10

58 Strehl, T (2010). *Street-Working and Street-Living Children in Peru: Conditions and Current Interventions*. Foundation for International Research on Working Children (IREWOC). Retrieved from: https://www.essex.ac.uk/armedcon/story_id/Street%20Children%20Peru_Strehl_IREWOC_2010.pdf: 9

59 Graham, L (2011). *Helping the Children of the Streets of Lima*. Instituto del Perú Lima. Retrieved from: http://institutodelperu.org.pe/descargas/laura_graham_final.pdf: 21

empower them to be positive human capital. Countries that attend to their “*youth bulge*” with quality education, positive opportunities, and employment create a brighter future for their nation as a whole and have a “*demographic bonus*” of human capital.⁶⁰ This is not the case in Brazil however, for although it is the 6th largest economy in the world, it is also the 7th most unequal nation in the world in terms of economic distribution.⁶¹ Nearly half of the world’s children in street situations are in Latin America, the majority of whom are in Brazil.⁶²

Although police violence has been in the forefronts of news in the United States lately, it does not compare to the state in Brazil, for “*in the United States 1 person is killed by police for every 37,000 arrested; in Brazil the same figure is an appalling 1 person for every 23 arrested.*”⁶³ According to the Citizen Council for Public Security and Criminal Justice, an advocacy group based in Mexico City, “*19 of the 50 most violent cities in the world are located in Brazil,*” and most of the violence is carried out by the police.⁶⁴ Another study released by the Latin American Social Sciences Institute (FLACSO) in 2013 stated that an average of 29 children and teenagers were murdered per day in Brazil, ranking the country third in child homicides globally. According to Rio on Watch, 60% of the deaths of children at the hands of police in the past decade were in the city of Rio de Janeiro alone.⁶⁵ Unfortunately, statistics show that this is only getting worse.⁶⁶

Children in street situations are most at risk for police violence, for they are criminalized before the facts.⁶⁷ Police claim to be ensuring public safety by killing the most vulnerable youth,

60 Dowdy, C. S. (2012). *Youth, music, and agency: Undoing race, poverty and violence in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil* (Ph.D.). American University, United States -- District of Columbia. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/926193318/abstract>: 21

61 Bolton, A. T. (2012). *A Rua e Nossa (The Street is Ours): In Search of Childhood and Rights on the Streets of Guarulhos, Brazil* (Ph.D.). University of California, Riverside, United States -- California. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/1286750588/abstract>: 275

62 Raffaelli, M., Koller, S. H., Reppold, C. T., Kuschick, M. B., Krum, F. M. B., Bandeira, D. R., & Simões, C. (2000). *Gender differences in Brazilian street youth's family circumstances and experiences on the street*. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 24(11), 1431–1441. [http://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134\(00\)00202-7](http://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(00)00202-7): 1432

63 Saenz, Sergio. (2016) *Statistics Reveal Alarming Rate of Police Violence in Rio*. Rio on Watch. Retrieved from <<http://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=21350>>.

64 Ibid.

65 Saenz, Sergio. (2016) *Statistics Reveal Alarming Rate of Police Violence in Rio*. Rio on Watch. Retrieved from <<http://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=21350>>.

66 Alves, Lise. (2016) *Study Shows Brazil Among Leaders in Child Homicides*. The Rio Times. Retrieved from <<http://riotimesonline.com/brazil-news/tag/homicides/>>.

67 Dowdy, C. S. (2012). *Youth, music, and agency: Undoing race, poverty and violence in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil* (Ph.D.). American University, United States -- District of Columbia. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/926193318/abstract>: 135

the same police that should be protecting the rights of these children in street situations.⁶⁸ Children in street situations are often caught in the crossfire of gangs and directly targeted in a war promulgated by the death squads or “*extermination squads*.” These children are in “*a silent war of extermination*.”⁶⁹ They may even be compared to urban refugees seeking asylum from the structures that are meant to be protecting them.⁷⁰ The children expressed great fear of being under police custody, for if they have no documents, there is no state recognition and the child is pretty much non-existent.⁷¹ In these cases, the death of street children is not mourned in the same way that the premature deaths of ‘*regular*’ children would be, but rather, their deaths are justified as being better for the public good.

Race is important to discuss when dealing with police injustice and the state of Brazil. Afro-brazilians now make up the majority of the Brazilian population, however they are still disempowered and treated as the ‘*minority*.’ Brazil took a relatively long time to abolish slavery in 1888, and in a way it still persists through structural means of injustice and inequality.⁷² Although Brazil claims to be a “*racially-blind democracy*,” afro-brazilians are still structurally in the position of the “*other*.”⁷³ The Atlanta Black Star also reported that Brazil, the world’s second-largest black nation, has an all-white male cabinet and dismantled the ministries of Culture, Human Rights, Women’s Rights and Racial Equality.⁷⁴ According to teleSUR, over 23,000 black youth are killed in Brazil each year, three times more than the white population. Black homicide continues to rise as the rate of homicide in the white community drops, this

68 Rosenblatt, F. F. (2012). *A Youth Justice Approach to the Street Children Phenomenon in Brazil: A Critical Review*. Youth Justice, 12(3), 229–244. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1473225412461214>: 235

69 Cubillos, R. H. (2002). *Braving the streets of Brazil: Children, their rights, and the roles of local NGOs in northeast Brazil* (Ph.D.). University of Southern California, United States -- California. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/305522340/abstract:198>

70 Rodrigues, T. (2010). *Non-Formal Education and Street Youth Empowerment: Pedagogy and Practice of Two Brazilian Non-Governmental Organizations* (M.A.). University of Ottawa (Canada), Canada. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/761386438/abstract:64>

71 Bolton, A. T. (2012). *A Rua e Nossa (The Street is Ours): In Search of Childhood and Rights on the Streets of Guarulhos, Brazil* (Ph.D.). University of California, Riverside, United States -- California. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/1286750588/abstract:258>

72 Norman, K. (2010). *Identity and Public Policy: Redefining the Concept of Racial Democracy in Brazil*. Harvard Journal of African American Public Policy, 17, 29–41:30

73 Dowdy, C. S. (2012). *Youth, music, and agency: Undoing race, poverty and violence in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil* (Ph.D.). American University, United States -- District of Columbia. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/926193318/abstract:27>

74 Selvaggi, Shaundra. (2016) ‘*Undeclared Civil War: Black Youths Under Threat of ‘Genocide’ in Brazil, 1 Killed Every 23 Minutes Per Report*. Editorial. The Atlanta Blackstar.

inconsistency demonstrates the links being made to a genocide of black youth in the nation.⁷⁵ This complicates these children's vision of their internal locus of control, or how much control they have over what happens to them.⁷⁶ Identity is constructed not only by how one sees themselves, but by how they perceive that others see them.⁷⁷ Girls in street situations get the bulk of discrimination because not only are they poor, but they are also female, black, and minors, a quadruple threat of stigmatization. It is therefore essential to develop their identity and self-love in order to better develop their agency and empower them in their own skins.

Non-Governmental Organizations

The rights of children in street situations are predominantly stated on paper, but not sufficiently enforced in practice.⁷⁸ The United Nations, through UNICEF, works with children in street situations; however, its mission is not specifically targeting the “*street child*” population. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are therefore the greatest providers of services for children in street situations.⁷⁹ The NGOs that work specifically for these children are focused primarily on their overall wellbeing, with the primary goal of returning them to their families. However, the family is many times the reason why children leave the home and turn to the streets in the first place and, therefore, this strategy is not always effective.⁸⁰

Each actor that works with children in street situations has a different perspective and approach with them; therefore, there are different means of action.⁸¹ If these children are viewed

75 Selvaggi, Shaundra. (2016) ‘*Undeclared Civil War: Black Youths Under Threat of ‘Genocide’ in Brazil, 1 Killed Every 23 Minutes Per Report.* Editorial. The Atlanta Blackstar.

76 Colman, A. (2015). *locus of control*. In A Dictionary of Psychology: Oxford University Press. Retrieved 25 Nov. 2015, from <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199657681.001.0001/acref-9780199657681-e-4701>

77 Norman, K. (2010). *Identity and Public Policy: Redefining the Concept of Racial Democracy in Brazil*. Harvard Journal of African American Public Policy, 17, 29–41:33

78 Bolton, A. T. (2012). *A Rua e Nossa (The Street is Ours): In Search of Childhood and Rights on the Streets of Guarulhos, Brazil* (Ph.D.). University of California, Riverside, United States -- California. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/1286750588/abstract: 285>

79 Paloheimo, J. (2011). *The Preventative and Symptomatic Approaches to Educating Street Children in Recife, Brazil: An Assessment of Best Practice* (M.A.). Saint Mary's University (Canada), Canada. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/902758085/abstract: 25>

80 Bolton, A. T. (2012). *A Rua e Nossa (The Street is Ours): In Search of Childhood and Rights on the Streets of Guarulhos, Brazil* (Ph.D.). University of California, Riverside, United States -- California. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/1286750588/abstract: 255>

81 Ibid., 311

as dangerous and despicable, programs will aim to get rid of their presence on the streets in a reactive approach.⁸² If they are viewed as agents with rights, then the rights-based approach will step in.⁸³ If the child is seen as a subject of knowledge that has the capability of acquiring higher level rational structures when in a supportive environment, then the constructivist approach would apply. In this ideology, NGOs frame their theory of change towards influencing the environment, more so than the child.

NGO ideologies can also be paternalistic, seeing the child as a victim that needs protection, or antagonistic, seeing the child as ‘*little adults*’ with agency.⁸⁴ The first runs the risk of making the child too dependent on services while the latter runs the risk of disregarding the fact that the child is in fact just a child. Depending on how the NGO views the child, they will have a different theory of change on how to approach the child and provide services.

Paloheimo discusses two methods, the symptomatic approach, which works with children already on the streets through street educators, and the preventative approach, which works to prevent children from turning to the streets by providing the families with a stipend. She claims that the preventative approach is more sustainable and effective. In one example in Brazil, the government provides cash transfers known as Bolsa Familia, that aim to target the root cause of the “*street child*” phenomenon, poverty.⁸⁵ The poorest families are given this cash transfer on the condition that their children attend at least 85% of school days.⁸⁶ Bolsa Familia, however, fails to attend to those children that are already on the streets, a lost generation. Between the preventative and symptomatic approach, the latter is more directly related to dealing with those children who already find themselves living on the streets.⁸⁷

82 Cubillos, R. H. (2002). *Braving the streets of Brazil: Children, their rights, and the roles of local NGOs in northeast Brazil* (Ph.D.). University of Southern California, United States -- California. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/305522340/abstract: 198>

83 Graham, M. Laura. (2011). *Helping the Children of the Streets of Lima*. Instituto del Perú. Retrieved from http://institutodelperu.org.pe/descargas/laura_graham_final.pdf : 7

84 Strehl, Talinay. (2010). *Street-Working and Street-Living Children in Peru: Conditions and Current Interventions*. Foundation for International Research on Working Children (IREWOC). Retrieved from https://www.essex.ac.uk/armedcon/story_id/Street%20Children%20Peru_Strehl_IREWOC_2010.pdf: 97

85 Paloheimo, J. (2011). *The Preventative and Symptomatic Approaches to Educating Street Children in Recife, Brazil: An Assessment of Best Practice* (M.A.). Saint Mary's University (Canada), Canada. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/902758085/abstract: 34>

86 Ibid., 50

87 Ibid., 92

A specific challenge with NGOs in this subfield is the difficulty of discerning what amount of the child's progress came as a result of the NGO and what would have occurred regardless. It is difficult to attribute certain changes as being a result of the NGO.⁸⁸ NGOs working with children in street situations should ideally be longitudinal in scope in order to be more effective. There are various stories of NGOs working and 'succeeding' in taking these youth out from their street lifestyles; however, due to the vast marginalization and exclusion, in a few years these youth tend to return to where they feel most comfortable and accepted and there is a high rate of recidivism.⁸⁹ In this subfield there are high risks and high investments, which is not an ideal situation for NGOs that are dependent on international funders who look for statistical progress.

Various literature affirms that, in order to have real substantive change in the problems facing children in street situations, the theory of change needs to be comprehensive, for these children cannot be treated as separate from all the complexities of the larger ecosystem that they are attached to.⁹⁰ NGOs theory of change must keep in mind that the children themselves are not the problem; rather the problem is their situations. The focus needs to be redirected from the children to the structures that perpetuate their situation.⁹¹ There has to be all-encompassing change of all aspects of society that interact with youth in street situations. The social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions of the children's reality shape their lives and circumstances and, therefore, it is crucial that NGOs be attuned to the greater ecosystem affecting the "street child" phenomenon.⁹² It is ideal if NGOs are able to work on the reality that creates the injustices

88 Benitez, Sarah Thomas de & Hiddleston, Trish. (2011). *Research Paper on the promotion and protection of the rights of children working and/or living on the street*. OHCHR 2011 Global Study. Retrieved from <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Children/Study/Consultation/GlobalResearchPaperbySarahThomasdeBenitez.doc>: 32

89 Strehl, Talinay. (2010). *Street-Working and Street-Living Children in Peru: Conditions and Current Interventions*. Foundation for International Research on Working Children (IREWOC). Retrieved from https://www.essex.ac.uk/armedcom/story_id/Street%20Children%20Peru_Strehl_IREWOC_2010.pdf: 96-97

90 Bolton, A. T. (2012). *A Rua e Nossa (The Street is Ours): In Search of Childhood and Rights on the Streets of Guarulhos, Brazil* (Ph.D.). University of California, Riverside, United States -- California. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/1286750588/abstract:289>

91 Ibid., 298

92 Rodrigues, T. (2010). *Non-Formal Education and Street Youth Empowerment: Pedagogy and Practice of Two Brazilian Non-Governmental Organizations* (M.A.). University of Ottawa (Canada), Canada. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/761386438/abstract:79>

that children in street situations are the victims of.⁹³ This is an ambitious goal for NGOs to have, one that is oftentimes too broad for their limited funding to achieve.

“...street children are protagonists of their life story and citizens with rights, but are overshadowed by conditions that make them subjects of exclusion, disenfranchisement and stigmatization.”(Rodrigues, 2010, pg 71)⁹⁴

A great bulk of literature pertaining to children in street situations in the Americas refers to the example of the Movimento do Meninos e Meninas de Rua (MNMMR) and its analysis. Many of the NGOs in Brazil were well aware of it, therefore, it is important to know of the MNMMR impact. Padre Bruno of the Salesian Don Bosco School began a movement that empowered children in street situations to be the agents of change in their own lives. Their goal was to defeat influences of submission and to “give children a firm sense of identity and belonging, a heightened awareness of their own ability to interpret their lives, take action and learn from that action, a strong sense of their own rights and responsibilities and those of others, and a critical disposition.”⁹⁵

In order to reach these marginalized youth, Padre Bruno and volunteers set up an NGO in the form of a restaurant in 1971 in Belem, Brazil, by where they saw many children in street situations working. They charged a very small price for the food, for they did not make the restaurant an act of charity where the children could become dependent on its services.⁹⁶ Soon, responsibilities were given in order to make the children a part of the collective decision making process of the NGO. The restaurant held assemblies divided by different thematic groups of issues affecting the children daily, from police violence to economic revenue.⁹⁷ Years later, these youth express that they learned to be critically aware of themselves and how society works through these discussions, and many of them continue to be activists even now as adults.

93 Roslyn Arlin Mickelson, ed (2000). *Children on the Streets of the Americas: Globalization, Homelessness and Education in the United States, Brazil, and Cuba*; London: Routledge, 53

94 Rodrigues, T. (2010). *Non-Formal Education and Street Youth Empowerment: Pedagogy and Practice of Two Brazilian Non-Governmental Organizations* (M.A.). University of Ottawa (Canada), Canada. Retrieved from [http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/761386438/abstract; 71](http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/761386438/abstract;71)

95 Swift, A. (1997). *Children for Social Change: Education for citizenship of street and working children in Brazil*. Nottingham [England]: Educational Heretics Press: 57

96 Ibid., 13

97 Ibid., 31

The restaurant NGO soon grew into the National Movement for Street Boys and Girls (MNMMR). MNMMR soon held national conferences, where children divided into groups depending on the topic that they most identified with, such as health, school, family, work, and violence.⁹⁸ Their speeches were broadcasted on the radio and news television stations and in the end, they drew up a report of all that was discussed and presented it to the government. They were empowered on a national platform to be agents of change. It was the work of these youth that got Article 227 of the Brazilian constitution to pass, a hallmark victory and success of the movement. Article 227 of the new Brazilian Constitution states that *“it is the duty of the society and the state to ensure that children and adolescents are an absolute priority- and that they have the right to life, health, food, education, leisure, training, culture, dignity, respect, familial and community relations- as well as to ensure that they are not subject to any form of negligence, discrimination, exploitation, violence, cruelty or oppression.”*⁹⁹

After Padre Bruno stepped down from leadership and Brazil went through political changes, MNMMR lost the great momentum they had picked up. However, its effect and influence is still present, for it is well-known among the NGOs in Brazil.

For this research, many street-child NGOs were contacted. Below is a brief description of the NGOs from which interviews were conducted with street educators.

1. Instituto Mundo Libre (IML)

Instituto Mundo Libre (IML) is an NGO established in 1993 in Lima, Peru that promotes, through the application of prevention and rehabilitation, the healthy and integral development of children and adolescents in high risk.¹⁰⁰ This NGO does a particularly good job of targeting the seemingly most difficult of children in street situations, those addicted to psychoactive drugs. IML's structure is a semi-open shelter, where children can leave when they want to but, while inside, they must follow all the rules and their exit usually means that they are formally leaving the program.¹⁰¹ The children voluntarily sign a contract to enter this NGO and receive its

98 Ibid., 106

99 Wright & Pyne (2002). *Gender Dimensions of Child Labor and Street Children in Brazil*. The World Bank. Retrieved from <http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/abs/10.1596/1813-9450-2897>: 2

100 "[INSTITUTO MUNDO LIBRE] Niños Y Niñas De La Calle." (2015). <<http://www.mundolibre.org.pe/>>.

101 Graham, L (2011). *Helping the Children of the Streets of Lima*. Instituto del Perú Lima. Retrieved from: http://institutodelperu.org.pe/descargas/laura_graham_final.pdf: 14

services of rehabilitation from street life and drug use. IML has a social worker, a psychologist, professors, and street educators with various workshops that teach the children vocational and recreational skills and norms of mainstream society, aiming to shift their perception and behavior.¹⁰² Their goal is to foster the emotional, psychological and physical wellbeing of the child so that they can be reintegrated into society on a healthier path without drugs. This theory of change is mainly focused on the child's wellbeing rather than the larger ecosystem that interacts with the child.

Children interned at IML mentioned that the positive aspects of staying there include: receiving affection, psychological support, food and a bed.¹⁰³ Girls focused on the assistance provided by the psychologist, where they can discuss different emotional needs that afflict them.¹⁰⁴ Integral factors to having the child stay include: seeing their dreams come true, having a comfortable and friendly environment, and having security of their basic needs.¹⁰⁵ However, factors that influence whether a child decides to escape from a therapeutic center and returns to the streets are: their relationships, boredom factor, and the feeling of losing freedom and control. Moreover, when children in street situations enter a transition center or join a support program, they are usually put in a room with many other children where there are two or three street educators who have rotational working hours. Volunteers also enter and leave the center and in general the atmosphere is one of transition and instability. This aspect can be like a replica of the transitional atmosphere of the street where there is a lack of dependence and constancy in relationships.¹⁰⁶

Once the child agrees to enter the NGO shelter, it is still common to go through a process of entry and exit before a genuine change in lifestyle and behavior is seen, making success hard to quantify. Children in street situations are a difficult population to convince to commit to the NGO, thereby making measurement of success difficult. In IML, although a full year of the

102 Magalhães, F (2014). *Children and Adolescents from Street Situations in a Drug Rehabilitation Residential Setting- Experiences and Aspirations*. Retrieved from Email: 34-37

103 Ibid., 55

104 Ibid., 57

105 Martinez, C. L. (2010). *Living in (or Leaving) the Streets: Why Street Youth Choose the Streets Despite Opportunities in Shelters*. Asia-Pacific Social Science Review, 10(1): 39

106 Schimmel N. (2008). *A humanistic approach to caring for street children: The importance of emotionally intimate and supportive relationships for the successful rehabilitation of street children*. Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies: An International Interdisciplinary Journal for Research, Policy and Care 3(3): 217

program is expected to be the amount of time it takes to see genuine change in the child, only 50% of the children stay in the program for more than 45 days and of those, only 50% are expected to finish the entire program. There is therefore a 20% quantitative success rate, yet the qualitative success rate goes unmeasured and is usually where most impact is done, for even those children who escape or abandon the institution have learned life lessons that have helped them to reintegrate in society in a healthier way.

2. Associação Beneficente AMAR

The Benevolent Association AMAR, founded in 2000, is a non-profit NGO that works with youth in personal and social risk, through the methodology of the Preventive System of Education in three operating lines: Emergency Line, Preventive Line, and the Formative Line. The methodology of action used by AMAR is based on the principles of active and participatory process of education and building a life plan with the youth, aiming for their social reintegration. They also are inspired by the principles of Don Bosco, using reason, love and spirituality to guide their work. AMAR states that there is a lack of research on children in street situations in Rio de Janeiro and, even though there are many laws protecting children's rights, they are not enforced. According the 13th Census of Population in Rio de Janeiro (MPRJ, 2013), "*street situations*" is the third most likely reason why children are taken to shelters.

AMAR's street child project focuses on the care of children who are in the streets of Rio de Janeiro. They do this by means of using street dynamics, activities in the socio-educational center and a Halfway House. Children in street situations are offered opportunities to participate in educational activities that focus on their integral development as citizens with rights. This NGO is grounded in the Brazilian Statute of the Child and Adolescent (ECA), for children are treated as the absolute priority of public policy. For this research, the specific home visited had a structure that only received children in street situations during the day's working hours and closed at night. The workers all mentioned that this specific house was for daytime attention, whether it be medical, educational, recreational or psychological. This approach is that of an open shelter, giving children the liberty to come and go as they please, and is the most linked to the revolving door theory where children come to use the services but do not fully detach from street life. It is not a closed-shelter method like IML where the youth sign a contract and are not allowed to leave. Each method has its own pros and cons.

3. Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha

Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha began its work on the streets with youth in street situations. As it expanded and had its own location and home, the NGO shifted a little and received children from disadvantaged communities in a preventative effort, engaging them in the arts and circus activities as healthy hobbies and extra-curricular programs. It has attended to over 2,000 young people over the past 20 years. They currently have about 100 circus, dance, theater and computer lessons offered to the youth. They invest in cultural development and seek to guarantee the human rights of all of the children in relation to health and employment. This NGO was commonly referred to and recommended by umbrella networks and organizations because their street educators were known to be highly experienced and involved with street connected youth both personally and politically.

4. Passaporte da Cidadania

The program Passaporte da Cidadania of the organization Pastoral do Menor aims to enhance the alternative care given to children and youth in street situations, facilitate their departure from the streets and return them to their communities. This is achieved through an integrated network of services aimed at social inclusion, investing mainly in strengthening family and community ties. In order to achieve its mission, this particular project operates from a bus in strategic locations throughout the city, depending on the diagnosis of the social context. This bus serves as a strategic point for the convergence of networks of local government services, merchants, residents and community initiatives set by the Catholic Church and where street connected youth go to seek refuge and recreation. The bus operates in the evenings and has a tech room inside. Outside of the bus, the children engage with social workers, street educators, and workshop leaders for activities such as Capoeira and Passinho cultural dance. In addition to direct service, this project holds several joint meetings with officials for the formulation of public policies for the benefit of these street connected youth. Passaporte da Cidadania has helped hundreds of street connected youth between the ages of 7-24 years.

The Law: ECA, CRC, and Ley 27337

Every country in the world except for the United States has signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Peru and Brazil therefore falling under its jurisdiction to protect the rights of all children. However, although signed, many articles are not enforced. In Brazil, the Statute of The Child and Adolescent (ECA) has 267 articles to describe children’s rights along with their respective paragraphs and bullet points. In Peru, Law 27337 confirms the new code of Children and Adolescents and has 252 articles, however does not go into as much detail as ECA does. The CRC only has 42 articles in comparison to the two domestic laws. ECA was applied in July of 1990, in part due to MNMMR. The CRC came into effect a few months afterwards, in September of 1990. Unlike these, Peru’s code came into play in 2000.

ECA describes the most open rights whereas the CRC maintains a certain level of vagueness and the Peruvian law continually lists restrictions attached to each article. All laws however begin by stating the definition of a child. ECA states in Article 2 that, *“the child is considered as the person who has not yet completed twelve years of age and the adolescent as that between twelve and eighteen years of age.”* Article 2 in Peru uses the same language, stating that, *“the child is considered a human being from conception until the age of twelve years old and as an adolescent from twelve until eighteen years old.”* The CRC however, maintains more vagueness and states that, *“a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years...”* The articles of the respective conventions highlighted below discuss comprehensiveness of rights, protection from harm, absolute priority of government and family to ensure rights, freedom and right to be heard and participate, and services for children.

The highlighted topics in this research are illustrated briefly in the graphic below:

<p>The right that children have their full extension of rights</p>	<p><i>Example:</i> Brazil ECA: Law n° 8.069 Article 3 “...the child and adolescent enjoy all the fundamental rights inherent to the human person and, by law or other means, are ensured of all opportunities and facilities so as to entitle them to physical, mental, moral, spiritual and social development, in conditions of freedom and dignity.”</p>
<p>The right of each child to be protected and prevented from experiencing harm</p>	<p><i>Example:</i> Brazil ECA: Law n° 8.069 Article 5 “No child or adolescent will be subject to any form of negligence, discrimination, exploitation, violence, cruelty and oppression, and any violation of their fundamental rights, either by act or omission...”</p>

<p>The right that each child be protected and ensured their full rights under the duty of the government and the social systems in which they live</p>	<p><i>Example:</i> Peru -Ley 27337 Article 8 It is the duty of the state, family, public and private institutions, and grassroots organizations, to promote the correct application of the principles, rights and rules established in this Code and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p>
<p>The right that each child be heard and participate in the events in their lives</p>	<p><i>Example:</i> United Nations CRC Article 12 1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.</p>
<p>The right of each child to be attended to by social systems and their role in that process</p>	<p><i>Example:</i> United Nations CRC Article 39 States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment, which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.</p>

Resilience

Characteristics of resilience as an internal attribute are being studied with greater interest around the world by scholars, especially in regards to the design of programs and services for at-risk youth. In order to realize rights, it is essential to recognize functionally what it means to do well. Although definitions vary, most agree that resilience is the ability to bounce back in a healthy way despite experiencing risk and adversity. Therefore, the study of resilience includes both the study of the risks and adversities, along with the study of the response behaviors and coping mechanisms.¹⁰⁷ The American Psychological Association (2014) defines resilience as *"the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress."*¹⁰⁸ The nature of resilience has been conceptualized to include *"good coping,*

¹⁰⁷ Peters, R.D.V., & Leadbeater, B., & McMahon, R.J. (2005). *Resilience in children, families, and communities : linking context to practice and policy.* Banff International Conference on Behavioural Science . New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers: 13

¹⁰⁸ American Psychological Association. (2014). *What is Resilience.* Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx>

opportunities for growth, beating the odds, and inoculation against future stress.”¹⁰⁹ Fostering children’s resilience is directly related to children’s rights because it empowers youth to be able to better face and overcome adversity.

In order to best understand resilience, it is important to examine the role that it plays in relation to adversity. Youth that navigate well through life’s tensions and stressors are considered to be resilient. Life’s tensions can be related to several factors including limited access to material resources, relationships, identity, power and control, cultural adherence, social justice, and cohesion.¹¹⁰ Resilience building empowers youth to be able to continue forward despite their adversities and grow stronger rather than be destroyed by the unfortunate circumstances that envelope them. According to Gilgun, resilience emphasizes the active use of available resources and the will to engage with protective processes. Exercising resilience helps with many of the rights outlined in the laws above, for it enables youth to be more aware of their rights and capabilities and better prepared to confront violations of these rights.

For children at-risk and living in adversity, developing stronger resilience is important, not only for them on an individual micro level, but also on a macro level, for their family and community.¹¹¹ Resilient youth tend to have more positive character traits that extend beyond themselves into many other factors and realms of life. It correlates with traits, such as, “*easy temperament, secure attachment, basic trust, problem-solving abilities, an internal locus of control, an active coping style, enlisting people to help, making friends, acquiring language and reading well, realistic self-esteem, a sense of harmony, a desire to contribute to others, and faith that one’s life matters (Davis, 2001).*”¹¹²

Young people with the highest level of resilience proved to indeed be more mature, have more self-control and to better adapt to social constraints and materials. They are not perceived as cruel and are not indifferent to others. In addition, they are more likely to have a stable relationship with an adult and benefit from emotional ties and committed relationships with

¹⁰⁹ Ungar, M. (2004). *Nurturing hidden resilience in troubled youth*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 60

¹¹⁰ Liebenberg, L. & Ungar, M. (c2009). *Researching resilience*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 107

¹¹¹ Clauss-Ehlers, C.S., & Weist, M.D. (c2004a). *Community planning to foster resilience in children*. New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers: 316

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 29

teachers and responsible adults outside the family.¹¹³ Internal factors (such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, intelligence and perseverance) and external factors (such as affective ties that encourage confidence and autonomy) contribute to the development of resilience. Rutter (2002) notes that people can be resilient in certain situations but very vulnerable to others, and this implies that it is important to understand the specific social context that makes the basis for the behavior of certain individuals.¹¹⁴ Studies have also shown that girls are more resilient than boys.¹¹⁵ In the few years they have had in their life, and with all the problems they face, girls in street situations show remarkable resilience.

Resilience is inherently tied to strengths-based methods. In the past, the more common strategy that programs and services modeled was deficit-based. Children that ran away from home used to be classified in the DSM-III-R as having a mental disorder, “*a perception that focuses on a child’s deficits as opposed to strengths* (Demoskoff & Lauzer, 1994).”¹¹⁶ Behavioral sciences have been “*systematically biased toward negative, problem-focused frames of reference and therefore have failed to explain how most people manage to lead lives of dignity and purpose.*”¹¹⁷ Positive internal attributes such as hope, wisdom, creativity, courage, spirituality, responsibility, and perseverance have been largely ignored.¹¹⁸ Describing children in street situations with words that portray their strengths and potentials does not only help the child’s own view of themselves, but also society’s view on them and helps to promulgate a paradigm shift on the perspective towards children in street situations.

Programs that work with youth have the opportunity to foster their resilience and empower them to be better prepared to cope with past adversity, as well as present and future difficulties, by developing positive mechanisms that capitalize on their healthy character traits and on the utilization of resources available to them. These programs tend to be strengths-based, focusing and building upon the youth’s existing strengths both internally and externally. The

¹¹³ Ibid., 685

¹¹⁴ Taylor, C. F. (2011). *What is the Difference between “Desistance” and “Resilience”? Exploring the Relationship between Two Key Concepts*. *Youth Justice*, 11(3), 221–234. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473225411420528>: 8

¹¹⁵ Born, M., Chevalier, V., & Humblet, I. (1997). *Resilience, desistance and delinquent career of adolescent offenders*. *Journal of Adolescence*, 20(6), 679–694. <https://doi.org/10.1006/jado.1997.0119>: 685

¹¹⁶ Ungar, M. (c2005). *Handbook for working with children and youth : pathways to resilience across cultures and contexts*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications: 71

¹¹⁷ Clauss-Ehlers, C.S., & Weist, M.D. (c2004a). *Community planning to foster resilience in children*. New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers: 186

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 186

strengths-based model is in contrast to the more commonly used deficit-based model that resembles a more medical formula where the problem is diagnosed and a solution is prescribed. Strengths-based models encourage and empower youth to strengthen their resilience and are heavily participation based. These programs tend to be especially keen on listening to youth's voices, creating opportunities, providing resources that fit with their needs, and allowing them to take the lead in their decisions.¹¹⁹

Reintegration is defined as the process or link with the environment that occurs after a period of crisis, isolation or exclusion.¹²⁰ Ramon (2001) uses the term "*social integration*" and defines it as the "*set of processes of socialization and training aimed at achieving a comprehensive personal autonomy and full participation in the community.*"¹²¹ Restoration does not only have to do with abstinence from drugs, but also with social representation, quality of life, social skills and daily routine.¹²² Certain interventions lack reintegration strategies due to a lack of adequate monitoring and social support to prevent relapse after being admitted to a rehabilitation center.¹²³ Interventions have to work with an approach that respects the rights of children and their perspectives, allowing children to participate and express their views, so that they themselves are considered in the programs that provide services to them and in the decisions that affect them.¹²⁴

Even though girls in street situations may have agency, they expressed still needing a point person of support to offer healthy alternatives to lead them out of their detrimental street lifestyle.¹²⁵ Positive references can be street educators whose role is "*to recognize [the children] as agents in the transformation of reality, through a constant dialogue which gives priority to*

¹¹⁹ Ungar, M. (2006). *Strengths-based counseling with at-risk youth*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Corwin Press: 37

¹²⁰ Kuri, Solveig Eréndira Rodríguez & Méndez, Luis Daniel Nute. (2013). *REINSERCIÓN SOCIAL DE USUARIOS DE DROGAS EN REHABILITACIÓN UNA REVISIÓN BIBLIOGRÁFICA*. Revista Electrónica de Psicología Iztacala. 16, (1): 191

¹²¹ Ibid., 191

¹²² Ibid., 191

¹²³ Strehl, T (2010). *Street-Working and Street-Living Children in Peru: Conditions and Current Interventions*. Foundation for International Research on Working Children (IREWOC). Retrieved from: https://www.essex.ac.uk/armedcon/story_id/Street%20Children%20Peru_Strehl_IREWOC_2010.pdf: 96-97

¹²⁴ MAGALHÃES, F (2014). *Children and Adolescents from Street Situations in a Drug Rehabilitation Residential Setting- Experiences and Aspirations*. Retrieved from Email: 58

¹²⁵ Bolton, A. T. (2012). *A Rua e Nossa (The Street is Ours): In Search of Childhood and Rights on the Streets of Guarulhos, Brazil* (Ph.D.). University of California, Riverside, United States -- California. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/1286750588/abstract>: 225

their participation in the whole process.”¹²⁶ This definition presents street children in a positive light as agents of social change. The street educator is not taking credit for the work done but being used as an instrument for the empowerment of these youth. They play a critical role in the girls’ development and that is why this research focused on the responses of street educators in NGOs in Peru and Brazil and their perspective of a successful trajectory for the girls that they have worked with.

¹²⁶ Fahmī, K. (2007). *Beyond the victim : the politics and ethics of empowering Cairo’s Street Children*. New York: American University in Cairo Press: 127

METHODOLOGY

My research explores in a pilot study how street educators, from street-child based NGOs, describe the ideal trajectory for a girl in street situations who has decided to leave the streets and pursue a new walk in life. I aim to contextualize how street educators view the success of girls in street situations. This alignment is being studied in order to analyze how the girls are being prepared to own and respect their rights. This is a small exploratory study which utilizes preliminary analyses using qualitative methods to determine contextually what it means to be doing well in street-child NGOs in Peru and Brazil. I have focused on the case study microcosms of the NGOs I visited in Lima, Peru and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It is not meant to draw generalized conclusions nor to be used for universal application, but rather to compare different methods and strategies within these selected NGOs.

This research is qualitative in nature and underpinned with the phenomenological approach, focusing on the voices of NGO staff and street educators. Last year, I conducted a Fulbright research grant in Lima and was focused on interviewing the street girls themselves. However, this time, I am focusing on the voices and experiences of workers in these NGOs, rather than the girls themselves. All interview subjects were street educators from a street-child NGO. I am studying the perception of street educators on the successful trajectory for a girl in street situations because I want to analyze how their vision is reflected and implemented in helping these girls better realize their rights. Other than interviews, a comprehensive literature review was conducted using various databases, libraries, article searches, networking and NGO resources in order to ground the information collected from my interviews with the existing theories and statistics in the field.

1. Street Educators

According to the World Health Organization's (WHO) Module 2 on the Responsibilities of Street Educators, "*The term street educator applies to anyone who is directly involved with street children and responds to their needs by providing support and care...The street educator must serve as the main link between the children and the community which can provide them with their needs. To do this, a street educator must be in direct contact with street children and*

*must recognize the expanded role and responsibilities of the street educator.”*¹²⁷ Many times street educators are the only responsible adults that a girl in street situations may come into regular contact with and they serve as a support system for the girl to receive guidance. Their responsibilities encompass assessment of the child’s situation, responding to their needs and problems by providing resources, teaching and educating the children by equipping them with necessary skills and attitudes, and finally, engaging in community mobilization and advocacy.¹²⁸ The street educators interviewed in both Peru and Brazil fall under these descriptions and have similar roles and responsibilities in their work in the NGO.

2. Peru

My first stop was Lima, Peru. I arrived in June 2016 and stayed for ten days with the sole purpose of going to Instituto Mundo Libre (IML), as described on page 19, to conduct interviews with the staff there. IML houses street children, who are connected with the use of psychoactive drugs, and rehabilitates them through a comprehensive program of social work, psychology, and vocational workshops. “*Educadoras*,” or street-educators, act as foster mothers to the girls, with special attention to the girls’ rehabilitation within the institute. Due to various transitions within IML, there were four educadoras who rotated shifts within the institute working there during the time period that I conducted the interviews. In addition to the street-educators, I interviewed two workshop professors who have been working with the girls for many years in the area of sewing and seaming. Finally, I also interviewed the social worker, who is also the head of the girls’ institute, and the psychologist, both of whom have daily interactions with the girls. Overall, I collected eight interviews in Lima, with an average length of half an hour per person and close to four pages of interview script per person. All of the workers interviewed in this NGO were female.

Considering that the workers were all very busy, the best strategy was for me to go to IML and stay for nearly the full week, sleeping over and volunteering throughout my time there. I conducted interviews whenever the workers had a moment of free time, such as at night after all the girls were asleep. Most of my time there was spent volunteering and helping out with daily tasks with the girls, which gave me great insight on the work of the educadoras and of the

¹²⁷ World Health Organization. (2016). *Working with Street Children: Module 2: Responsibilities of Street Educators*. Retrieved from http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/66756/3/WHO_MSD_MDP_00.14_Module2.pdf; 1

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 2

behavior and interactions with the girls interned there. Although I was only there for ten days, this was my third time returning to IML, for I had volunteered there in 2013, and then conducted research there for a year with Fulbright in 2014-2015. As a result, all of the workers already knew me and had an established base of trust. It was therefore relatively easier for me to gain access to IML and to ask the staff if they would like to participate in this research and be interviewed. The staff shared their views freely in the interviews and spoke a lot about the difficulties of trying to rehabilitate a girl because most of the problems often lie beyond the individual girl herself. Many explained how they only touch a piece of the puzzle, for full recovery lies on a more complex level that heavily includes the role of the family and community overall.

3. Brazil

In contrast to Peru, I had no connections on the ground in Brazil, and therefore, reserved all of July and August to establish connections with NGOs working there. Throughout Brazil, I had the most correspondence from organization in the city of Rio de Janeiro, which was also of high interest due to the Rio 2016 Olympics in August and the intensified “*street cleanings*” and pressure on street-child NGOs taking place at that time. I therefore decided to hone my search for NGOs within Rio alone. The follow-through is always different once on the ground and therefore my research took on an emergent design with an inductive approach. The first week I arrived, I contacted many organizations and went to universities and umbrella networks that could connect me through snowball sampling with local NGOs that worked with street girls on the ground. Overall, in Brazil I connected with:

1. Centro Internacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Sobre a Infância (CIESPI) as part of Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro
2. Centro de Defesa da Criança e do Adolescente (CEDECA)
3. Associação Brasileira Terra dos Homens (ABTH)
4. Associação Beneficente AMAR
5. Central Única das Favelas (CUFA)
6. Rede Rio Criança
7. SGM Lifeworlds’ Projeto Calçada
8. Street Child United

9. Rede Evangélica Nacional de Ação Social (RENAIS) in Bola na Rede
10. São Martinho
11. Passaporte da Cidadania do Pastoral do Menor
12. Viva Rio
13. Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha
14. Comissão de Defesa dos Direitos Humanos e Cidadania da ALERJ
15. Projeto Meninos e Meninas de Rua (PMMR)

It was a pleasure to have been welcomed with open arms at all organizations and received with such eagerness to help me in this research. I received great information and resources from every organization I visited, however, my role in each one was different. By means of non-probability snowball sampling for recruitment through these social networks, I only interviewed staff from Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha, Associação Beneficente AMAR, and Passaporte da Cidadania do Pastoral do Menor, all of which are described in greater detail on pages 21-22. Those three organizations worked directly with street children, including both boys and girls. I volunteered with the youth and staff. After establishing trust, if staff was willing and able, we went to a private area to conduct the interview. I only interviewed staff who worked daily with these youth, not the administrators who had less contact with them, but the “*educador social*,” or street educators who help orient them. I conducted my first interview in Brazil on July 12th and my final interview on August 16th, completing 12 interviews in total. Like Peru, the interviews in Brazil also lasted about half an hour and added up to about four pages of written interview script per person. However, a major difference was that of the 12 interviewed, only five were females, thereby having more male participants than females in Brazil.

With the other organizations, such as CUFA, RENAIS, Rede Rio Crianca, São Martinho and Projeto Calçada, I did not conduct recorded interviews, but helped out with specific events they were hosting, Child Rights Campaigns taking place, and with volunteer work. I volunteered with the campaigns, “*It’s a Penalty*” and “*Bola Na Rede*” which both aim to protect children from exploitation and abuse at major global sporting events, such as the Olympics in August 2016. In the favelas, or poorer neighborhoods, we conducted prevention events to help children realize if they were in a dangerous situation of trafficking. On the Copacabana touristic beach strip however, we handed out information to passersby to help them be more aware if a child was being trafficked and how best to intervene. The campaign “*Candelaria Nunca Mais*,” brought

together hundreds of people from different organizations, including children in street situations and the families of children killed due to police violence in Rio de Janeiro. The movement is named after the Candelaria Massacre that took place in front of Candelaira church when in 1993, police opened fire where more than 70 people were sleeping, killing 8 children. Therefore, the first night of the campaign was a vigil in front of Candelaria church, uniting all families who lost a child due to police violence. The next day, after an interfaith service at Candelaria, there was a march down the main streets of downtown Rio in memory of those lost and calling for action to better protect children in street situations.

All of these events and campaigns revolved around ECA, the Brazilian Child and Adolescent Statue, of which I had the privilege of celebrating its 26th anniversary with many youth and activists on the steps of Rio's State Legislative Assembly (ALERJ). Many of the events taking place were directly linked with targeting the spotlight on the Olympics, to combat the violation of children's rights during this mega event. My participation in all of these events greatly contributed to my observations of the field and the work being done with street children.

4. Procedure

I had been engaging in conversation with various NGOs in Peru and Brazil throughout the 2015-2016 school year and had received email correspondence from a few. In May 2016, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) in Morningside HRPO Columbia University campus approved my protocol to conduct interviews with human subjects in Peru and Brazil. After that ethical step was cleared, I was ready to present my consent forms to the NGOs I hoped to receive interviews from.

After email correspondence and once on the ground, I visited the NGOs and introduced myself to the person in charge. After that initial meeting, I approached the street educators if given the go-ahead. I discussed my research project and introduced myself and asked if they were interested in participating. We arranged the best time for them to talk and I followed-up with them. When we met, I explained again who I was, the purpose of my visit and my research project. It was then that I gave them a consent form with all of the detailed information and asked if they were still interested in participating (Annex). Once they signed the consent forms, I began recording on my device, and asked the interview questions, further explaining if there was any confusion, and taking notes on relevant and important issues that they mentioned. I focused

on engaging in conversation, as this was a semi-structured interview and long responses to my open-ended questions were common.

Overall, I conducted 8 interviews in Lima and 12 interviews in Rio de Janeiro, 20 total. I was also privileged to have participated in events and volunteering every week which provided a great platform for observation. Most of my volunteering tasks within the NGOs involved interaction with the children, such as serving them lunch, participating in activities like dance and art workshops, and always engaging in small talk and keeping the youth busy while staff worked on other matters. In both countries, language was not a barrier as I spoke both Spanish and Portuguese. In both Peru and Brazil, the staff was very open with me during the interviews, however, the content varied in their descriptions of what consisted of a “*successful trajectory*.” Every worker expressed great interest in seeing the end results of this research.

5. Interviews

The interview was made up of ten questions regarding the participant’s perspective of their work, the successful trajectory of girls in street situations, and the implication of their related human rights. The interview was semi-structured and the two free-listing questions (six & seven) were particularly vital for the purposes of this research, both in bold in the interview below (translated versions can be found in the Annex). The first of the essential questions asked street educators to think of a girl in street situations who was now doing well and to state a few reasons why they thought that was the case. The following question was the reverse, asking them to think of a girl in street situations who was now not doing well and why they thought so. From the expressed “*successful*” trajectories, street educators would backtrack to see what methods and services helped that particular girl reach relative success. Other questions targeted perspectives on resilience, human rights, NGO efficacy, and the overall context of success for girls in street situations.

Semi-Structured Interview: English (Guide for Researcher)

1. What is a street girl?
If needing further clarification: “Describe what it means to be a street girl”
2. What are some adversities that street girls face?

In connection with: What service would help them the most?

3. What is the mission/end goal of your work and this NGO?

If needing further clarification: "I work so that girls _____"

4. If you were in charge of this organization, what would you do the same and/or differently?

5. Describe a success story of your work

If needing further clarification "My work was successful when I was able to _____"

6. Think of a specific girl that was a former street girl and is now doing well (do not share names)

a. List 5 reasons why she is now doing well

7. Think of a specific girl that was a street girl and is now not doing well (do not share names)

a. List 5 reasons why she is not doing well

8. What is resilience?

If needing further clarification "What does resilience mean?"

9. How does your work help to foster resilience?

If needing further clarification "What are the most important factors that contribute to developing resilience?"

10. How does your work help the girls with Human Rights?

-Is there anything you would like to add? (Final Comments)

All interviews were recorded and uploaded on a private folder of my Google Drive. I then re-listened to each interview and typed up the interviewees' responses verbatim, in addition to adding in the notes I had taken during the interview. This added up to about 80 pages of interview transcripts. I later uploaded all of my interviews into the qualitative analysis software Atlas.ti, where I coded the scripts and analyzed by categories. I began by coding the two vital free-listing questions on the girls' trajectory, in order to see what the most common responses were in order to track patterns. After organizing all of the material, I translated the selected quotes in Spanish and Portuguese to English and sorted out the categories based on what was most mentioned which I then inserted in quotes respectively. The main results of these interviews are discussed below.

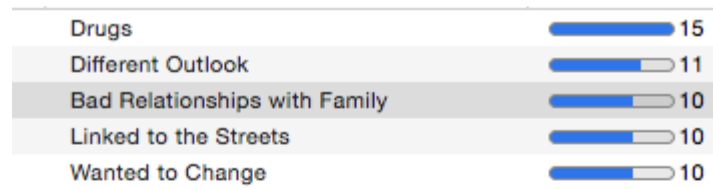
RESULTS

In this qualitative exploratory study, street educators in Peru and Brazil shared many perspectives on the trajectories of girls in street situations. There was more consensus on the problem than on the solution, noting more similarities on what would constitute as a bad trajectory rather than on what constitutes a good one. In fact, there was almost a converse relationship between the answers to question six and seven. The top free-listing responses to the two questions regarding the trajectory of these girls will be further discussed in detail in this section.

The two questions are as follow:

6. Think of a specific girl that was a former street girl and is now doing well
 - a. List 5 reasons why she is now doing well
7. Think of a specific girl that was a street girl and is now not doing well
 - a. List 5 reasons why she is not doing well

The top responses to those two questions from the 20 interviews were:



1. Drugs
2. Different Outlook
3. Bad Relationships with Family
4. Motivation to Change
5. Links to the Street

1. Drugs

The most common response overall on naming a reason as to why the girls' have a bad trajectory, both in Peru and Brazil, was drugs. The influence and use of drugs was the most stated reason as to why a girl would not have a successful trajectory and was stated as a major roadblock in her life. Seven of the eight street educators in Peru mentioned drugs, and eight of the twelve in Brazil mentioned drugs as the reason why a girl did not have a good trajectory.

In Peru, street educators stated that the girls' cravings for drugs would overtake them because they did not learn the proper tools and manner to manage their cravings. This caused them to lead a lifestyle that would further alienate them from fulfilling the rights that they have as a girl in society. Drugs would pull them into a world where their rights would be further violated, whether physically, emotionally, and mentally, and also lure them into violating the rights of others in an effort to maintain their addiction. One street educator in Peru stated that, *"What is important is that they know how to control their emotions, with techniques...so that they can, when confronted with a certain problem, or in a circumstance, be able to solve it and not always turn straight to drugs to forget about their troubles; because drugs are used to escape reality, not to solve issues. Drugs end up leading them to robbery, and worse things like prostitution, you know?"*

In Brazil, the street educators tended to explain by means of descriptive stories. They explained how drugs would facilitate the girls' continual exit from their household and into the streets, especially as adolescents who are prone to become more addicted physically and psychologically. It was also mentioned that, for many of these girls, whose boyfriends were involved in drug trafficking, it was easier for them to continue in their relationship and stay within the cycle that they were in instead of going through the struggles of school and work. This was seen as a chronic conflict. Jo, who clearly stated that he did not want to remain anonymous when quoted for this research, from Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha explains in one example: *"The father of her first son is in the drug trafficking business and, because of that, she remains stuck in the same lifestyle. She does not have to study for anything, because she does not have that pressure so she stays in that dependant relationship. The world of drug trafficking has a great risk, but on the other hand, it has a great financial benefit, making it easy for her and her son. Therefore, she is stuck in that position which is a chronic conflict."* Similar to what was

explained in Peru, drugs would be described as a way that the girls would remain bound to a world excluding them of their rights to school, family, work, and quality life.

Understanding the significance of drugs in these girls' lives is vital in understanding the risks that the girls face and how programs can best structure their strategies to prevent this addiction. An important aspect that was mentioned in the interviews was the girls' resilience, or how well they bounce back after difficult situations. Girls with more resilience were more likely to be doing well and to stay off of drugs due to their desire and motivation to continue moving forward despite setbacks. However, the pull of drugs was extremely strong, especially at that young age and particularly when dealing with more intense drugs other than marijuana, such as crack and cocaine.

The girls' self-esteem also came into play as a factor in their trajectory, relating to the use of drugs and pull to belong to their "*street family*." Especially as females, the interviewees described the position of girls to be extremely vulnerable and that they were in need of more comprehensive help. Self-esteem was constantly mentioned as important to overcome drug addiction and street educators often linked the right to be listened to as the strategy to work with these girls. One street educator in Brazil commented that, "*First, we create a bond with this teen and by means of that bond, we confront the issue of neglect, these girls are not listened to. We have patience to listen to these teens, to their complaints, to their reasons as to why they left their home and why they are using drugs. Therefore, we must listen to these teens and always have our arms wide open to receive them regardless of how deep in the ditch they are. We need to seize the window of opportunity when we can help them so that they can pursue a better life.*"

In general, street educators viewed a girl in street situations as a girl "*who is unprotected from everything...and whose rights are violated.*" In relation to the role of street educators, one stated that, "*We need more people to join us in this work because it is a job that never stops; girls often relapse back into their old lifestyle, so the job is not completed with the work of just one street educator.*" The street educators that were interviewed often referred to their job as requiring a lot of their inner strength because it is often draining due to the roller coaster nature of the ups and downs in the girls' trajectory. They stated wanting more resources to help them as street educators and more help in the field, for there was a large ratio of many girls to one educator. They also stated that they felt that their job was not valued and recognized as much as it should be by society and the government. This aspect will be further discussed in later

sections, however it is important to mention here because the instability in their work is often linked to the girls roller-coaster addiction to return to drugs.

Overall, as an NGO, it is within the personal stories and one-on-ones with the girls that the street educators saw the most change and efficiency in their work. One street educator in Brazil summed it up in this story: *“There are various cases. With one, there was a girl that was very involved in drugs and dependent on drugs and she would talk and complain and explain and curse and I would listen. In one instance, she ran away and was hit in an accident. When I found out, I went to the hospital and she cried and asked for help, only to me because she trusted me. She asked me to contact her mom and her family. She only asked me. She didn’t have anyone else to ask. This is why our role as street educators is important!”*

2. Different Outlook

The second most mentioned free-listing response regarding the girls' trajectory was that it was vital for the girls to have a different outlook in life in order for them to have a better trajectory moving forward. In Peru, all eight of the eight street educators interviewed mentioned this as a reason to why girls do better. In Brazil, only three of the twelve mentioned it, therefore, this was of much more importance in the Peruvian sample. They mainly stated that the girls were doing well because they had goals in life and were pursuing their aspirations. Others stated that it was because the girls recognized their problem and were conscious and aware of their situation. The girls that took the lead in their lives invested their time in more positive things. In Brazil, one stated the example of a girl who changed the way she talked, thought, and reflected upon the streets. He said that her language changed, even her pronunciation, and when he pointed it out to her, she said that it was because she was reading books and trying to get a job. Overall, the girls on the right path are said to have a better vision of their future.

Having a different outlook in life was directly related to the comments on the girl being resilient, for under really difficult circumstances, having resilient qualities were linked to having a more successful trajectory. One street educator in Peru clearly explained, *“Resilience is when a person has many troubling and vulnerable experiences, such as risk and violence, and they are still able to get over the hurdles in life. They recognize and acknowledge these things as part of their story, and are able to live a good life despite all of that, you know? They are able to construct things and not stay stuck in the story of suffering, for they are stronger than that.”* Another street educator reaffirmed that point stating that, *“Resilience is that, despite the difficulties that a person may experience, they are able to push forward and fight to reach their positive goals in life; that despite the things they lacked, they still have every intention in pushing forward and to continue fighting.”* Resilience is indeed an important instrument in having a different outlook in life, *“Even though there are adverse situations that one can be experiencing in context, it is the capacity to continue forward despite all of the forces pushing against you.”*

In regards to resilience, if girls move forward despite difficult circumstances, they had an outlook and perspective that helped them to have a better trajectory in life, the change starting from the inside out. Therefore, since the change occurs internally first, the girls' self-esteem is essential in order for the girl to internalize a different outlook and vision in their life. Street

educators stressed self-esteem as an instrument within the girls that enables them to see life in a different way and grasp that different outlook. One street educator in Brazil stated that, *“I think they have to value themselves and like themselves. She has to accept the way that she is, and how she is, with all of the characteristics that God gave her; whether she is fat, thin, black, white, etc. Therefore, this work that we do is internal. We try and help the girls have joy and the will: we help them to want good things for themselves and to have that positive thinking; I think it is very important for their will to grow.”* As is mentioned in the quote above, these issues are closely tied to gender topics and the experiences that many of the girls have had as a result of their gender, whether it be prostitution, sexual violence, motherhood, or homosexuality. The facade of topics ranges and the street educators are experts on how to reconcile the girl's identity, boost their self-esteem and have that motivation translate into a different outlook.

Working on the girls' self-esteem is working on the girls' identity and worth, knowing their rights and value in society. This work is then translated into the girls' rightful place as a citizen in that society as one street educator in Brazil stated, *“Our main mission is to rescue the adolescent, to strengthen their self-esteem, their citizenship regarding their rights. We teach them, as well, the responsibilities that they have. Therefore, the main mission is to reestablish their rights as citizens.”*

In Peru, street educators stated that they work to help the girls know and learn how to exercise their rights by means of expressing themselves and having their voices heard. It is the right of the girls to be listened to and from that point, street educators work together in guiding the girls to have a better outlook for their lives: *“It is important for the girls to be listened to and to be heard, for them to participate in their own development. It is important that they participate as actors in their change because they need to learn the tools that they need in order to keep moving ahead in life.”* She later continued, stating that, *“The girls' opinion is what is important...Seeing their opinion, I can advise them and help them walk the path that I think is best in relation to that. For example, if their opinion is that they don't need to make their beds every day, they need to realize that as a consequence that brings bugs. They are humans worthy of not sleeping in bug-infested beds and, therefore, they learn their rights and responsibilities through this process of sharing their opinions.”*

3. Bad Relationships with the Family

The next most stated reason was mentioned ten times overall, tied with the same number of mentions as the following two categories. Bad relationships with the family dominated as a response to question seven, as a reason to why the girls were not on a good trajectory. Literature also supports this claim; youth leave the home and turn to the streets primarily due to bad relationships with the family.

In both Peru and Brazil, five street educators mentioned this reason. In Peru, street educators referred to the family as very dysfunctional and lacking knowledge, therefore not knowing how to properly raise and teach “*a good citizen.*” Others mentioned that the family has rejected the girl and it is difficult for her to overcome that sense of rejection. In Brazil, street educators mentioned domestic violence and stressed the abuse that takes place within the family. It is difficult for the girls to have a good trajectory if there is such brokenness in their family environment. Coming from broken families, many of these girls have ingrained norms and mental structures that keep them in a cyclic street-culture situation. One street educator in Brazil stated, “*Family comes first, because the family is the base....the family really makes a very big difference in the child’s and adolescent’s head... This is where they first learn respect, starting with respect at home and then at school, with the teacher. All of this work with the youth, is a multidisciplinary work because family is key.*”

Street educators often attribute the trajectory and progress of the girl to her social context and her family. One street educator in Peru states, “*She is not well because of the environment where she grew up, the family circumstances. They lack basic principles and don’t know how to raise a child. They did not give her the basic right of being loved, schooling, nutrition, and shelter.*” Another street educator in Peru stated, “*I think that she is not well because of her family. She always felt rejected by her family and was not able to overcome the trauma she and her family experienced. That is the most important reason.*” This familial context is emphasized in both Peru and Brazil, “*She never learned to dominate her emotional state. She always felt alone; she did not feel the support of her family. They did not support her follow-up and continued growth. If there is no familial support, there is nothing for her to lean on.*”

As stated in literature, bad relationships with the family are often part of the reason as to why girls leave the home and begin their street life. There is brokenness in her self-image, self-

worth, and self-esteem and therefore there is a need for her to understand her rights and identity, as a female who is resilient and not as what society has ingrained in her to be. Since the families never instilled good values, many of the girls come distraught, looking for love in areas where they will not find it and become evermore confused about what love truly is. It is most important to work on these girls' self-esteem, for the street educators state that the girls don't "*feel loved, or worthy, or like anything.*" As an organization, street educators state that they fail when the girls do not feel that they are valued, when "*she feels like she does not belong to anything,*" or "*she never was able to have a good self-esteem, she always felt like the odd-one out. I think that, despite all of the work that we did, we never were able to have her believe in herself.*"

Street educators stated that the reconstructive work that they do leads back to reconnecting these girls to their families and fixing broken relationships. One street educator in Brazil stated, "*Our job is to have them realize their rights as rightful citizens and also to show them what their responsibilities as citizens are...If she has the right to live with her family, then our work would be to reestablish those links and reconstruct those bonds with the family, with the society and with their school. We try to facilitate that return for them, to their homes. All that encompasses the social, educational, health, and familial is very important. If the relationship with their family is broken, I ask them, 'who do they think loves them the most?' and most answer their mothers. Others respond that their mother prefers their step-father, and so, we work through those issues with them.*" This reconstruction of their social unit with the family helps the girls have the support that they may need to pursue a better trajectory in school and work life. In addition, this reconstruction also gives her a boost of hope, love, and self-esteem that helps in their resilience to continue to push forward despite adversity. If the girls reestablish better relationships in their broken and dysfunctional homes, they are more likely to have a better trajectory. That is why much of the work with the girls must involve the family.

In Peru, it was often mentioned that working with girls in street situations is only scratching the surface of the problem, for after the girls change, they return back to the same harmful contexts in their families. One street educator in Peru expanded on this, stating that the family was the root of the troubles that led the girls to the streets; "*I think that here, the basis of this, the origin, is the family. It is the family because it is not well structured; it does not have everything that is necessary to procreate and to nurture their children. I think that most of the people are coming from extreme poverty, and the lack of education is alarming!*"

In Brazil, street educators often went beyond discussing the problem of the family unit and into discussing the systemic problems within the government, making this issue even greater in its scope and complexity. They called on the rights and responsibilities of the state for these girls, for even if the street educators do all that they can, the world is still standing against the girls' successes and there is a need for more comprehensive help.

Working on the girls' resilience is vital because the road to recovery is very bumpy, often described as a roller coaster. However, the street educators described this roller coaster to progressively have shorter lows and shorter highs and reach a middle ground of more stability after a lot of trial and error. Jo, from the NGO Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha, elaborates on this stating that, *"The roller coasters will always exist, however, the great significance in our work is when the size of these mountains begins to decrease. The ups and downs will always be there in life, however, the work is to diminish the intensity of those highs and lows, and it is hard work, but not impossible..."*

The main rights that these girls have been deprived of stem from their relationship with their family. Beyond other rights stated such as the right to health, education, or play, street educators agreed that the most important rights stemmed from love. This basic need of love and affection is often lacking in their lives and street educators work on this most pressing need; *"It is most important to work on affection because many of these children come from families where there was a great absence. There existed was lack of affection and love, causing emotional instability."*

Following the first and most important right, love, is the right to be heard and listened to. This right was mentioned frequently across various contexts, especially when it came to neglect, as they had been deprived of the right to be heard. A street educator in Peru agreed, stating the importance of having a strong social network where they can be heard and supported: *"We need people that they can rely on. Right now, I arrive at work and all of the girls run to me for attention. So the ideal would be that if we have 20 girls, there would be at least five adults. I believe that psychology includes the internal cognitive emotional part and the professional therapy is important, but many of these girls come from a background where professional psychological therapy is not available. But what they do have in their environment is each other, their neighbors, friends, a society that lives to help each other. The true ideal world would be that they stay with their families who also receive therapy, because much follow-up has to do*

with the family since many times the family is in worse condition and sicker than their child who is here.”

4. Motivation to Change

Ten of the 20 street educators interviewed also referred to the girls' desire to change as a top reason to why they thought a girl in street situations had a good trajectory. In Peru, they mentioned the girls' own motivation to move forward and make wise decisions. One stated, "*Of the 100% change, she gave 90% of the effort.*" In Brazil, they mentioned that when the girls showed positive signs to want to change the route of their lives, they were more likely to have a better trajectory. Although motivation to change seems very close to the category of having a different outlook, the two are different because the first is based on desires whereas the latter is focused on perspectives. Motivation comes before a different outlook, which leads to change.

The first step in going towards a better life trajectory was for the girls to show the motivation to have change in their lives and not be complacent and stuck in their situations. Street educators described hope as the first step. One in Brazil stated, "*We all have the right to life, however many of these girls are shot just for living on the streets. We all have the right to affection. I don't know if this is written in the constitution, but I think that we all have the right to have a hope, no one can negate you from having hope, love and affection.*" Another stated the importance of hope that manifests itself into a motivation: "*I think that before society begins to judge those who live on the streets, they should try to understand why they are here. How they got to the streets, because it is very likely that many of them simply were born on the streets, where their mother was. I think that it is something that many people forget. Today in age, many of their hopes are snatched from them. I think that one of the most essential rights is the right to having a hope. I think that this work is very significant because many times people only act off of judgments when they don't know the full story behind it and that is why I am happy that you are doing this research.*"

The opposite, no motivation, is usually an indicator of a bad trajectory. A street educator in Peru illustrates this point when she said, "*She didn't have that spirit within her to move ahead, to want to keep pushing forward.*" Another street educator stated, "*Today for some reason she is unemployed and has no job and no desires or will for life. She thinks that she is not capable of anything.*" Yet again, "*She is missing faith, missing hope.*" This lack of motivation translates into the girls' own self-identity and what they do in life. One street educator in Peru reflected that, "*She did not analyze herself, what she could do with her life. She did not project her life and*

what she could be doing.” Motivation is indeed the key to change, “They need to be open to change, to welcome change. That is one of the most primordial things, to have the attitude of putting effort, of putting everything on your part to be able to change. If they do not put that, the words, or the things we say, will go down the drain.”

Resilience was highly linked to the motivation to change. As street educators spoke of the girls’ motivation, it was often linked to the girls’ resilience to want to keep moving forward and not be drowned in their circumstances. One street educator in Brazil defines it as, *“To have fallen very very low, have absolutely nothing, but despite all of that, to still have the capacity to, after the hard fall, get back up and from your own mustered up strength, be able to come out from a difficult situation, no matter how unfavorable and sad. That is a power that we have as humans.”*

Resilience arose as a pattern highly mentioned in all parts of the interviews as a main ingredient in continually being motivated to change. One street educator in Peru shared her perspective that if change was difficult for the regular adult, then how much more so for the girls, and how much greater an accomplishment it is for them to have that motivation and drive to change; *“I think that, even those who aren’t addicted to drugs, that even they have their constant daily battles. And so these girls, despite the huge mountains that they have faced, continue to push forward, despite the setbacks, the financial difficulties, the lack of affection, and we can say that they are relatively stable. Even in all of that muck, they continue to push forward. This could be any one of our daughters, a girl hidden in the darkness. I like that when I speak to them, I see something more and I want to help them reach their potential.”*

In addition to resilience, ambition sparks motivation to work and desire change. One street educator in Brazil shared that, *“Ambition is important, you need to want to do things better, look for things for yourself to do better and if she is ambitious, even if it is to have the best clothes or bike, she will work hard for that and that is a great sign. Some people think that it is bad to be ambitious but I think that it is a great thing.”* Another street educator in Brazil built upon the pros of being ambitious when he shared how it was important to see progress in their motivations; *“To see qualities in them that they are focused on receiving help so that they can walk a better path. For example by returning to school and finding work. It is good to see them work hard to pursue their studies and in their job making money. A reality of our society is that*

we go to the job market early, unfortunately. But, in that, we can still help them achieve their dreams.”

In addition to resilience and ambition, the girls’ motivation is also linked to her self-esteem, how they view themselves and value themselves and therefore her desire to have a better life, to be deserving of more and better. As one street educator in Peru explained, *“I think that when they come, they come with very low self-esteem and we work to increase that. That regardless of their experiences in this world, they can rise above. For themselves or for others, that they can believe that they can be more, be all that they dream of being and from there we can work out the road to their solutions and recuperation. But if they do not love themselves, if they do not have esteem for and respect for themselves, they won’t think or believe that they can do good things and they won’t do it, right?”* In addition, for girls, the motivation to change and have a better trajectory was often linked to her family or to topics linked to girls, such as being a new mother. Street educators work to enhance this motivation, however, they often speak of burnout due to the constant trials of wanting to ignite a motivation that goes beyond just a desire and into a more concrete action leading to change.

Street educators play a huge role in this process of lighting a flame of motivation, for they help to mold and direct perspectives. They expressed that although it is difficult, it is worth it. One street educator in Brazil stated, *“This process that we work with the street girls is a very draining one where you need to have a lot of patience and things do not occur fast. This type of change takes time. She may take two steps forward and then one step backwards. Yet, we have to always be by their side through it all and encourage them to keep pushing forward, giving them positive energies. It is a full and extensive job, but once you see the fruits of all of this effort, it is beyond marvelous! When a teen leaves the streets and works and returns to her family or creates her own family and has a higher self-esteem, all of that is beyond important, do you understand?”*

Another street educator in Brazil stated that, *“What is most important is the will to change, that they come to us with the desire to change, to leave the situation they find themselves in. And then they begin to have interests in doing something better. Some return to school and study, some return to their families or build their own families and understand what it means to have a healthy family environment. It is possible to leave the streets. At other times there are girls that cannot return to their communities because they committed a crime or they crossed a*

line or are being hunted by a trafficker and can only return back to her community when she is authorized. It helps to have her change her desires and want to leave her street situation.” A street educator in Peru summed it up nicely when she said, “If there is no motivation, there is nothing...and not just family motivation. It is a spiritual question, within herself. The values that were lost within her, that is more important than anything else.”

5. Links to the Street

Ten street educators agreed that a reason as to why a girl is not on a good trajectory is because of her strong links to the street, five stated this in Peru and five in Brazil. This link is beyond just physical and material, but also heavily psychological and emotional as well, for the girls' bondage is within their hearts and minds. In Peru, they mention that the girl exposes herself to stimuli that reawakens their attraction and links to the streets, whether it be through Facebook, being out on the streets after dark, or certain peer influences that lead them back to the same lifestyle. One street educator in Brazil illustrated those deep links, "*...when they like the street, it gets harder to get out of the street, it's a school. The street is a school where you are often challenged on how to best manage risky situations of survival; knowing how to get food, knowing where to take a shower, where to change clothes, or to steal. And so the street leads girls deeper into its abyss, tricking them into believing certain norms that even when they have the possibility to return home, they don't know why they find themselves addicted to the streets.*"

The strong links to the streets are the parts that street educators state are the most difficult to shake off of the girls, they are like chains that the girls need to be liberated from. They encompass the mental, emotional, physical, social and even spiritual chains that link them to the street and it is hard to undo those connections. This is related to the burnout that street educators express feeling in their work and why there is a need for so much more comprehensive help. The girls usually come with strings attached on all corners and all aspects of life, not just material needs or psychological addictions to drugs, but deeper links and attachments that go to the core of our human nature, searching for a sense of belonging or the desire for love and affection, often as a result of the broken and dysfunctional families from which they come. The links to the street are also greatly related to their gender, being females, whose desire to be "*loved*" keeps them attached to their boyfriends and sometimes in harmful situations such as prostitution. This confusion and need to be "*loved*" runs deep and continues in a cyclic way, especially if the girl becomes pregnant on the streets.

Links to the street are formed in critical stages of their adolescent development of identity. One street educator in Brazil stated that, "*they lose much of this ritual rite of passage, you know? This rite of passage from childhood to adolescence, from adolescence to the adult stage, I think that they crossed directly from childhood to an adult, you know? They have to deal*

with many risks, many vulnerabilities...” The street socialization involves a culture of immediacy where they do not practice delayed gratification. Certain characteristics and norms learned from being on the streets and having to fend for themselves at such an early age can become blocks that prevent them from socializing well as they become “adults” making reintegration much more difficult. The same street educator in Brazil elaborated that, *“For them, everything is immediate, but we have to remain calm when they demand an immediate lifestyle, for we must understand that they skipped their rites of passage and were thrust into adulthood...their limits are very fragile.”*

In addition to characteristic-links of sharing similar street culture and norms, another street educator discussed social links that call a girl back to the streets. Some families do not put limits to how much their girl engages with the streets and it soon becomes a social addiction as one street educator in Brazil explained; *“In reality, this female liberty is making the girls believe that they are more free, more independent, and in my opinion, it is now starting at an earlier age. The girls are younger and so later on, it becomes more difficult for their parents to tell them what to do and put limits on their lifestyle.”* Another in Peru echoes this process, *“They go out into the street because they are looking for what they lack in their homes which is often based on a lack of communication. They have freedom and that excessive freedom turns into having no rules. They have so much freedom and do not know how to handle it; but that is a question of the family culture...”*

In the more frequent cases, girls choose to be on the streets more so than the home because they are not treated well at home. One girl had bad relations with her mother and much better relations with people in the streets; they therefore often returned to the streets where they felt more at home. They used the street as her refuge. In those situations where the link to the street is so strong, sometimes the street educators describe a sense of discouragement, that it does not matter what they say or do, for the girl chooses to return to the streets.

The street educators call for more comprehensive help and for a home that houses the girls day and night and provides attention to each one of these areas and links to the street so that the girl is not pulled back to what consumes her on the streets. A successful trajectory is related to how well a girl manages to undo herself from such links; through growing her motivation to change and possessing a different outlook in her life, or in other words, being able to dream for something better and being able to see her life outside of the bubble of the street life that she is

engulfed in. That is the street educators' role, but many times they express feeling overpowered by all of the other forces that call and tug for the girls' attention. Many of the links to the streets are in direct relation to the girls' role as a female, from her sexuality to her beauty. Therefore, working on self-esteem is once again heavily emphasized as a starting point in order to go towards a successful trajectory, unlinked to their unhealthy street connections.

Patterns

In addition to the top five free-listing responses to the two main trajectory questions, there were certain patterns throughout all interviews that are important to discuss. As values, resilience and self-love were top patterns in terms of what street educators discussed and repeatedly emphasized as important for a good trajectory. Beyond those values, three more factors were discussed extensively in regards to a girl's successful trajectory and all are related to the final category of "*Links to the Street*": Female Position, Street Educators Role, and Need for More Comprehensive Help.

A. Females

Many of the links and the problems that girls in street situations face have to do with the fact that she is a female, and therefore, the psychosocial bonds and links that are made are also related to her female role. It therefore requires a different outlook and methodology than when dealing with boys in street situations who may have different links to the streets. One Brazilian street educator states that the issues for girls are so complex that they require their own laws and public policy: "*Here in Brazil, there should be public policy specifically for street girls, not just for women or for the homeless but specifically for street girls and professionals for them. The girls are now seeking protection from the wrong people, from boyfriends or from traffickers and prostitution and that protection ends up hurting them more in the end. There are girls here that have boyfriends and at lunch you can see that these girls are not allowed to make eye contact with anyone and so they are under the control of their boyfriends and not free. They can be exploited and used for money, taking away her worth as a human being. Therefore, specific public policy is needed for these girls, which currently does not exist.*"

It is clearly stated repeatedly that the girls are in a worse-off situation than the boys. Another street educator in Brazil stated that, "*There is a preconception towards the girls, in my opinion, the girls are a lot more vulnerable than the boys. First of all, she is on the streets, and to be there she has to be a lot stronger than the boys because the situations that she confronts and what she experiences, I think that she suffers a lot more than the boys.*" In both countries this fact was stressed, "*The greatest difficulty for a street girl is first and foremost the fact that she is a girl. That already brings a plethora of adversity. The number and quantity of girls on the*

streets is less than that of boys on the streets, which is also a difficulty that they face. The abuse they experience is a lot greater for the girls, they suffer a lot more than the boys, for example sexual abuse, if they are in a group they are always the first to be forced to do something.” Therefore, the links are specific to the case of girls in street situations rather than boys; it is not the same work or topics that street educators focus on with girls and boys because they have different lived experiences.

The fact that these girls are in their teens makes it more difficult for them because they are in the process of hormonal, bodily and psychological changes and the establishment of their identity. One street educator in Peru stated that, *“The majority of girls here have their sexual state very high because it was awakened at such a young age. We need a lot of psychological help because they are also in a stage where the adolescent body is changing and hormones are awakened and sometimes the girls think that certain feelings are love, but their whole concept and structure of love has been messed up since before. When she is of age and goes out looking for love, she only does what she has learned in her lifetime and it is a long process to undue that early learning of what love is and there is a lot of therapy and psychology that needs to be done to undue and redo certain links. Once she leaves the organizations she needs a lot of follow-up in order not to return to those mental structures that her context had ingrained within her.”*

Street educators described some of the self-defense tactics that girls engaged in and that link them even further to the streets, as it was a part of their identity-development and character formation on how they would like to be known, either as a leader of a group, a male, or someone’s girlfriend. A street educator in Brazil explains further, *“The girl has no assurance on the streets, and so to be better protected, she either becomes homosexual and depicts the characteristics of a boy, or she finds a boy to latch onto for protection and security because she will suffer less harm and violence under him. Because in reality, everyone is going to want to take advantage of her and so she has to choose the lesser of two evils, what kind of violence she is willing to endure.”*

It is on the streets where many of the norms and values get skewed as they figure out how best to survive, *“During this time on the streets, many of them either become prostitutes or lesbians as a form of protection.”* It is in this critical time period and process of identity development that it is difficult to undo certain links. One street educator in Brazil explains, *“Girls on the streets often display male characteristics as a way of protecting themselves. Many*

also decide to stay with a boy who is strong and can protect them, one who is a leader and/or is respected within the community. Violence is very big for the girls; they often run away from that in their own families, communities and streets. Many of them suffer from great discrimination. They consider the boys to be privileged in comparison to the girls who are always discriminated against. They are less valued, less loved, and they need more help.”

According to the street educators in both countries, some of the specific abuses that girls in street situations encounter are, *“Violence, not just physical aggression, but also sexual and psychological and humiliation. This is experienced a lot more for the girls. People say that a street girl does not deserve anything and they mistreat her and she suffers sexual violence and the girls may not even perceive that they are being attacked because they are so used to it. Their bodies become a commodity, in order to get food, or more drugs, or for protection from more violence. Some girls think that violence is just physical, but they experience so much more than that.”*

The role of females in society heavily influences the positions that these girls are in and is described as very hopeless, especially in regards to values. One street educator in Peru stressed the disadvantaged position females are in by relating it to a loss of values in society overall: *“I would ask all people who work in organizations like these to understand that even if we have a lot of laws protecting women, for those girls that are in total abandonment, they are more vulnerable. We have the right to vote, to work, but no, those are all lies because the discrimination is deep-seated and still exists and it always will. But we have to realize, us being women, is that we can still achieve many things. We can educate ourselves and educate our children and we are the example for these children. Even though there is no official school on how to be good parents, we do have the responsibility to be a human that can be productive in this society. Nobody respects you in this society, a pregnant woman gets on the bus and no one gets up, same with the elderly. We are losing our values and these organizations are just filling up with more and more street girls. It’s not meant to just be someplace that gets filled, but that truly helps; the fact that they are in an organization is not what makes the difference because the girls continue to confront various violations. Many of them come here thinking it is punishment for them, but they need to change their perspective and outlook on the purpose of these organizations. It is not a dumping ground for children abandoned by their parents. Not only is this work on our part as a team, but also with the family. It doesn't matter how poor she is,*

because there are poor people that are very happy. The misery here is in values, that many households lack values and the children are not worth anything to them and they are vulnerable and they loose communication and attention to their children...We need more quality time, more values instilled in these youth. It is not quantity but quality. Parents need to know their children and show them affection and instill loving values. The girls come here thinking that love is money, that everything is conditional. If we truly work within them and see all of what they have within, we see how hurt she is, her whole life is like that, give and take, and how difficult it has been to survive. We all know the effort it takes, but sometimes all these means do not reach them.”

It is unfortunate that the accumulated links that girls in street situations have prove to be a huge roadblock in order to change their trajectory. Street educators constantly mentioned these links and the ways they worked to re-link them to positive and healthy sources. However, the work is strenuous and demands a lot of time, effort, and collaboration. In addition, there is a need, on a greater scope, for cultural and societal respect for females.

B. Street Educators

Many times, the street is the norm for these girls, and so changing that perspective goes deep into the girls’ history and experiences in life. One street educator in Brazil explained this case where a girl stated that, *“Shelter and a roof over her head was never something that she sought. She feels like a prisoner within walls, she always lived outdoors and slept with her eyes fixed on the stars.”* For these teens that are now acquiring their stable identity, life on the streets has many times become an expression of their inner identity and how they see themselves and behave; *“Girls in moral abandonment that live the majority of their lives on the streets adopt the same street characteristics and stay very little within the household, because their life is on the streets and the majority live on the streets and acquire the attitudes on the streets and smoke, getting involved with a new lifestyle of drugs, and gangs, prostitution, theft, criminal behavior, begging, etc... the street culture.”*

The street educators that work with the girls start off by working on the girls’ internal state and self-worth, making them know herself as a new identity not defined by the streets, but understanding her position as a rightful citizen, not just as a sad statistic that is destined to have a street life. In the words of a street educator in Brazil, *“First of all we all have the right to life, to*

live, to be respected and treated as an equal in this society, to recognize one another as the person that we are. We try to value that by all means, but we know that this right is something that occurs within our organization, but out in society they do not see these girls as we do.” Street educators often begin this process of undoing damaging links to the street by means of working on the girls’ self-esteem. *“The principal objective is to rescue these girls, understand their situation, and help them raise their own self-esteem, since they have always been rejected, more than boys. This should happen in order for them to develop a positive lifestyle.”*

The work with these girls is a constant one that requires a lot of follow-through and continued presence because change for a long-term trajectory cannot be captured in a one-shot deal from a service that she received in a tumultuous time in her life. One street educator in Peru describes the need for constant follow-up stating, *“To begin with, I will tell you that rehabilitation is constant day by day. There is no rehabilitation that tells you, ‘alrighty, you are good to go, you will never again relapse.’ No, rehabilitation for any individual, especially for girls, is a constant thing until their last dying breath. So I can tell you that I have met girls that are doing relatively well day by day, they are stable but they still feel temptations. For example, I know of a girl who is still mobilized and with a desire to go because she is relying more on her friendships, which most are in drugs and on the streets. She seems unstable even though it is just the pressure she feels to go out with her friends...but when she stays home, she does well.”*

No matter how much attention and services these girls receive, even with follow-up, sometimes the links to the streets overpower them and they are not strong enough to withstand the forces pulling and fighting for their attention and loyalty. One street educator in Peru stated that, *“One of the girls finished the full program and we all thought that she was ready to go out into the world and do well, but in a few months, she returned to all the things that she had left. She went right back into the same street situation, alcohol and sex, and it was all too close to her.”* The street educators have a lot of passion and desire to help, but see the limits of their work when so many links are keeping these girls in bondage to the streets and so much more work is needed on each soul. Another street educator in Peru stated, *“I hope that God gives us the ability to help these girls push through, I think it is possible, but with a few of the girls, I honestly have no idea how to help them. We can only give them a grain of salt, one more grain and hope. The president of our organization works day and night and I hope that it is not in vain.”*

Jo, from Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha, describes his inner battle in the work that is done to undo the strong links the girls have to the streets, *“In this type of job, we have many successful cases but we have also had many more unsuccessful cases. The successful cases, they come from the principle that we believed it was possible to achieve this work. And in the more frequent unsuccessful cases, they are based off the principle that we tried everything we could, but the enemy was stronger than we were.”* A street educator in Peru echoes his words, *“Simply put, this job is difficult because many times we work a lot and it gives no result, no outcome. That can be frustrating, but you need to have the will to continue pushing forward despite those setbacks because there is always another girl who needs help and maybe it’ll work with her, right? Because many times girls leave well and then suddenly, what happened? That has a lot to do with their context, the context is very important.”*

Street educators voiced their opinion and made it very clear that the work that they do is of vital importance but not valued or invested in that way. One street educator in Brazil spoke up stating, *“It is important to discuss the significance of our work as street educators and how we need so many more resources because this is a profession that is not given its rightful-value and it is very difficult to do, yet very important.”* One street educator in Brazil explains the different aspects that go into their day-to-day, *“accompanying the children, listening to them, giving them counsel, orienting their walk and supporting them constantly.”*

Other street educators feel unappreciated and that the organizations focus on the trivial details rather than on the girls as a whole. *“In comparison to the workers, the volunteers don’t know why that girl spent a sleepless night and her problems and nightmares of the past and that what goes on during the day frustrates her and that she is looking for a second to escape and cut herself and do something to call for attention. We need more workers, those things kill my will and efforts because as humans we need to hear, “Hey, good job, you moved one step ahead, little by little,” so that they can see and move forward. Many times I ask that of others, to encourage the girls, and I know that my coworkers do the best that they can, same as I do, but there is still not enough of that. Despite that it is asked for, it does not happen and that is the truth and that hurts me because the girls are humans just like us and they feel things. Even me as an adult, I can manage myself, I am well, I am oriented, but I feel the lack of being acknowledged, so imagine this young girl with just a few years of age who is just now learning and understanding the world, living an accelerated life that she was thrust into, realizing her mistakes and that you*

have to be by her side giving her high fives...We need more workers to pour into encouraging these girls and also our work needs to be appreciated and valued more.”

The work is difficult and more help is needed. A street educator in Peru stated that the NGO where they work *“is not a bubble. These girls have lived with their husbands and now we are going to prohibit them from seeing men? Education liberates you, as well as having faith in God, in believing in things that alone you would not achieve...the work is nice but we do not have enough resources right now, and so the work has become a heavy burden.”* The work requires a lot of undivided attention and focus, but there are not enough people working in this field. Another street educator in Peru states a case where, *“For example there was a girl who would always be in crisis and we would work together constantly and after her crisis we would discuss it for her to reflect on how to change things for the better. We put in practice all of the exercises that she had learned that would constantly help her to diminish her anxiety and the delusion you get when you are totally consumed by your traumas. The follow-up, our constant company is very important for their growth, but unfortunately it becomes almost impossible when there are so few of us doing this job, it is impossible for one of us to do it all.”* There are many kinks and specific details that need to be worked on and sorted through with each girl that takes a lot of time, energy, effort, and dedication to rearrange such links.

The street educators all had fond memories of working with the girls, despite all of the struggles and ups and downs. Below is a snippet of one of the many elaborated stories shared of this work.

The story of Lua, by Jo from Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha
(name changed to protect identity of girl)

“A girl named Lua lived in the street and we began to work with her in the street. She was a girl who used drugs, she also had her prostitution relationship with the boys and also with other street people in order to survive. And as we began to work with her going to the street every day and meeting with her, we began to see potential in Lua as an artist. There, we began to work on this with her. She was a girl who had a lot of talent in trapeze and we began to help her develop this skill ... We brought Lua here to reinforce what we had already started in the street, and during this process she started to reduce her drug intake, she spent less time on the streets, and

she was practically leaving everything she knew in order to come to us. So I understood that the fact that she spent eight hours with us already made a big difference in her dynamics on the street. She already was spending eight hours of her day off of the street and away from drugs, away from other illicit activities. And that was very good for her because it helped her to begin to notice this difference when she was out on the streets from when she was off of the street...the difference from living in the middle of other adolescents of her age who were leading different lives versus her new relationship with us, so this was very cool. So the main pedagogy of our NGO was helping her to create a new story of her life. And then, in the story she was making of her life, she discovered herself as an artist and then she started not wanting to go to the streets anymore and instead coming to us in this process...Nowadays Lua is no longer living in the streets, but leads a life as a dignified and respected woman, wife, and mother. So her past that linked her to the streets, although still present in her memory, no longer pulls on her heart and mind. She won't forget it because it is part of her story, but this desire to go to the street, to live in the street, to continue in the street, in her heart no longer exists. As long as that is no longer in your heart anymore, you have, in fact, overcome it. It is so cool that she has indeed overcome this! That is what our mission is all about. It may take a long time, but that is our commitment to help them in this process. Even though being recognized for this job is cool, what really motivates us is the fact that change is indeed possible."

C. Need for more Comprehensive Help

The solutions that most street educators propose are related to their over-encompassing tasks and responsibilities, or the need for more help. This street educator in Peru sums it up well stating that, *"We do not have as many resources as we require. Sometimes girls are seen for about two hours and then their session is done, that is nothing for them! With more psychologists it would build up their rehabilitation and they would learn that it is worth the effort of putting in all of themselves in this battle to become a new person and move forward. With more psychologists, the strategies they could learn would help them overcome their issues. Everyone can benefit from more psychological services, including us, the workers. We all have problems and we all have tools, sometimes hidden, that we can use to overcome difficulties. This work as counselors and advisors for the girls is a huge job, but it is a job done as a team. Much of our work depends on the permanence and constancy that the girls are able to receive. She needs that*

constant encouragement every step of the way, to be able to count on people to be with her. It would be the ideal example if a girl arrives to the organization and immediately everyone is attending to her needs; so it would be ideal to have more street educators working here... ”

Many street educators suggested that they would recommend having a home just for the girls, a comprehensive shelter exclusively for the girls. One street educator in Brazil stated that, *“I think that we have a cool methodology and the way that we work is good, but I would just open a home just for the girls, especially for the girls that already have children of their own and that are living on the streets because they cannot stay at home and are not welcome in their communities. When we send the girls to go to a shelter they realize that they function under different rules and have a different methodology and of course, every organization is different, but the thing is that we have an opportunity to change the lives of the youth that we already have. We have a home for the boys but not for the girls, I think we should open one for the girls.”*

It is important to have a comprehensive approach given the overburdening tasks that street educators have and the need for more resources in this area. Various street educators in Brazil shared proposals on having a center available to attend all of the girls needs in one. One elaborated sharing that, *“If I had the financial power, I would try to alleviate the hurt of the teens and youth and would open a republic where they would be cared for and have shelter in addition to a psychologist, doctors and vocational training and tutoring for school. A republic is more open and more comprehensive and complete than what mere shelter can do.”*

Other street educators made sure to point out the importance to break feminine stereotypes and give girls the comprehensive and open care and attention they need to grow and flourish as productive citizens. One street educator in Brazil shared that, *“If I were the boss of this organization, I would make a house just for the girls where they would be cared for and they could stay, not just during the day, but sleep there, live there as if it were their home. It would be a more integral living space. They would receive services in all areas, such as in health, education, vocational training and many other things. We have shelters right now where they are attended to...but my critique is that those places do not grant the girl a listening ear to be able to give her the attention that she needs in all of her complexities. Every girl has the capacity to learn and they shouldn't judge that just because she is a girl that she needs to be a cook and go into vocational training for the culinary arts. They need to have the freedom to explore all fields where they could work and contribute to this society. This would develop and strengthen the*

potential that they already have, the world needs to realize this, that there are girls that want to be in computer science or in other areas.”

Another street educator in Peru thought of an innovative idea to help break links to the street; *“I think that it is important for the girls to create their own businesses and micro-businesses, especially those that no longer use our services here in this organization, so that they have a reason to return and keep being checked on as a follow-up. It would help them to be able to leave this place with a learned trade and skill and be marketable, they can be free economically and can care for themselves, especially if they are now of age. It would be like its own new republic and if the girls have children, they can live here too. It would be nice if we could offer her a job in that area, in order for her to break the cycle of poverty, for it comes even from their great grandparents. And when they return home, what do they have?”*

In addition to needing a more supportive and comprehensive network in this field of work, educators also stated the desire to have more follow-up with them as workers and have services available for them so that they could better complete their work. One street educator in Peru stated that, *“I would increase staff training and would also create a space in which workers would have psychological support, effective team building techniques, and group strategies... I would finally increase the quantity of staff for more personalized attention for the girls.”*

Street educators are vital instruments for the successful trajectory of girls in street situations and their role must be respected. The street educators as part of these NGOS, in addition to the existing policies in place work to help support these girls in their process to have a successful trajectory. This will be discussed in further detail in my next section.

DISCUSSION

The results of the interviews focused on the aspects that street educators thought were most important in order for a street girl to have a better trajectory in life; the meaning of risk and resilience in the context of really difficult circumstances was discussed. As the Results section focused on the responses to the questions regarding a girls' trajectory, the focus of the Discussion is on the links to human rights law.

Of all of the existing human rights law, both internationally and domestically, this section will focus on three main children's rights law. Internationally, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) will be compared with the domestic laws of the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (ECA) in Brazil and Ley 27337 in Peru. Based on the topics highlighted throughout the interviews, five topics in these laws were selected to use as comparison. Below, they are further discussed to link them back to how street educators are striving towards the successful trajectory of street girls while using a rights-based approach. They are as follows:

1. The right that children have their full extension of rights.
2. The right of each child to be protected and prevented from experiencing harm.
3. The right that each child be protected and ensured their full rights under the duty of the government and the social systems in which they live.
4. The right that each child be heard and participate in the events in their lives.
5. The right of each child to be attended to by social systems and their role in that process.

From the free-listing responses for a good and bad trajectory from questions six and seven of the interviews, three of the top five responses are based on values that are not clearly delineated in children's rights law internationally or domestically in Peru or Brazil. Those three categories are: having a different outlook, links to the streets, and the desire and motivation to change. Laws discuss emotional and psychological wellbeing, however, the street educators focused on the importance of having hope and motivation, both of which are rooted in a stronger self-esteem and self-image. It was rather difficult to pinpoint "*the right to have hope and love*" back to an existing law in the system, however, that is what most street educators mentioned as primal.

1. Full Rights for Children

Brazil ECA: Law n° 8.069	United Nations CRC	Peru -Ley 27337
<p>Article 3 Without prejudice to the full protection treated in this Law, the child and adolescent enjoy all the fundamental rights inherent to the human person and, by law or other means, are ensured of all opportunities and facilities so as to entitle them to physical, mental, moral, spiritual and social development, in conditions of freedom and dignity.</p>	<p>Article 4 States Parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention. With regard to economic, social and cultural rights, States Parties shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international co-operation.</p>	<p>Article 2 Children and adolescents are subjects of rights, freedoms and specific protection. The obligations set forth in this statement must be fulfilled.</p>

When asked how their work helps the girls with their human rights, street educators tended to have a long list of the rights they ensure girls receive and spoke of instilling in the girls the responsibility for them to protect and respect their own rights and the rights of others.

In contrast to what is delineated in the expression of law regarding the full rights for children, about half of the interviewees expressed values, such as hope and love, as fundamental rights. They repeatedly stated that every girl has the right to be loved, the right to have hope, and the right to receive affection. These are not rights mentioned in the law, although they may be implied through social rights or as stated in ECA, “...*moral, spiritual and social development...*” However, the value of love and hope are not clearly delineated as a right that children have, even though they are of utmost importance in order for these girls to have all of their rights fulfilled. These rights are of great importance in order to achieve the full rights of these girls. Therefore, it is interesting to consider how these values could be written into law, for they are continually stated to be the foundation for all change.

As stated in the section discussing the negative relationships with their families, love is the most important right; “*They have the right to be treated with respect and affection and to receive affection. They have the right to be loved and that is the most important right we work on here, because that is the right that has been most violated with them. It is not enough to just have the basic necessities.*”

In addition to love, hope was an obvious pattern. As one street educator in Brazil stated, “*I don’t know if this is written in the constitution, but I think that we all have the right to have*

hope. No one can negate you from having hope, love and affection.” Yet again, another stated, *“I think one of the most important rights is the right to having hope.”*

What is the purpose of having rights if there is no hope that they will be respected? Hope is indeed essential, and the street educators recognize this in their work for a better trajectory. However, generating hope in the girls is parallel to working towards having a system that is hope generating, having hope that they will indeed be accepted in society, welcomed in schools and offered good health services. These hopes must have a foundation, however, the system has constantly given the girls reasons to lose such hope, as one street educator in Peru noted, *“She is missing faith, missing hope.”* That is why this work, that may often seem paradoxical, can be so draining for street educators who realize that it is important for the girls to have hope but also understand the reality of their situation that has drained them of such hope.

If these girls have no hope or motivation, the existing rights, as they stand now, do not make much of a difference in their lives. It is therefore up to policy and societal influencers to consider what needs to change for these girls to believe that their rights can be realized. In reality, although the laws exist, there is a lack of enforcement and true accountability to make sure that each child indeed has their full rights protected as stated in the articles above. One street educator in Brazil stated, *“I think that society needs to stop judging and consider maybe why a child is on the streets. Perhaps they were born there because their mother was already on the streets...Many of these youth have their hopes snatched from them, but we are all born with the right to have hope and so we need to learn to give hope. I think that what we are doing here is very important because we can change the world despite people having prejudices...this work is very important.”*

Girls with resilience, who continue to strive forward despite the setbacks and indicators that things are not hopeful, are the girls who were highlighted as having a better trajectory. Girls who have hope, despite not having evidence to prove that their hope is logically founded, are those who tend to continue forward despite roadblocks.

Another point that was stated is that the girls have strong links to the streets and have many of their rights violated from a very young age. How can they be blamed for violating rights if they are a product of these violations? If these girls learn to steal, to prostitute themselves, to fight, and commit crimes that violate others rights, how can they be blamed for behaving in that way if that is how they have been nurtured and taught to behave?

In terms of the girls having their full rights, street educators suggested having a comprehensive home or system available for them. This was a repeated suggestion, especially in the Brazilian context. One elaborated on this well stating, *“I would make it a lot more comprehensive. I would have one center with every professional necessary, from psychologists to social workers to teachers to doctors and lawyers, and tutors and shelters and schools and workshops and everything in between, but all part of one great network. Our work is all part of a network, but now, when I work to connect the dots, many times doors are closed with the snap of the government's finger. But, we need to all work together so that this process is interconnected and smooth.”* It was stated that shelters for the girls are not nearly enough; they needed more individualized attention and help. There needs to be a greater network that connects and supports each other in this effort to help the girls.

2. Protection from Harm

Brazil ECA: Law n° 8.069	United Nations CRC	Peru -Ley 27337
<p>Article 5 No child or adolescent will be subject to any form of negligence, discrimination, exploitation, violence, cruelty and oppression, and any violation of their fundamental rights, either by act or omission, will be punished according to the terms of the Law.</p>	<p>Article 36 States Parties shall protect the child against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare.</p>	<p>Article 4 The child and adolescent have the right to their moral, psychological and physical integrity and their free development and well being must be respected. They shall not be subjected to torture or cruel or degrading treatment. Extreme forms are considered to affect their personal integrity, forced labor and economic exploitation, as well as forced recruitment, prostitution, trafficking and all other forms of exploitation.</p>

In both Peru and Brazil, the mere fact that the girls are in the streets, shows that their rights have most likely been violated and that they have not been rightfully protected from harm. Therefore, in working with the girls, street educators, especially in the Peruvian context, discussed how it was difficult to work with just the microcosm of the girls when they know that they will return to a similar harmful and rights-violating context with their family.

There was also a lot of discussion regarding the girls' heightened position of vulnerability and harm simply because of their sex, being female. Even without being asked for a perspective based on sex, the street educators in both Peru and Brazil stated that it was much worse to be a girl than a boy on the streets. One stated, *"I believe that in Brazil, the girls experience a lot more difficulties than boys. Even in our own macho culture, I believe that it becomes a fragile cycle for them, a lot more so than for the boys. Our culture facilitates a lot of the violence that the girls experience, simply for being female."*

The law is not being effective in this regard and is not attaining its promises to this demographic. As stated in the female section of results, one street educator in Brazil suggested a law specifically for the protection of girls in street situations. She stated that laws exist protecting women and the homeless, but not specifically for the demographic of girls in street situations who have a unique vulnerability and are prone to much more harm; *"they need a policy to protect the female street child. I think we need that, but it does not exist."*

3. Duty of Government and Family to Ensure Rights

Brazil ECA: Law n° 8.069	United Nations CRC	Peru -Ley 27337
<p>Article 4 It is the duty of the family, community, society in general and the public authority to ensure, with absolute priority, effective implementation of the rights to life, health, nutrition, education, sports, leisure, vocational training, culture, dignity, respect, freedom and family and community living.</p> <p>The guaranty of priority encompasses: a) Precedence in receiving protection and aid in any circumstances; b) Precedence in receiving public services and those of public relevance; c) Preference in the formulation and execution of public social policies; d) Privileged allocation of public resources in areas related to the protection of infancy and youth.</p>	<p>Article 3 1. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration. 2. States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures. 3. States Parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision.</p>	<p>Article 8 It is the duty of the state, family, public and private institutions, and grassroots organizations, to promote the correct application of the principles, rights and rules established in this Code and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p> <p>Article 9 Any action concerning the children and adolescents taken by the State through the Executive, Legislative and Judicial Branches, the Public Ministry, regional governments, local governments and other institutions, as well as the action of society, is considered the Principle of Best Interest of the Child and Adolescent and respect for their rights.</p>

“We work to ensure that the rights of these girls are in fact respected, that the rights of these girls by the governments are fulfilled. The Brazilian state, the Brazilian government is a major violator of this population's rights. Well, not only of this population, but also of the general population in Brazil, so they are the main violator of human rights. And us, as a project, as an NGO, and I, as an educator with my professional and life ideology...what I try to do within my range of power is to keep those in authority accountable, charging our rulers to the fulfillment of laws that already exist as protection for these girls. We have ECA, a federal law that is not enforced. We are also trying to implement another law that is the national law of protection of children's rights but we did not succeed. This is our goal, and I think that this is what motivates us all the time to be pursuing this mission. That goal is to do, to validate and to fulfill what is already written. We work only with the street children and what is the real purpose of the type of

work that we do? It is to bring the public statistics to the attention of those in authority and call them to action in regards to their role and responsibilities, to follow-up with people in influential spaces where they have power and can hear our indications to what is written. We as a social project are always trying to control what is not being properly worked with these children and adolescents in street situations, especially the girls who are in a more fragile position culturally speaking. The woman is a more fragile gender within the system in which we live. Empower them.”- Jo, Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha

Street educators work to link the girls back to the social community that they belong to, a transition out of the relative anarchy they are engulfed in on the streets. The reconstruction of the social network of these youth often begins with the two main points mentioned in the articles, family and government services. However, between those two factors, street educators have a stronger impact on working to fix broken relationships within the family, since that is more relevant to the emotional and psychological wellbeing of the girls.

These girls cannot be prescribed a quick-fix service, for street educators all stated how this is a long process that requires patient and consistent follow-up, and that they alone cannot do all the jobs needed in this effort. Therefore, a network of services provided by the government, such as schooling, justice, health, social work, and basic necessities, and the family unit must work together as a strong committed network to help these girls. It is an effort that requires commitment and collaboration for, *“Much of our work depends on the stability and consistency that the girls are able to receive.”*

It is the role of the government to protect all of its citizens, yet as Jo explained, the government itself also plays a role in the violation of these girls’ rights. One street educator in Peru expressed that the girls are on the streets mainly because the country has failed to create a living society that is beneficial to their growth. She elaborates and states that, *“Dealing with children who use drugs is a social responsibility, because if there exists a drug addict, it is because the society is not fulfilling its responsibilities to its population. This problem does not stem from the child, but from the situations that are under public laws, the institutions that give these laws, the state, the congress, or the ministries. Although the law is written, it is not enforced, and we as an NGO do not have the capacity to be able to fulfill that need or societal*

problem that is very extensive. The government needs to have a department that specifically works with these street children...”

The government plays a role in undoing the links that the girls have to the streets. When the girls are on the streets, they often behave as less than a right-owning citizen, even as less than human, for they are dehumanized as their rights are violated in extreme ways. Street educators, especially in the Brazilian context, discussed how they worked on *“their citizenship regarding their rights, and teaching them as well, the responsibilities they have...to have the girls exercise their rights as citizens.”* This is critical, for if the girls do not know their rights as citizens, they often turn to survival tactics with others on the streets and loose sight of their rights. They also seek help from people who may end up harming her. It goes from an issue of resources to a deeper issue of not knowing their identity and the rights they possess as a human being. As stated in literature, many girls in street situations do not feel as though their identity is at the same level as other humans, for they are *“less than”* because they are on the streets, and therefore are more at risk for dehumanizing treatment. Bolton’s piece stated a quote from a child that illustrates this point, for on the streets, *“we wanted to run and escape from ourselves. We wanted to be more, but really, we weren’t anything”* (Bolton, 2012, pg 238).¹²⁹

This point is even more critical for girls, as one street educator stated, *“Street girls are very weak on the streets, and they are in very vulnerable positions. What does she do when at risk alone on the streets? She must find a group with whom she belongs for protection or she must become a leader of the group...and so the girl in her weak and fragile position is on the streets and adopts characteristics unlike her natural-self. She becomes more aggressive and even adopts masculine characteristics so that she is more protected and can survive. That is why many girls change their identity and end up having many male characteristics in order to be respected.”* How is the government protecting their rights? This comes into play as to how girls are treated and perceived in society. They have the right to be listened to and participate in the decisions that take place in their lives.

¹²⁹ Bolton, A. T. (2012). *A Rua e Nossa (The Street is Ours): In Search of Childhood and Rights on the Streets of Guarulhos, Brazil* (Ph.D.). University of California, Riverside, United States -- California. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/1286750588/abstract;238>

4. Children’s Freedom to be Heard and to Participate

Brazil ECA: Law n° 8.069	United Nations CRC	Peru -Ley 27337
<p>Article 16 The right to freedom encompasses the following aspects: I - going, coming and remaining in public places and community spaces, except as determined by legal restrictions; II - opinion and expression; III - belief and religious practice; IV - play, sports practice and entertainment; V - participation in family and community life, without discrimination; VI - participation in political life, according to the terms of the law; VII - seeking refuge, aid and guidance.</p>	<p>Article 12 1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. 2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.</p>	<p>Article 9 Children and adolescents who are in a position to form their own judgments shall be entitled to express their views freely in all matters affecting them by the means of their choice, including through objection and their views must be taken into account based on their age and maturity.</p> <p>Article 12 The child and adolescent have the right to freedom of movement, with the restrictions and authorizations listed in the Third Book of this Code.</p>

“These girls, they are sooo discredited of what they can do, not because they do this to themselves; it is not that... it is because society is against them and they get caught in this mentality that they are not good for anything, that they are nothing, you know? So when someone else comes in and starts talking to her, listening to her and starts telling her that she is capable, and she has value, she can change her thinking and go the other way. But of course, this requires time and patience. And so, this dialogue reinforces her worth. Dialogue is a basic right.”- Jo from Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha

The right to be listened to was constantly repeated throughout the interviews with street educators in both Peru and Brazil. Although the street educators did not quote directly stating from Article 12 of the CRC, they did often discuss the need for these children to be listened to, by security forces, by their families, by school staff, by health providers, by all. The street educators also went as far as to say that the fact that these girls have not been listened to has been the root of many of the problems they find themselves in today. A street educator in Brazil stated

clearly that their work is to *“listen, respect, and not judge because each has a right to say what they want and to give their opinion for life. We may simply advise.”*

The NGO in Peru had a daily system of listening to the girls through meetings regarding their experience that day and weekly meetings with all of the staff to hear what they wanted to express; *‘The girls’ opinion is what is important. That is why we have sessions to share what went well, what they disliked, in our daily meetings at the close of the day. We also have a general assembly because their opinion matters; it is not my opinion, it is their opinion. Seeing their opinion, I can say and help them walk the path that I think is best in relation to that...they learn their rights and responsibilities through this process of sharing their opinions.’*

Most of the times that the street educators would discuss the girls’ right to be heard, it would be in the context of describing the neglect these girls face on all levels. Jo, from Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha in Brazil shared many stories regarding the right to be listened to, such as the following: *“They have various rights, but the basic one that I identify as the base of a relationship of trust is the right to dialogue. It is the right for you to hear and listen to what is being said and that is a right we and society have denied [these girls]. The right to be heard involves our government and they never do that. They never listen to what the girls have to say, and, in my opinion, that is a basic right. If I want to say something, no matter what it may be, you must hear me. For example, a girl I worked with, as she entered a store, was told by security to leave. She walked in to buy something for her grandmother, but nobody would listen to her, they just assumed that she was there to steal and they would not listen to what she had to say. They told her that she was making shoppers uncomfortable and that she had to leave. She couldn’t even check the price of what she wanted to buy for her grandmother. She may have even been able to buy it, but the people rejected her and did not give her the space to speak or be heard. They did not know her motives. They would just tell her to leave. This is a basic and very important right, the right to be heard.”*

The frequently mentioned right to be loved is stated as part of the girls full comprehensive rights, however it is not described in the form of an applicable law. One street educator in Brazil stated that the right to be listened to is indeed a practical extension of the right to be loved. He discussed, *“What makes her walk on a good path? Love. It is love, dedication, and affection. When she feels as though someone cares about her, she begins to listen and to*

want to change. People do not value them or give them the attention that they need, and so when a person begins to give them attention, something changes within them.”

In order for street educators to attend to these girls' rights well and give them the attention they need, they stated that they needed more workers, for there was often not enough of them to give the girls the quality time to talk and listen to them. In Brazil one stated, *“Firstly, you have to listen because even though our adolescents may have points in common, they all have their differences. All of them have a point in common, whether it is violence, drugs, their mothers; and at the same time, they may have something that another has not experienced, and therefore we have to listen and observe. Listen and observe first and adapt to their language... it is important to show that our services are here to help them be a more fulfilled citizen in this society.”*

In Peru, the street educators often mentioned how they needed more of this, more time with each individual girl, and that the girls also needed more time with the psychologist. One street educator stated, *“What we see here, is like one street educator for too many girls. A specific example is now with a girl, who needs to be spoken to very gently so that she learns not to fight and to not always be frustrated and so we need to be with her and talk to her until she learns. I wear many hats and unfortunately cannot give her undivided attention. For example, I would talk to her and suddenly another girl would approach me with another need for attention and then I need to go back and forth and then the time goes by and we have to do something and work and go and so it gets hard to give her the attention that she needs...”*

In addition to the right to be heard, the laws also delineate the right to participate in their own development. This is in direct relationship and often the product of the fact that the girls are being heard and listened to, that they are active agents in their own growth and can express their opinions. One street educator in Peru stated that, *“It is important for the girls to be listened to and be heard, for them to participate in their own development. That they be actors in their change because they need to learn the tools they need in order to keep moving ahead in life.”* As Rodrigues's literature states, *“...street children are protagonists of their life story and citizens with rights, but are overshadowed by conditions that make them subjects of exclusion, disenfranchisement and stigmatization...street youths do not require a savior, but rather an opportunity to transform their situation and empower themselves. It is not possible for these youth to exercise their citizenship while living and surviving, on the street and being exposed to*

high-risk situations”(Rodrigues, 2010, pg 71).¹³⁰ The words that the girls say can be used in policy as was the case with MNMMR and in the works to prevent them from future harm, helping them to grow both internally and providing more insight to external services to better understand how to best serve them.

Many street educators in Brazil referred to being inspired by the teachings of Paulo Freire, a pedagogue who focused on the importance of generating dialogue and breaking systematic injustices. One street educator in Brazil went into depth about the importance for youth to participate in the society they live in as active agents rather than just passive victims of the system: *“We need to make them understand that policy is not everything. To understand who and what commands, who and what determines, who and what is going to give us orders, the politicians who are in this rich class. Then have the girls focus on changing roles; what would they do if they had power in this situation? Would they repeat the same model if they were president? What would they do differently or the same? And then they start to have this experience of seeing the perspective of both those who are above them and those who are in their position to see if they will reproduce what already exists. We think about drugs, addictions, politics, respect, dignity, and the consequences of our actions. And another thing related to understanding power dynamics is breaking a chain of self-belittlement by using every possibility to raise their self-esteem through hair styling, dance, afro music, expression, theater, and activities that bring freedom.”*

¹³⁰ Rodrigues, T. (2010). *Non-Formal Education and Street Youth Empowerment: Pedagogy and Practice of Two Brazilian Non-Governmental Organizations* (M.A.). University of Ottawa (Canada), Canada. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/docview/761386438/abstract:71>

5. Helping Agents

Brazil ECA: Law n° 8.069	United Nations CRC	Peru -Ley 27337
<p>Article 94 The entities that conduct internment programs have the following obligations, among others: I - observe the rights and guaranties to which adolescents are entitled; II - not restrict any right that has not been the subject of restriction in the internment decision; III- offer personalized treatment in small units and reduced groups; IV - preserve the identity and offer an environment of respect and dignity to the adolescent; V - see to the re-establishment and preservation of family bonds; VI - inform the judicial authority periodically of cases in which the re-establishment of family bonds is shown to be unfeasible or impossible; VII - offer physical installations in adequate conditions of habitability, hygiene, health and safety and the objects required for personal hygiene; VIII - offer apparel and nutrition that is sufficient and suited to the age bracket of the adolescents treated; IX - offer medical, psychological, dental and pharmaceutical care; X - provide education and vocational training; XI - provide cultural, sports and leisure activities; XII - provide religious assistance to those who so desire, according to their beliefs; XIII - proceed to social and personal studies of each case; XIV - periodically re-evaluate each case at maximum intervals of six months, informing the proper authorities of the results; XV- periodically inform the interned adolescent on his procedural situation; XVI- inform the proper authorities of all cases of adolescents who are bearers of infectious-contagious diseases; XVII - provide proof of the deposit of the belongings of the adolescents; XVIII - maintain programs aimed at providing support and accompaniment to those who have left the facilities;</p>	<p>Article 20 1. A child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, or in whose own best interests cannot be allowed to remain in that environment, shall be entitled to special protection and assistance provided by the State. 2. States Parties shall in accordance with their national laws ensure alternative care for such a child. 3. Such care could include, inter alia, foster placement, kafalah of Islamic law, adoption or if necessary placement in suitable institutions for the care of children. When considering solutions, due regard shall be paid to the desirability of continuity in a child's upbringing and to the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background.</p> <p>Article 39 States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other</p>	<p>Article 33 Development policy attention to children and adolescents will aim to develop: a) Prevention programs to ensure adequate living conditions; b) Promotion programs that encourage their participation and that of their family and allow the development their potential; c) Protection programs to ensure timely care when faced with risky situations; d) Assistance programs to meet their needs when they are in especially difficult circumstances; e) Rehabilitation programs that enable their physical and mental recovery and offer specialized care.</p> <p>Article 40 Children and adolescents living on the street are entitled to participate in programs of comprehensive care aimed at eradicating begging and ensuring their education, and their physical and psychological development. The Ministry of Women and Social Development, in coordination with</p>

<p>XIX - take steps to obtain the documents required for the exercise of citizenship for those who do not have them; XX - maintain a file with annotations including the date and circumstances of the treatment, names of the adolescents, their parents or guardians, relatives, addresses, sex, age, monitoring of their training, listing of their belongings and other data that will make possible their identification and the individualization of treatment.</p>	<p>form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment, which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.</p>	<p>regional governments and local, will be responsible for the promotion and implementation of these programs, which are developed through a learning process that includes strengthening family, school and community links.</p>
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“First of all, I believe that a lot of the problems in this system have to do with a lack of self-love. It is due to the fact that many girls do not know their worth. It’s the lack of knowing how precious they are, how they are unique. Whether they believe that they are ugly, indigenous, or whatever, we go crushing those labels and walls. Self-esteem is basic and so when someone comes here, we immediately are interested in demonstrating to them how much they are worth and their value. We show them that it doesn’t matter what they have done, what we are interested in is what they will do now and in the future. It’s the basics, no?”

The role of a street educator is a comprehensive one, involving work in the streets, in the NGO, and beyond, once the child is transitioned to live in a better environment. One street educator in Peru describes her mission in work as follows; *“we are concerned with the rights of the child, therefore, removing them from the streets so that they live how they deserve to, you know? Provide what corresponds to them, a house, food, clothing, roof, health... We work to help them rediscover themselves as girls again, so that they can use their rights, and live in freedom.”*

This work is directly related and intertwined with the core pattern mentioned in all of the interviews, the need for the girl to have self-worth and feel loved. A street educator in Peru expands on her role, *“My job, our job as educators is to give them the opportunity, being here, to meet and know themselves with strengths, qualities, positive attitudes and to put all that is taught into practice so that they can say, ‘No. I’m worth this ... I’m this, I can get by.’ That’s what this work is all about.”* Another street educator in Peru stated that, *“All the people who work here give moral and sentimental support to help the girls try to get ahead in life.”*

The street educators constantly mention the girls’ right to be loved and to have hope. This was most often acted upon by increasing the girls’ self-esteem, knowing that with a stronger self-

esteem, girls would be more resilient to endure the difficulties in their lives. The articles in law do not state self-esteem, however the CRC and ECA discuss self-respect and dignity, which is related. The street educators' role is to boost the girls' self-esteem so that girls have their own motivations and hopes to push forward and have an inner fuel that is strong intrinsically rather than simply due to an external or extrinsic force that leads them to change. This is related to a good trajectory in having the motivation to change and a different outlook on their lives. In both Peru and Brazil, street educators emphasized this: *"If they do not love themselves, they will not believe that they can achieve a good thing and they will not. They need to believe in themselves in order to believe that they can change for the better and have positive affirmations."*

The street educators' job is therefore both one of working with the girls' state internally as well as their external state. This one story from a street educator in Brazil further describes this dynamic: *"We once had a girl, a pregnant teen living in the streets that didn't want to have her child and wanted to abort. We continued to talk with her and we were always there for her. She eventually had her child, started working and now she can support her child. She is 16 years old. The change came from our conversations; we gave her a hope on which she could lean on. We showed her that she was capable of what many street children believe they are not able to do; we showed her that she was indeed able."* Street educators considered the girls' self-esteem as a determining factor in their pursue of change.

Self-esteem and love is complemented with good social networks, as previously mentioned. However, one that has been overlooked is the importance of their faith, their spiritual well-being. This is vital for community and an aspect that fills them with hope, love, and self-worth. A street educator in Peru stated that, *"Of the girls I know, one of them is doing well because of her faith and being committed to her religion...She surrounded herself with good influences; she knew how to say "No" and how to take care of herself first before others. The difference for her was her spiritual strength and relationship with her mother."* Another stated, *"We have to show them once again what values are. Their life, good nutrition, your vulnerability, your body, and recover all of those things that have been damaged, their dignity, their self-love, their self-esteem...This is all within their spirit because it is vital to be able to belong to something beyond ourselves."*

Street educators describe this process as a roller coaster, with girls having their highs and lows in their trajectory of progress, but with the end goal of having shorter highs and shorter

lows, or a more stable trajectory. The hardest job is to change mental and emotional strongholds that have been so deeply ingrained within these girls through their links to the streets. However, most stories shared discussed how they managed to break down these barriers and see change with an outpouring of *“the right to be loved.”* One street educator in Peru gave an example: *“one day a girl was really upset and she wanted to punch things. When I spoke to her, I spoke to her heart and made her see what is truly important...to love yourself and to love those that are around you, even if they are not your family. She then broke down in front of me and told me that she never received love from her parents and so she didn’t know how to give it. I told her that she doesn’t have to think that it is just her parents that give her love, but also those who are close to her. And so she hugged me and I hugged her and she cried like a little girl, she broke down and then she felt better because she felt loved.”*

Street educators feel that their role is often not taken as seriously or given as much value as it merits and this is repeatedly stated throughout the interviews in both Peru and Brazil. These street educators often encounter these girls in a critical moment in their lives where they are making decisions that will affect the course of their future. They are the ones that work directly with them and are often the expression and the enforcement of the positive rights stated in the law. A street educator stated, *“I think that our work is essential and our role is on the front lines. We have direct contact with the girls and so I think that our work as catalysts in that process of recuperation and incentivizing is vital for the girls to move forward and have a bond of affection. Many times the girls find in us, street educators, a lot of what they were searching and longing for in their families, that unconditional love and support.”*

However, although their contribution is grand, for they are working with the nations’ most vulnerable youth and the future of the nation, they are often not given sufficient resources, overworked, and not recognized by their society as a job of such worth. One street educator stated, *“It is important to discuss the importance and significance of our work as street educators and how we are in need of so many more resources because this is a profession that is not given its rightful-value and it is very difficult to do, yet very important.”*

CONCLUSION:

Girls in street situations are one of the most vulnerable and at-risk populations in society. They experience vast violations of rights and have been neglected to receive the care they need as stated in human rights law. Overall, working with girls in street situations is a job that requires a lot of time, effort, and trial and error, but a work that is vital for the lives of these girls and too often overlooked by society. This pilot study explored the perspectives of street educators in street-child NGOs. From the interviews collected in Peru and Brazil, the most frequently mentioned reasons that relate to the trajectory of a girl in street situations are:

- Drugs
- Different Outlook
- Bad Relationships with Family
- Motivation to Change
- Links to the Street

Drugs, bad relationships with the family, and links to the street contributed to girls having a bad trajectory and had many similar points across all interviews in Peru and Brazil. Therefore, there was more consensus on the problems, than on the solutions. The two most mentioned reasons that girls do well and have a good trajectory, have more to do with internal qualities rather than external forces, such as their different outlook and motivation to change. NGOs in this field focused heavily on the girls' internal state, strengthening their self-worth and self-esteem. This helps to change the girls' perspectives and to motivate them to have hope and love, the two rights that were mentioned most. In addition, girls who showed more resilience tended to have a better trajectory, showing stronger internal self-worth, and motivation to move forward in hopes of a better life, despite the roadblocks and adversities that they face.

In terms of next steps, it is clear from all street educators that they are in need of more workers and resources united in this collaborative network to work with these girls. They work with the girls, but the greater more complex familial, community, and societal problems create systematic difficulties in getting these girls onto a better path. They also state a greater need to focus on females, for much work with children in street situations focuses on boys. Although boys make up the greater quantity of children on the streets, girls are, without a doubt, at higher risk and in greater need of help, support and protection. From a research standpoint, it is important to build on strengths in the field of human rights rather than to just rely on remedial or

deficiency based approaches. It is important to continue to research and build in a movement in this strengths-based approach, in addition to going a step further to implement and apply what is learned to working with girls in street situations.

My sincerest gratitude goes to all of the organizations in Peru and Brazil that are very committed working in this field and are not given enough credit for all of the hard work and effort they pour into changing the lives of these youth, our next generation and our future. Their work is beyond monetary value and I hope that this research brings light to that and helps to share, beyond national borders, the similarities and differences that are a part of ensuring a better trajectory for girls in street situations. I thank the NGOs for opening their doors to me and receiving me with such warmth to share their precious time and gems of advice. Their work is inspirational and they deserve to be showered with many more resources to be able to make a greater impact in this field. Thank you for your continuous work despite the obstacles; it is a work that is rewarded with the lives of these youth. My deepest thanks and admiration goes out to:

- Instituto Mundo Libre
- Centro Internacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Sobre a Infância (CIESPI) as part of Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro
- Centro de Defesa da Criança e do Adolescente (CEDECA)
- Associação Brasileira Terra dos Homens (ABTH)
- Associação Beneficente AMAR
- Central Única das Favelas (CUFA)
- Rede Rio Crianca
- SGM Lifeworlds' Projeto Calçada
- Street Child United
- Rede Evangélica Nacional de Ação Social (RENAIS) in Bola na Rede
- São Martinho
- Passaporte da Cidadania do Pastoral do Menor
- Viva Rio
- Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha
- Comissão de Defesa dos Direitos Humanos e Cidadania da ALERJ
- Projeto Meninos e Meninas de Rua (PMMR)

ANNEX

Columbia University

Consent Form to Participate in a Research Study

Street Workers Define Successful Trajectories for Street Girls: Comparing Definitions with Implementation in Policies and NGOs

Principal Investigator: Melody Mills

Department: MA in Human Rights

We are asking you to take part in a research study. This form explains why we are doing this study and what you will be asked to do if you choose to be in this study. It also describes the way I would like to use and share information about you. Please take the time to read this form. You should ask me any questions you have about this form and about this research study. You do not have to participate if you do not want to; this process is called ‘informed consent.’

Purpose of this Research:

I am conducting field research for my Master's thesis in Human Rights from Columbia University. In order to realize rights it is essential to recognize functionally what it means to do well. Therefore, I will explore how street workers define the ideal trajectory for a street girl who has decided to leave her street life in the past and pursue a new walk in life.

My approach is participatory, and based on strengths. I am doing this research study to learn more about the successful trajectories of street girls and to analyze how the girls are being prepared to own and respect their human rights. Overall, my study will be based on how street workers define successful trajectories for street girls and compare these definitions with the current implementation of these NGO services in Peru and Brazil.

Participation:

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to answer questions in an interview that will take about a half hour of your time. The interviews will be recorded so that the researcher can recall all that was expressed during the session. Your responses will be coded and therefore will be anonymous.

Participation is your choice and comes from your own will, it is not mandatory. You may refuse to answer any question, decide not to take part in the research, or withdraw from being in the study at any time. There are no consequences if you decide not to participate.

Confidentiality:

The information collected will be anonymous and will not be used for any other purpose outside of this investigation. The interviews will be recorded on a password protected phone and will be immediately deleted upon upload to a private account that only the investigator has access to. If information from this study is published or presented at scientific meetings, your name and other personal information about you will not be used. The following individuals and/or agencies will be able to look at and copy your research records:

- The investigator, study staff and other professionals who may be evaluating the study
- Authorities from Columbia University, including the Institutional Review Board ('IRB')
- The United States Office of Human Research Protections ('OHRP')

Risks and Benefits:

We do not think that there are any risks to taking part in this study. You will not receive any payment or other reward for taking part in this study and there will be no costs to you for being in this study. Although you may not directly benefit from taking part in this study, your participation may help programs and people like you who work with street girls in the future.

Questions or Concerns:

You can ask questions at any time. If you do not understand something or have doubts, questions, complaints, concerns or suggestions about the research, please talk to me without any hesitation. My email is mjm2324@columbia.edu and my phone number is 917-365-3618.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, or if you have a concern about this study, you may also contact the Institutional Review Board listed below:

Columbia University

HRPO-Morningside

615 W. 131st St., 3rd floor

New York, NY 10027

Tel. 212-851-7040

Email: askirb@columbia.edu.

Participant's Statement:

I have read this consent form and understand my role in participating in the research. I volunteer to take part in this research. I have had a chance to ask questions. If I have questions later about the research, I can ask the investigator listed above. I understand that I may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without jeopardizing my status or other rights to which I am entitled. I certify that I am 18 years of age or older and freely give my consent to participate in this study. I will receive a copy of this document for my records.

Subjects Consent: _____

Date: _____

Investigator's Statement:

I have discussed the proposed research with this participant, and in my opinion, the participant understands the benefits, risks, and alternatives (including non-participation) and is capable of freely consenting to participate in this research.

Investigator's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Entrevista Semi-Estructurada: Español
(Guía Para Investigador)

1. Defina “Niña de la calle”

Si se necesita más aclaración: "Describe lo que significa ser una niña de la calle"

2. ¿Cuáles son algunas de las dificultades que las niñas de la calle enfrentan?

En relación con: ¿Qué servicio le ayudaría con esas dificultades?

3. ¿Cuál es la misión / el objetivo final de su trabajo y esta ONG?

Si se necesita una mayor aclaración: "Yo trabajo para que las niñas _____"

4. Si estuviese a cargo de esta organización, ¿qué haría igual y/o de otra manera?

5. Describa un ejemplo de tu trabajo que consideras fue exitoso:

Si se necesita más aclaraciones: "He experimentado éxito en mi trabajo cuando pude comprobar _____"

6. Piense en una niña con un pasado en situación de calle y que ahora está recuperada (no comparten nombres)

a. Describe 5 razones que demuestren porque usted piensa que ahora ella está bien

7. Piense en una niña con un pasado en situación de calle y ahora anda por malos caminos (no comparten nombres)

a. Describe 5 razones que demuestren porque usted piensa que ahora ella no está bien

8. ¿Qué es resiliencia?

Si se necesita más aclaraciones: "¿Qué significa la capacidad de recuperación?"

9. ¿Cómo ayuda su trabajo a fomentar la resiliencia?

Si se necesita más aclaraciones: "¿Cuáles son los factores más importantes que contribuyen al desarrollo de la resiliencia?"

10. ¿Qué derechos humanos aborda su trabajo para favorecer a estas niñas?

→ ¿Hay algo que le gustaría añadir? (Comentarios finales)

Entrevista Semi-Estruturada: Português
(Guia para Investigador)

1. Definir "menina de rua"?

Se for necessária uma maior clarificação: "Descreva o que significa ser uma menina de Rua"

2. Quais são algumas das adversidades que meninas de rua enfrentam?

Em conexão com: Que serviço iria ajudá-las mais?

3. Qual é a missão/ o objetivo mais importante de seu trabalho e desta ONG?

Se ainda é necessário esclarecer: "Eu trabalho para que as meninas _____"

4. Se você fosse responsável por esta organização, o que você faria igual e / ou de forma diferente?

5. Descreva um caso sucesso, ou uma história de sucesso:

Se precisar de mais esclarecimentos "Meu trabalho foi bem sucedido quando eu fui capaz de _____"

6. Pense especificamente sobre uma menina que já foi menina de rua no passado, mas que agora não esta mais na rua. Diria, uma menina que esta indo bem agora. (Você não precisa compartilhar nomes)

a. Por favor, você poderia descrever 5 razões que demonstrem o porque você acha que ela esta bem agora?

7. Pense especificamente sobre uma menina que já foi menina de rua no passado, mas que não esta indo bem. (Você não precisa compartilhar nomes)

a. Por favor, você poderia descrever 5 razões que demonstrem o porque você acha que ela não esta bem agora? Ou não esta evoluindo como o esperado?

8. O que é resiliência?

Se precisar de mais esclarecimentos "Quais as qualidades são importantes para a recuperação das meninas?"

9. Como o seu trabalho ajuda a construir a resiliência?

Se ainda é necessário esclarecer: "Quais estratégias o métodos de seu trabalho ajuda para que as meninas desenvolvem essas qualidades?"

10. Quais Direitos Humanos o seu trabalho se aproxima para favorecer a essas meninas?

Quais são os direitos humanos dessas meninas o qual o trabalho que você desenvolve as beneficiam?

→ Existe alguma coisa que você gostaria de acrescentar? (Considerações Finais)

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