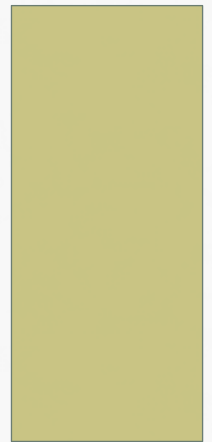


# STREET GIRLS IN CAIRO

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# INTRODUCTION

- Egypt 2011-2013 - Research
  - work with street children in the protests
  - work with street girls at shelter
- Teaching
  - University of London
  - Free University Berlin
- Campaigning
  - Blogging and twitter

# WHAT ARE STREET KIDS CALLED AROUND THE WORLD?

The different names given to street children around the world provide a good indication of how society perceives these children.

**In India:** “Sadak Chap” means ‘without root or roof’ or ‘carrying the stamp of the street’ (Patel, 1990)

**In Brazil:** the word “Moleque” used to refer to street children in the dictionary has two meanings, the first “an individual with no word of honour, a bastard, rogue, knave, young boy’ the other... a younger child (up to 21 years of age) of a slave”

**In Kenya:** the street children are known as *chokrra*, a derogatory term, meaning both ‘to pick’ and a ‘kitchen’ or ‘odd-job’ boy

**In Vietnam,** they are known as ‘bui doi’ (the dust of life) (Noble, 1994);

**In Egypt:** the term used by mainstream society and the media, ‘awlaad elshaware’e’ was historically used in the late 1910's to describe trouble makers and thieves from the lower classes who took part in the Nationalist anti British revolution. More recently, the word used is ‘sewas’ the small insects that destroy grains and crops.

Lalor adds that the slang words used by the police for street children include “the plague” or “dirty faces” (**Columbia**), “vermin” (**Ethiopia**) and “mosquitoes” (**Cameroon**) (1999: 765).

In English, of course, the term ‘street child’ has been a successful marketing tool touching the sensitivities of the Western donors “for whom the term... represents both the violation of the sanctity of childhood and the need for moral reform” (Nieuwenhuys, 2001: 551; see Hecht, 1998: 113).

# WHY AND HOW THE STREET?

- Reasons for being on the street
  - Gendered Violence
  - Sexual, physical and emotional abuse
  - Poverty
- The initiation period after leaving home
  - Making friends on the street
  - The street as “refuge”
  - Rape as a form of initiation

# A CLOSER LOOK AT STREET GIRLS

- Different problems push them to the street
  - Gender and sexuality
  - Violence and family breakdown
  - mental health: once loved by god and boarderline
- Different risks and roles on the street
  - culture of rape on the street: reconstructive surgery and meaning of illness
  - Prostitution: guys coming in with swords for 11 year old
- Different challenges leaving the street:
  - 2003: First street girl to access services
  - 2008 campaign to change the law
  - The broken Hymen (Maya)

# SECRETS AND TABOOS

- Incest and family secrets
  - Lack of reporting
  - Children born out of wedlock
- The Street vs. Institutions
  - Honor and Shame
  - Services and reintegration
  - Amal and her mother
- Virginity and Loss
  - Cultural expectations of girls
  - Maya and Summer

# PRE 2008

- The legal procedures once the child was born
  - What happens to the new born
  - What happens to the child mother
  - The future and life chances

# A CHANGE IN THE CHILD LAW: 2008

- Prejudice: gender differences and rehabilitation and reintegration into mainstream society
- Lobbying and campaigning
  - The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood
  - Hope Village Society and other NGOs
- Current Procedure
  - The new born and the mother
  - Support services



# NEXT STEPS

- The response of the government to the UN recommendations for gender equality
- Current drafting of the constitution
- The need for alternative care for children in general
- Gender specific services for girls in particular