

I Exist

Birth Registration in Guatemala City

Toybox Project Proposal

Prepared for:

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About Toybox

Toybox is a UK charity with a mission to end the injustice of children living and working on the streets. Although reliable figures are hard to obtain, the UN estimates the number of street children around the world to be in the hundreds of millions. We work in five countries across Latin America; Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Bolivia and Peru, and last year, helped over 14,000 children. This year, we are also beginning exciting new work with street children in India and Kenya.

Toybox projects provide some of the world's most vulnerable children with the immediate care they urgently need; such as emergency medical treatment, food and shelter. We also work to achieve long-term, sustainable change in the lives of street children through birth registration, educational support and reintegration with families at home. Our vision is of a just world, with no street children.

Objectives

- i. To significantly reduce the number of children living and working on the streets in cities across the world
- ii. To break the cycle of poverty, abuse, substance misuse and exploitation that overwhelms street children and, in numerous cases, contributes to their death before adulthood.

Approach

Prevention – When we can reach a child before they hit the streets, our chances of success are so much better. Our job is to help families on the brink of destruction and prevent children at risk of being forced to live or work on the streets.

Intervention – In a crisis, children living and working on the street need direct help and they need it quickly. Our job is to rescue these children and place them in a safe and secure environment, where we can provide much needed support.

Restoration – Vulnerable children living or working on the streets need urgent protection from abuse and neglect. Toybox works with families and agencies to provide children with the appropriate care. Our job is to ensure children are placed in a safe home and that they receive the support they need to recover from their experiences.

Organisational Overview

Our trustees delegate the management, the development of strategy and overall leadership of the charity to the Chief Executive and a team of directors. We have an office based in Milton Keynes which employs 12.6 fulltime members of staff and is responsible for all fundraising activities and financial monitoring. To respond appropriately to the local context, we have established a regional office in Costa Rica, where our Latin America Manager and Communications Co-ordinator are based. This office supports our partners with the monitoring and evaluation of our projects.

More information on the profile of our trustees and executive team are available online here www.toybox.org.uk/about



Context



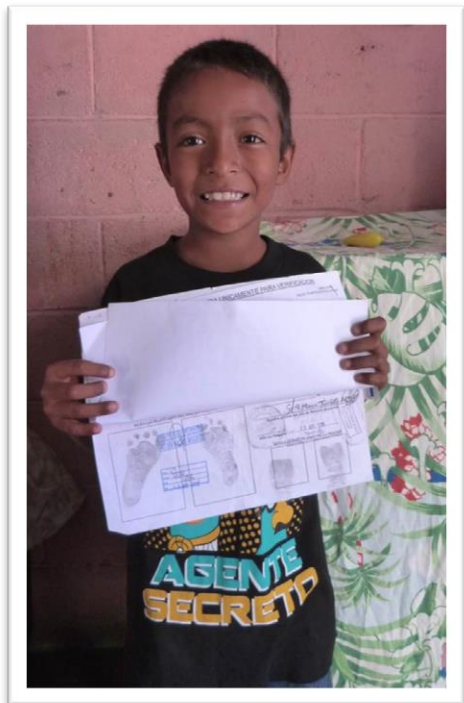
‘Nearly 100 births a minute go unnoticed’ – UN, 2013.

Toybox works to rescue children living and working on the streets, and prevent those at high-risk of doing so. In Guatemala, this journey to the street often begins at birth. The National People Registration Office (RENAP) estimates there are currently 700,000 children in Guatemala who do not have their official birth certificates. Though it may seem like a small simple piece of paper, without it, unregistered children face major obstacles both in early childhood and later life.

Children without birth certificates have no official names, birthdays or identities. Whilst many can begin school, without the official documents required by law to sit exams, they cannot advance past first grade. National attendance levels in Guatemala between primary and secondary education therefore fall at an extraordinary rate; from 95.6% to 48.8% for boys, and from 94.9% to just 44.5% for girls (UNICEF, 2015). This lack of progress pushes children out onto the streets, with some working to support their families and others pressured into the temptations of gang life in order to survive. Many are simply left to wander the streets alone looking for friendship and purpose. Instead they find crime, violence, brutality and abuse.

Life on the streets for an unregistered child is unimaginable. Known simply as the ‘XXX children’, street children live in extreme poverty without access to food or shelter. Many suffer from preventable illnesses and disease, as without their official identity paperwork, hospitals will not provide them with vaccinations or medical treatment. An unregistered child is also not recognised by national statistics and therefore not protected by the state. This means police have no legal obligation to assist them if they become victims of crime - which so many street children do. Shunned and ignored by society and the authorities that should be working to protect them, quite simply – they don’t exist.

Birth Registration: A Solution for Street Children



Introduction

Toybox have been working to change the lives of children living and working on the streets since 1992. One of the major obstacles facing street children is their lack of legal documentation. Around the world; almost 230 million children under the age of 5 are effectively invisible because their births were not registered. The Toybox Birth Registration programme seeks to reduce the number of invisible and unregistered children living and working on the streets of Guatemala.

In early 2013, we identified the widespread issue of child registration in Guatemala and launched the ground-breaking 'I Exist' campaign to register street children and give them their official identities. In partnership with a local grassroots organisation, we were able to successfully obtain birth certificates for 100 children who were previously unable to be registered without help. Recognising the importance of this work and the impact it was having at a national level, Toybox continued this life-changing work throughout 2014, registering a total of 629 children, more than double our target! **This year, with your help, we want to register even more.**

Project Aims

- To reduce the number of invisible and unregistered street children in Guatemala
- To provide education and training within the community and raise awareness on the subject of birth registration

Project Outcomes and Activities

Outcome 1: 400 children in Guatemala are registered and provided with their official identity paperwork

1.1 Activities to assist in the registration of children who do not have the means to obtain their legal identities without help

The absolute first step of getting children off the streets is providing them with a legal identity. Children who receive their birth certificates will benefit from the lifetime of opportunities that come with being an official citizen; access to education, entitlement to medical treatment and healthcare, legal support, and future opportunities for employment. This year, this project will:

- i. Deliver outreach work in the community and on the streets to identify unregistered children and refer them to the registration offices.
- ii. Provide financial help for 400 children and their families towards the registration process including paying fees and fines, supplying witness reports and getting a signed declaration from a judge.
- iii. Hire a registrations manager and assistant to improve the effectiveness of existing registration facilities.

'A birth certificate is a matter of life and death. It is a key that opens the door to the rights and benefits of citizenship.' – Desmond Tutu

Outcome 2: Improved knowledge, attitudes and practice of child registration in Guatemala

2.1 - Activities to support and encourage birth registration with families

Whilst parents in Guatemala are only required to pay a small sum to register their new-born babies within a set period of time, for new parents, registration is often low on the priority list. After 60 days, there are fines for not registering children and the process becomes simply too expensive for parents, many of whom are earning less than \$2 a day. To address this problem, this project will:

- i. Train 85 community midwives on the benefits of birth registration and how to complete the correct procedure and documents for every baby they deliver. This will mean even when babies are not born in state hospitals, midwives will have the knowledge and training to assist parents in promptly registering their child.
- ii. Work closely with families of new-born babies to provide encouragement, advice and financial support to register their babies within 60 days of birth. This includes rewarding families who visit the registration offices within the set period of time.

2.2 - Activities to encourage birth registration in communities

We believe some of the best people to promote and encourage birth registration are those within the local community. This will also help to enable the project to eventually become self-sustaining. In order to do this, Toybox will:

- i. Offer 20 educational workshops for community leaders, pastors and parents to promote and raise awareness of the subject of birth registration.
- ii. Teach children in schools about birth registration so they can take the message back to their families, speak up on behalf of their peers and register their own children in the future.

2.3 - Activities to promote birth registration on a national level

Birth registration is a national issue in Guatemala, with an estimated 700,000 children who are currently not registered. There is also a widespread lack of knowledge or awareness on the subject, with many people not aware of existing registration facilities or opportunities for additional support. In order to reach as many people as possible with information on birth registration, this project will:

- i. Use different media channels including billboards, flyers, media spots and radio advertising to share information on the need for birth registration and how to access this basic right.
- ii. Lobby RENAP (National People Registration Office) to get better access, better prices and better processes for birth registration for poorer families and how to raise their profile.
- iii. Advocate with government officials, schools, churches and civil organisations to publicise the importance of child registration.

'Training for midwives and better registration facilities means more and more children are being registered.' – Jeanette, Project Director.

'I didn't have my documents so I couldn't go to school. Now I'm registered. At school I have friends and do homework. I'm very happy.' - Velveth, age 7.

'The law courts can be slow to process registration due to lack of staff. Also, parents can be reluctant to involve the courts because they fear their children could be taken away.' – Roberto*, Project Staff



ABOVE: Frida, age 8 with her two brothers Luis and Willem, 6 and 4, outside their home in Guatemala City

Project Impact

Registering a child may seem like a fairly straightforward event, however the impact it can have can be truly life-changing. For many children, it means the difference between a life on the streets or a future full of positive opportunities. Toybox are delighted to be able to share with you the inspirational stories from some of the children in Guatemala who this project has registered so far.*

Frida's Story

Frida is 8 and lives with her two younger brothers and mother in an impoverished area in Guatemala City. Frida's mother was unable to register her children at birth as their father walked out and refused to acknowledge any of the children as his own. The registration process is expensive, especially for a single parent, so without support; she simply could not afford to register them alone.

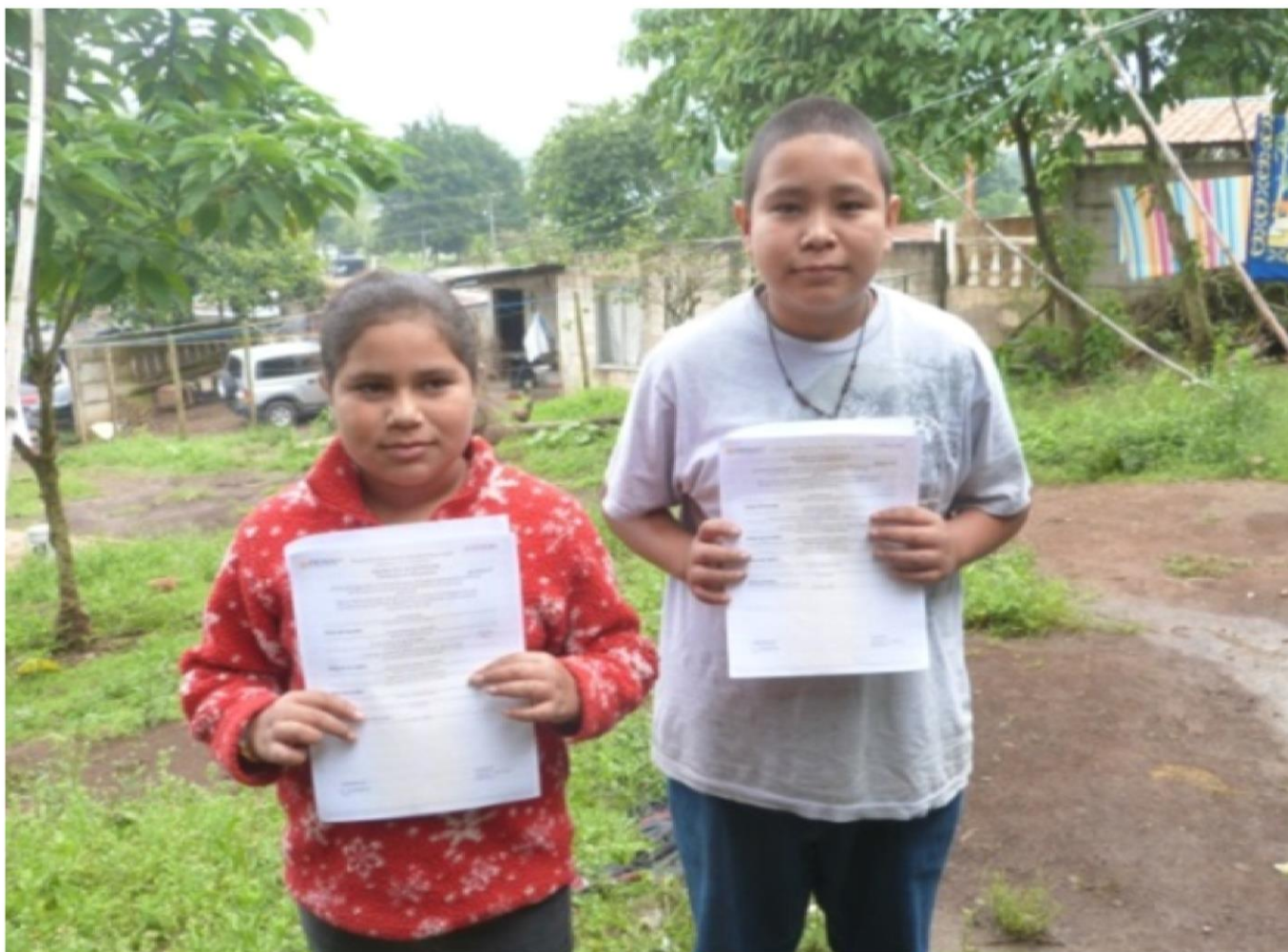
Until last year, neither Frida nor her brothers were entitled to vaccinations or treatment at a local hospital if they were unwell. Their mother constantly worried about them falling ill as she knew she would not be able to get help for them without their identity paperwork. However one day a pastor at their local church gave a talk about the birth registration programme Toybox is supporting and Frida's mother was inspired to ask for help. Now all three of her children have their birth certificates and can look forward to the lifetime of opportunities that come with it. Frida says, *"Thank you so much Toybox and everyone who has helped me!"*

Teresa and Josue's Story

Until last year, Teresa and her brother Josue had not been able to attend school as neither of them had birth certificates. Instead, Josue had a job selling car parts in downtown Guatemala City, whilst Teresa worked with her mother in a local tortilla shop. Their father had abandoned them when they were very young, leaving their mother Sara as their sole carer. Teresa remembers only too well how it felt to be one of Guatemala's hundreds of thousands of forgotten children who are all invisible to the authorities that should be working to protect them. She says, *"Not having my paperwork made me feel really sad – because I didn't exist."*

Fortunately, a neighbour heard about the birth registration programme Toybox is supporting and encouraged Sara to seek help to register her children. Now, both Teresa and Josue have been registered and are hoping to start school at the beginning of the next academic year. Josue is determined to study in order to get a good job. He declares, *"I feel so happy that I can succeed in life."* Teresa is equally as ambitious and is hoping to study computer science.

BELOW: Armed with these truly life-changing pieces of paperwork, Teresa and Josue can look forward to a much brighter future



*Please note that the names of the children and project staff used throughout this proposal have been changed to protect their identities.

Additional Information

Our Partner

Viva Guatemala has a strong, long-term relationship with The National People Registration Office (RENAP) and over twenty years' experience working at a grassroots level in Guatemala. Toybox have been working with Viva on the issues of street children since 2008. We strongly believe they are an organisation who fully grasp the complexities and realities of street life and are best placed to provide some of the most innovative and relevant solutions to help change the lives of street children.

Sustainability

Registration of a child is a one-off event but the impact it has is life-long. All of the activities in this project enable the beneficiaries to move forward without the need for future aid – a leg up rather than a hand-out. Our methodology of working with community leaders and schools, as well as children and families, means that this project will be able to continue working effectively after support from Toybox concludes. Similarly, by building the knowledge and capacity of local midwives and RENAP, there will be long-term community benefits beyond the time-frame of this project.

Inspired by the success of this model in Guatemala over the past two years, Toybox have begun a similar registration project in Bolivia working to secure street children their official identity cards, with the hope of registering even more children in the future.

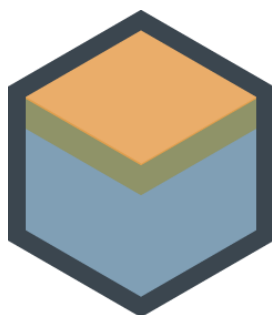
Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to continually improve our work and the lives of the children we are working to support, monitoring and evaluation is a vital part of all of our projects. This project will be monitored quarterly with financial and narrative reports, as well as a visit from the Latin America manager mid-way through the year to conduct an assessment and ensure everything is on track.

The nature of this project means that there is an immediate and tangible measure of success – the number of children we are able to register with their birth certificates. National statistics on registration as reported by RENAP will also be an important indicator of achievement and Toybox are confident that these will reflect the impact of our work in Guatemala.

HOW WE USE OUR FUNDS

84p in every pound given goes directly to our charitable activities based around our work with street children.



84% of our income is spent on direct activities designed to support and deliver our work with street children

15% of our income is spent on raising the next £1. This allows us to reach more and more street children in need of our help

1% of our income is spent on governance and management to ensure we work as efficiently and effectively as possible

Project Budget

The total budget for this project this year is £45,647. The individual costs are broken down below:

Birth Registration	Budget
Direct Project Expenditure	
Outreach work to identify unregistered children	£645
Registration of 400 children	£3,948
Training for 85 informal midwives	£968
Support for parents of new-born babies	£371
Educational workshops in the community	£323
Promotion of birth registration through local and national media	£1,290
Advocacy with RENAP, government officials and civil organisations	£968
Project Director salary (30% of work-time)	£2,323
Registrations Manager (100% of work-time)	£6,048
Registrations Assistant (100% of work-time)	£3,629
Accountant	£2,323
Staff training	£2,619
Additional employment costs	£6,673
Total Direct Project Costs:	£32,128
Indirect Project Expenditure	
Rent, utilities and equipment	£5,300
Financial auditing	£774
Additional taxes and fees	£1,490
UK monitoring and evaluation (15%)	£5,955
Total Indirect Project Costs:	£13,519
Total Project Costs:	£45,647

Please refer to pages 3 and 4 for more information about each activity mentioned above. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch. A copy of Toybox's latest audited annual accounts are available to download here - www.toybox.org.uk/downloads/Toybox_Accounts_31-3-14.pdf

Funding

This year to date, we have raised a total of £7,604 from private donations and individual supporters towards the Birth Registration programme. There is also a further £19,635 in principle at this stage from other anticipated grants and fundraising activities. We need a further £38,043 to successfully enable this project.

'If you are registered you have a legal identity. You can prove who and how old you are. Your government knows you exist and can plan for your present and future. Children who do not have their birth certificates are often among the poorest and most marginalised in society. Without a legal identity, those children are less likely to overcome social, economic and political barriers. Registration helps protect and empower them.'



Thank you so much for taking the time to consider this request. We hope you found this project proposal interesting and informative to read.

If you would like more information about this project, or have any questions about any other aspects of Toybox's work, please do get in touch with Sarah Mist, *Head of Philanthropic Giving*, on **01908 360069** or by email at Sarah.Mist@toybox.org.

Together we will change the world for street children.

Toybox

G4 Challenge House
Sherwood Drive
Bletchley
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK3 6DP

www.toybox.org.uk

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