



MEXICO CITY '26



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CEO &
CO-FOUNDER

STREET CHILD
UNITED

Without a shadow of doubt, the fifth Street Child World Cup was the most ambitious, challenging, and impactful event we have ever delivered.

Receiving messages and videos of the Teams returning to their home communities with young people clearly transformed by the experience, fills us with enormous pride.

- Team Argentina Boys were met by a caravan of love and a cavalcade of locals cheering them home.
- Team India Boys were formally presented to the First Minister of Gujarat and honoured as heroes.
- Team Palestine Girls were embraced with long held hugs of love by their families in Ramallah.
- The Ikoot Boys of the indigenous people of Mexico were honoured by their elders in a unique Mexican ceremony of recognition as their ancestors looked on with pride.

Additionally, the individual messages of appreciation from Team Leaders from all over the world have been overwhelming. Every experience from the event reminds every young person that they are indeed somebody. And this feeling will continue and grow for the rest of their lives.

This was all achieved because we were united. Street Child United.

It is essential that the world knows about this, because our job is to create a global platform for these incredibly young people's voices to be heard.

We are extremely grateful to all those who worked with us to deliver this extraordinary event:

- To those that have amplified the young people's voices including City Road Communications, Teneo, and Freud Communications.
- To the President of Mexico, Claudia Sheinbaum, and our good friends from Ireland, U2, as well as those that have taken their time to amplify the message. People like David Beckham, Lewis Hamilton, and Mo Farah, the many influencers and all people that love football and understand how the Street Child World Cup changes the lives of young people forever.
- To the many volunteers who travelled to be with us from 24 different countries.
- To our incredible Board at Street Child United, most of whom are former volunteers.
- To our local partners within the government of Mexico and our delivery partner Fútbol Más Mexico, who taught us more about fair play, and introduced us to the green card methodology which will stay with us in future events.

We were honoured to receive special recognition from UNHCR, whose CEO remarked that while they had been involved in many football events around the world, they had never seen anything quite like our unique combination of football, arts, congress, and campaigning activities - all strategically aligned to maximise meaningful impact. Their representatives were blown away by the impact on the young people that they'd supported to take part and saw them grow in confidence each day of the event.

Finally, I'd like to recognise the efforts of our amazing staff team at Street Child United. We are a five-a-side team who just before major events become a team of 11. They won this World Cup. They won't receive trophies or medals, but they will always know that the world is now different because they delivered a World Cup of Hope, a World Cup of Peace, and a World Cup of Joy.

When I think about my journey with the Street Child World Cup 2026 in Mexico, I see it as much more than a programme or an event. It was a life-changing experience that helped me grow, learn, and gain confidence in myself. It gave me opportunities that I never imagined having and introduced me to people who left a lasting impact on my life.

Being selected as a Young Leader and travelling to Mexico was one of the proudest moments of my life. As a young person from Palestine, representing my country on an international stage meant a great deal to me. I felt proud to share my experiences and to be part of a global movement that empowers young people to use their voices and create positive change.

One of the most important things I gained from this experience was confidence. Before joining the programme, I was often hesitant to communicate in English on my own. During the Street Child World Cup, I challenged myself to speak with young people from different countries without relying on anyone to translate for me. Every conversation helped me improve my language skills and gave me more confidence. This experience motivated me to continue learning and developing my English.

A moment that will always stay with me was speaking during the opening ceremony. It was the first time I had ever delivered a speech in English in front of such a large audience. I felt nervous, but also proud of myself for stepping out of my comfort zone. That moment showed me how much I was capable of achieving when I believed in myself.

I also had the opportunity to take part in the Congress, where I facilitated an interactive activity. Seeing young people participate, engage, and enjoy the session reminded me of the importance of creating spaces where everyone feels included and heard.

What made this experience truly special was the connection between the Young Leaders. Despite coming from different countries and cultures, we supported and encouraged one another as if we had known each other for years. We shared our stories, learned from one another, and built friendships that continue to inspire me today. Every Young Leader carries a story, a message, and hopes they want to share with the world.

These hopes are not only personal but also represent entire communities. We are voices for many children around the world, and we are proof that when young people are empowered and given opportunities, they can become leaders, inspire change, and create a better future for others.

The Street Child World Cup may have come to an end, but its impact continues every day through the young people whose lives it touched, and I will always be grateful for the role it played in shaping who I am today.



AYA HABAYEB

STREET CHILD
UNITED

YOUNG LEADER



The story of the Street Child World Cup

In May 2026, the Street Child World Cup returned to Mexico City, bringing together 28 teams of young people from 20 countries to show what is possible when those too often excluded are placed at the centre of the global stage. Delivered in partnership with Fútbol Más México and the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS), whose commitment, expertise and support were instrumental to the success of the tournament, the event created a powerful platform for young people to be seen, heard and celebrated.

Through football, arts, and advocacy, participants challenged stereotypes, shared their experiences, and called for change. Throughout the tournament, they stood before political leaders, government representatives, celebrities and global influencers - including the President of Mexico and members of U2 - to demand a world where every child is recognised, respected and included.

More than a tournament, Street Child World Cup 2026 was a powerful demonstration of young people's potential and right to be heard, declaring to the world,

"I AM SOMEBODY!"



Meet the Girls' Teams Demands for Change



BOLIVIA, FUNDACION ALALAY

- Education and equal opportunities for girls
- No discrimination and no more violence
- Dignity, identity and the right to be heard
- Hope, protection, and emotional support



BRAZIL, EN BUSCA DE UNA ESTRELLA

- Increase & improve public transport provision especially for safety of women
- Increase security work to reduce violence against women
- Improve the public education system
- Put more women in power



CANADA, REVES PASSION MONTREAL

- Access to education for all children without fear or worry
- Clear legal protection for children's lives and privacy
- More psychologists & wellbeing support in schools
- Better trained and educated teachers



ENGLAND, EVERTON IN THE COMMUNITY

- Open-mindedness from governments and society
- Equal rights, pay, opportunities, and respect for women and men
- Free sanitary products for everyone who needs them



GERMANY, HAWAR HELP

- To stop deportation of innocent people
- Right to healthcare for everyone
- Faster access to citizenship & equal treatment in schools
- Strong protections around social media for minors



INDIA, KARUNALAYA

- Legal identity documents, including birth certificates, parental documents & certificates
- Safe and free housing with sanitation & hygiene for street-connected communities
- Free, quality education, food, and healthcare
- Protection from violence for street children



KENYA, ZEBSTRONG

- Job & employment opportunities with good salaries
- An end to corruption in the government
- Free, quality education, and access to hospitals and the resources people need



MEXICO, IMSS

- Free schools with quality education
- Help and shelters for people living on the streets
- Fairer and better public officials
- Streets and public spaces adapted for disabled people



MEXICO, MAS SUEÑOS

- More campaigns against gender-based violence
- Family psychologists in sports centres and reflective conversations about emotions in our communities
- Actions from government, deputies, majors, and society
- More sports scholarships



PALESTINE, PS4L

- Protests, social media action and representation for Palestine
- Safe spaces, better healthcare, and better education
- Rules that protect young people's privacy and potential
- Government responsibility and compensation for harm



SOUTH AFRICA, SPORTING CHANCE

- More girls' participation in sport without inequality or discrimination
- Policies that accommodate everyone of all ages
- A revised education system with more practical subjects and covers the topic of peer pressure
- More job opportunities



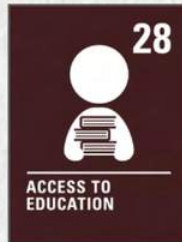
USA, STREET SOCCER USA

- Access to sport for all
- Fairer redistribution of taxes
- Free healthcare, education, and job equality
- Stronger government support for non-profit organisations



WALES, BLAENAU GWENT YOUTH SERVICES

- Girls-only football spaces
- Safe spaces for girls and young people
- Wellbeing and support in schools
- Equal opportunities for everyone
- More activities and support for children



**GIRLS ALSO HAVE THE POTENTIAL.
THEY DO HAVE THE SAME POTENTIAL AS BOYS
AND IT'S IMPORTANT THAT THEY HAVE THE
OPPORTUNITIES TO EXCEL**

Andrea, Team USA Girls - Street Soccer USA



Meet the Boys' Teams Demands for Change



ARGENTINA, HURACAN FOUNDATION

- Unity within our communities
- Petitions to government for improvements in health, roads, education, and jobs
- Better integration of rural areas, and community meetings to solve social problems



BRAZIL, STREET CHILD UNITED BRAZIL

- More social projects for young people
- Government support for children and families
- Better security in our communities
- Real pathways to financial stability
- Better education



CHILE, FUTBOL MAS

- More safety in our country
- Improvements in the quality of education
- Protection for Choluta Law and animal welfare
- Gender equality
- Economic improvement and opportunity



EGYPT, NAFAS / ASPIRE

- Affordable, good-quality education & better public medical care
- Good work opportunities for young people
- Sports to be accessible to everyone and all genders
- Fairness of speech and equal services for all citizens, regardless of religious background



HUNGARY, SECOND CHANCE

- More governments funding for doctors and health services
- Big companies to support underserved people
- Quality education for ordinary people
- Stronger protection for children
- Voters to think critically



MEXICO IKOOTS, FUTBOL MAS

- Better homes and safer living conditions
- Free, accessible psychological support
- Support from institutions, citizens and our communities
- Respect for our rights and the ability to demand them
- Stronger family and community support



INDIA, YFC

- Free, quality education with good teachers in rural areas
- Basic free health facilities for everyone
- Equal access to sports infrastructure, coaches and opportunities
- Ethical political leadership that pays attention to society
- Basic livelihood support, including clothes, shelter, & food



INDONESIA, YAYASAN KDM

- Simpler procedures for obtaining legal identity
- Stronger family-based and alternative care
- Better child protection systems and regulations
- More social security, aid and funding for children in need
- Live with education, shelter, safety, identity, support, happiness, wellbeing, and healthcare



MALAYSIA, YAYASAN CHOW KIT

- Stronger emotional and mental health support
- Family care that supports rather than pressures young people
- Discipline that is balanced with wellbeing
- Support systems that help young people grow sustainably



BORUSSIA ACNUR

- An end to discrimination
- Access to money and legal status
- Protection from bad influences that make young people lose focus
- Emotional support and protection of confidence



MEXICO, FUTBOL MAS

- Spaces that support comprehensive development
- Awareness of the scale of deaths caused by violence
- Educational scholarships that also support recreational activities
- Maintained public spaces
- More rubbish bins on streets to prevent flooding caused by waste



MEXICO, IMSS

- Maintenance repair of streets
- More support for hospitals
- A reduction of taxes
- Better security across the country



PAKISTAN, MUSLIM HANDS

- Free, quality education; trained teachers, books, uniforms, free lunch, playgrounds, and school buses
- Better healthcare in our communities
- More job opportunities
- Financial support for families



USA, DC SCORES

- Food recognised as a human rights
- Rent control and affordable housing
- Government support for parents
- Equitable access to equality education
- Investment in school programmes & community infrastructure



WALES, SWANSEA FOUNDATION

- Free buses to school and uniform donations
- Good teachers and strong school structures
- Social services that provide the right care for street-connected children
- Free education for doctors and nurses
- Weekly medical check-ins and safeguarding reform



“

I WOULD SAY TODAY THAT FOOTBALL CAN BE BEAUTIFUL. YOU CAN MEET PEOPLE OF ALL COUNTRIES ...AND STILL FIGHT FOR OUR DREAMS

Dominik, Team Borussia ACNUR

”

THE POWER OF FOOTBALL

The football at Street Child World Cup 2026 was competitive, inspiring and fiercely contested, with young people competing for visibility and national pride on a global stage. Teams began their journey in Oaxtepec, Morelos, where they competed in classification and group stage matches at the Athletes' Village. The strongest performers progressed to the knockout rounds, with the semi-finals and finals taking place at Parque Ecológico Texcoco in Mexico City.

Brazil (Street Child United Brazil) were crowned champions of the Boys' Cup, while Team Mexico Girls (Mas Sueños A.C.) made history as the first Mexican team to win the Girls' Cup. Indonesia (Yayasan KDM) lifted the Boys' Shield and Brazil (Em Busca de Uma Estrela) claimed the Girls' Shield, capping off a week of exceptional skill, determination and teamwork.

“

SOCCER IS A PLACE WHERE I CAN FEEL GOOD ABOUT MYSELF, HAVE FUN, AND BUILD NEW, LASTING FRIENDSHIPS. IT MEANS A LOT TO ME.

Julia, Team Mexico Girls & SCWC 2026 Winner

”



The finals provided a fitting stage for the tournament's message. Members of U2 were in attendance, with Larry Mullen Jr. performing the ceremonial coin toss before the first final on the Bank of America pitch.

Surrounding the field were eight transformed school buses, creating an urban stadium that echoed the spirit of Bank of America's Soccer at Schools campaign. Each bus had been painted with demands and messages from the young people, including "I AM SOMEBODY", "Never give up on your dreams", "Equality brings unity" and "Less aggression, more football, more love". Surrounding the pitch, they laid a powerful backdrop, transforming the football into something bigger: a declaration to the world that street-connected young people are here, and they deserve to be seen, heard, and listened to.



More than a tournament, every match created a platform for participants to express their identity, showcase their potential, and challenge the perceptions that too often define how street-connected young people are seen by society.



“

THE FACT THAT THEY CAN COME TOGETHER MEANS THAT THE WHOLE WORLD COULD COME TOGETHER IF LIKE WE'VE REALLY TRIED. BECAUSE THIS WHOLE EVENT IS ABOUT OVERCOMING OUR DIFFERENCES AND EXPLAINING WHAT'S GOING ON IN OUR COUNTRY.

Marchello, Team USA Boys - DC Scores

”

“

THE PEOPLE I'VE MET THROUGH FOOTBALL ARE VERY IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN MY LIFE AND THEY'VE GIVEN ME A DIFFERENT WAY OF LOOKING AT THE WORLD. I THINK I USED TO LIVE IN A BIT OF A BUBBLE, AND THEN FOOTBALL CAME ALONG AND COMPLETELY CHANGED THE WAY I SEE THE WORLD, AND TODAY I'M A MUCH BETTER PERSON.

Nicolly, Team Brazil Girls - Em Busca de Uma Estrela

”

THE MAGIC OF THE ARTS

Closely aligned with the event's Congress sessions, the arts activities invited teams to use images as a way of communicating ideas, advocating for change and representing themselves confidently through visual storytelling. Art has the power to communicate across languages and cultures, and throughout Street Child World Cup 2026, drawing and design became powerful tools for amplifying the voices of young people.

Delivered in partnership with Bath Spa University, the programme featured a series of workshops designed to explore identity, community and change. Teams began by reimagining their national flags, creating collaborative designs that celebrated what made them proud of where they come from while building a sense of collective identity.



Participants then created individual "I AM SOMEBODY" posters, combining words, images and graphic techniques to communicate who they are and what they care about. Together, these hundreds of unique posters formed a powerful collective statement that was later animated and showcased during the General Assembly.

Young people also produced personal zines - small handmade magazines that encouraged reflection on their past, present and future. Through messages of gratitude, hope and aspiration, participants documented their journeys and imagined the futures they wanted to create for themselves and their communities.

Alongside these activities, participants contributed to a series of textile banners featuring words, demands and messages developed through Congress discussions. Teams also designed football-inspired hexagon artworks that visualised the changes they wanted to see in the world. These designs were transformed into a 3D animation shown during the General Assembly, connecting the language of football with the collective calls for change emerging from the tournament.



Displayed throughout the event, the artwork, textiles, and animations provided a powerful visual expression of the hopes, identities and ambitions of participants, ensuring that creativity and advocacy remained closely intertwined throughout Street Child World Cup 2026.



“

Working closely with the teams in Mexico is something I am very proud of. Being able to create with some talented designers to capture and document the tournament is an exciting thing to do, and to work directly with the teams in workshops was a real privilege.

People often ask me what a Street Child World Cup is really like. I find it almost impossible to describe, but through the arts it becomes much easier to capture the mood, atmosphere, energy and pace of such a unique event. Alongside that, being able to use drawing as a form of storytelling to advocate for change is a very powerful thing.

Tim Vyner, Professor of Illustration at Bath Spa University & SCU Arts Manager

”



THE LATE SHOWS



As the sun set on each day of the Street Child World Cup, the Late Shows brought the tournament community together through celebration, creativity and culture.

More than football, the Street Child World Cup is a celebration of identity, community and culture from around the world, and nowhere was that clearer than during the Late Shows. Each evening, teams took to the stage to share a piece of home through dance, music, poetry, drama and storytelling.

The first Late Show began with dance circles and a snaking conga line to Shakira's Waka Waka (This Time for Africa), setting the tone for a night full of energy and joy. The Mexican boys opened the performances with a dramatic take on Lucha Libre, while the Kenyan girls delivered a powerful piece exploring how sport can offer hope in the face of poverty.

From traditional Malaysian dance and intricate Indian choreography to Brazilian funk, a Justin Bieber-inspired performance from the Canadian girls and the Bolivian girls twirling across the stage in flowing white dresses, every team brought something unique.

The Late Shows created a space where young people could express themselves beyond football, celebrate their identities and learn from one another's cultures.

Long after the performances ended, the dancing continued - turning each evening into a vibrant reminder that the Street Child World Cup is as much about connection, creativity and belonging as it is about competition on the pitch.



ADVOCACY IN ACTION

The Street Child World Cup is not simply a football tournament. It's a platform for street-connected young people to make their voices heard and speak directly to those in power to drive lasting change.

The Rights Framework

Everything Street Child United advocates for is grounded in a clear and authoritative legal framework: **UN General Comment No. 21 on Children in Street Situations (GC21)**. GC21 is a formal legal interpretation issued by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Adopted in 2017, it is the most comprehensive and authoritative international document ever produced specifically on the rights of street-connected young people. It covers the full range of rights relevant to their lives: legal identity and birth registration, access to education, health, protection from violence and exploitation, non-discrimination, and the right to participate in the decisions that affect them.

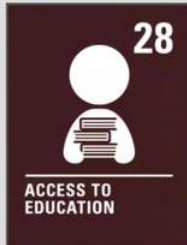
Its central finding is unambiguous: street situations are created by systemic failures, not individual circumstances. Governments have a duty to address those root causes. SCU's advocacy does not ask governments to do something new. It holds them to account for obligations they have already accepted.

The SCWC congress model - in which street-connected young people draft and present their own formal declarations - is itself an expression of a right recognised under **GC21: the right of street-connected young people to participate directly in the political processes that shape their lives.**



The Four Pillars

Access to Education



Article 28 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes every child's right to education. For street-connected young people, this right is routinely denied – not through individual misfortune, but through structural barriers: lack of legal identity, discrimination, and policies that exclude young people without fixed addresses or formal documentation. Street-connected young people are demanding that governments dismantle those barriers and create inclusive education systems that reflect the realities of their lives.

Access to Identity



Articles 7 and 8 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child establish every child's right to legal identity, including birth registration. An estimated 150 million children worldwide do not officially exist – no birth certificate, no legal recognition, and therefore no enforceable access to any of the rights they are owed. Without identity, no other right can be claimed. Street-connected young people are demanding universal, free, and accessible birth registration – and flexible recognition mechanisms for those already without documentation.



Protection from Violence



Articles 19 and 39 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child establish every child's right to freedom from all forms of violence. For street-connected young people, violence is both a cause and a consequence of their situation. Street-connected young people are demanding legal frameworks that protect rather than criminalise them, an end to the criminalisation of survival behaviours, and accountability mechanisms that apply to all perpetrators of violence.

Gender Equality



Article 2 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes every child's right to non-discrimination. Street-connected young women and girls face compounding barriers and heightened exposure to gender-based violence across all four pillars. Gender equality is not a separate agenda – it is foundational to all of them. In the congress sessions at SCWC 2026, young women and girls led on this pillar: setting the agenda, naming the barriers they face, and demanding that gender equality is embedded in every policy commitment that follows.



Taken together, these four pillars form the basis on which the young people hold governments to account – not through persuasion, but through the obligations they are already bound by. When street-connected young people present their declarations at the General Assembly, they are not asking for goodwill. They are demanding fulfilment of rights that are already recognised under international law. And when governments make commitments in response, those commitments are measured against the same standard: GC21, the UNCRC, and the framework that states have already accepted.

Congress Sessions

During the Street Child World Cup, all 28 teams of young people took part in congress sessions – structured spaces in which they discussed their lived experiences, learned about their rights, agreed on shared demands, and drafted formal declarations rooted in their human rights. The declarations are not wish lists. They are rights-based demands from young people who are recognised under international law as rights-holders.

The sessions were youth-led. Trained facilitators were present to support the process, but the agenda belonged to the young people themselves. Working through structured discussions rooted in their lived experiences, each team developed their own country-specific declaration – a formal, rights-based statement of the changes their communities need and are demanding. These were not talking points handed to them. They were demands the young people arrived at themselves, grounded in what they know, what they have experienced, and what they are owed.

From those 28 team declarations, representatives from each team came together to create a single SCWC 2026 United Declaration, a collective statement of demands from street-connected young people across the world, presented as one unified voice to governments, institutions and decision-makers. This process was democratic, structured, and entirely led by the young people at its centre. The United Declaration does not speak for street-connected young people. It was made by them.





United Declaration of the Street Child World Cup Mexico '26



We are a voice of the people. We may face different struggles, speak different languages, and come from different countries, but we are one team.



We deserve education that is free, flexible, and accessible for all. We need teachers who care and who are trained to support our wellbeing and protect us from bullying. We need safe, well equipped schools with resources, available transport, and free school meals.



We deserve free accessible healthcare and clean public spaces. We need to prioritize public health over funding wars. We need to improve waiting time to receive medical care. We need accessible roads to hospitals and infrastructure to manufacture medication locally. We need environmental protection: clean air, public hygiene, and better waste management.



We deserve the right to automatic and free identity by birth. It is a government responsibility to provide the foundational documents of identity through which all resources can be accessed. By giving us our legal identity, you are giving us our respect and dignity.



We deserve protection in our homes, public spaces, and in our schools. No child should live under occupation; living in fear of forces entering their homes, schools or communities. We need to be able to trust our authorities to protect us from any type of violence. Governments need to give people access to basic services as this alleviates poverty and violence; hence, providing more protection. Every child deserves protection so we are able to achieve our dreams.



We are resilient people. Our voices matter. We are different but united. We are not only representing our nations and our flags, but we are also representing each unique member of our teams.



This is what it means to be somebody.



The General Assembly

The General Assembly is the advocacy centrepiece of the Street Child World Cup. It is where street-connected young people take centre stage, present their demands to those in power, and declare to the world: I Am Somebody.

The 2026 General Assembly took place at Mexico City's historic Teatro Hidalgo – a fitting setting for a moment of real political and historical significance. The theatre brought together inspiring street-connected young people from across the world alongside a gathering of senior figures from government, diplomacy, and civil society. That Bono and The Edge from U2 were in attendance – and took their seats alongside President Sheinbaum – spoke to the global significance of what was taking place.

The morning opened with addresses from Street Child United CEO John Wroe and Fútbol Más CEO Ignacio Gómez, followed by speeches from Zoé Robledo, Director General of the Mexican Institute of Social Security (IMSS), and Gabriela Cuevas, the Mexican Government's official representative for the organisation of the 2026 FIFA World Cup. SCU young leaders also took to the stage, offering powerful first-hand testimony that set the tone for everything that followed.

Then the President of Mexico, Dr. Claudia Sheinbaum, addressed the Assembly. For the young people in that theatre, it was a moment they will carry with them. For street-connected communities around the world, it was a significant act of political visibility – a signal from the highest levels of government that they are being heard.

The British and Canadian Ambassadors to Mexico, Susannah Goshko CMG and Cameron MacKay then addressed the Assembly, followed by the Mexican representative of the UNHCR – who also presented SCU CEO John Wroe with an award in recognition of Street Child United's work with street-connected young people worldwide.

A filmed message from football icon David Beckham reinforced the moment, as he wished the teams well, and described the tournament as more than football, recognizing the incredible achievement for all involved.

Then it was the young people's turn. Teams from across the 20 nations took centre stage and delivered performances of real power and creativity – song, dance, and drama woven together with direct demands for change. They spoke about discrimination, about being denied their right to learn, about protection from violence, and about gender equality. They spoke about their own lives and the lives of young people in their communities. And they presented their rights-based demands, developed through the congress sessions, grounded in international law, and directed at every government and institution represented in that room.

At the Street Child World Cup, success is not measured in goals scored. It is measured in the commitments made. The 2026 General Assembly was where that process began.



“

We fight every single day so that the dream of every girl and every boy, in every forgotten corner of the world, has imagination as its only limit. Let the football roll where the pain used to roll, so that never again shall we see war steal humankind's hope. Let the violence be silenced. Let the music play. Let the people's joy make noise, but also the passionate scream of Goal!

- Claudia Sheinbaum, President of Mexico

”

THE YOUNG LEADERS

The Street Child World Cup exists to create lasting change. At the heart of this is the Young Leaders programme, bringing together former participants who continue to advocate for the rights of street-connected young people in their communities and on the global stage.



Eleven Young Leaders - Ailyn Lopez (USA), Ana Noemi Pichardo (USA), Aya Mazen Habayeb (Palestine), Ayub Manasseh Kariuki (Kenya), Deyna Mamani (Bolivia), Dzsesszika Nikolett Szlavik (Hungary), Jhoselyn Apaza Mamani (Bolivia), Leslie Rojas (USA), Sabin Kumar Thakur (Nepal), Sam Richards (UK), and Yoselyn Rodriguez (USA) - arrived in Mexico City as leaders.

They played a central role throughout the tournament, featuring in the Opening Ceremony, leading the General Assembly, acting as mentors, supporting advocacy sessions, and representing Street Child United at a roundtable hosted by the British Embassy in Mexico,

where they shared their experiences directly with diplomats and partners.

The Young Leaders were spokespeople for the Street Child World Cup. They represented the collective voice of this year's participants, championing their demands for change while demonstrating what is possible when young people are given a platform and trusted to lead. As they return home, they will continue to carry the messages and demands of the Street Child World Cup into their communities and onto the global stage, ensuring that the voices of street-connected young people continue to be seen, heard and acted upon long after the final whistle.



ONE THING I WOULD LIKE READERS TO UNDERSTAND ABOUT THE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO PARTICIPATED IS THAT ALTHOUGH THEY FACE THEIR OWN STRUGGLES IN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES, THEY ARE SOMEBODY - SOMEBODY WHO IS A FOOTBALL PLAYER, SOMEBODY WHO DESERVES RIGHTS, AND SOMEBODY WHO DESERVES A FIGHTING CHANCE

Leslie Rojas, SCU Young Leaders (USA)



UNHCR Award presented to SCU CEO



From the moment UNHCR Mexico learned about the Street Child World Cup 2026, we were excited to be part of it. Together with the Borussia Dortmund Academy, we helped create a team that brought together refugee youth and Mexican young people from vulnerable backgrounds, giving them the opportunity to participate directly in this extraordinary experience. Their enthusiasm, pride, and sense of belonging demonstrated the powerful impact of the tournament. This year's edition included the largest number of refugee participants in its history. UNHCR was proud to recognize John Wroe, whose vision, determination, and leadership transformed a simple idea into a global movement that continues to open doors and change the lives of young people around the world.

- Chiara Cardoletti - Representative for UNHCR Mexico



Roundtable with Chris Elmore MP & the British Ambassador's Reception

On the margins of the tournament, street-connected young people took their demands directly into one of the most significant diplomatic spaces of SCWC 2026.

Chris Elmore MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, chaired a dedicated roundtable with SCU Young Leaders and Team Leaders at the British Ambassador's Residence. Young Leaders led the discussion - sharing their lived experiences and presenting their demands directly to a government minister with the power to act on them. The conversation focused on how the government and sport sector can do more to advance street child rights: not as a question of goodwill, but of obligation. It was exactly the kind of direct access that the Street Child World Cup exists to create - decision-makers in the room, young people setting the agenda.



Katie Hannam BEM - Head of Foreign Policy for the British Embassy in Mexico City



SCU Young Leaders & Rt Hon. Chris Elmore MP

Following the roundtable, Ambassador Susannah Goshko CMG hosted a reception at the British Ambassador's Residence, bringing together diplomats, partners and supporters from across the tournament. Gabriela Cuevas joined SCU CEO, John Wroe, and Fútbol Más CEO, Ignacio Gómez - a moment that captured the range and depth of the partnerships at the heart of SCWC 2026, and the growing coalition of governments and institutions committed to turning the tournament's advocacy into lasting reform.



Left to right: Alex White - SCU Chair, Gabriela Cuevas - Representative of Government of Mexico for the FIFA World Cup 2026, John Wroe - SCU CEO, Luis Iván Camacho Morales - IMSS Representative, Ignacio Gomez - CEO Fútbol Más México

"It was a privilege to host Young Leaders from Street Child United, and to hear directly from them about their work and lived experience. What stood out most was their leadership and determination. These young people are not only advocating for their rights - on identity, access to education, protection from violence and gender equality - but are already leading change in their communities.

Football is at the heart of this: beyond being just a game, it is a powerful tool for connection, confidence and opportunity. Through Street Child United, it is helping to amplify voices that too often go unheard."

- Chris Elmore MP

Media

Media and communications created a powerful ripple effect throughout the Street Child World Cup 2026, carrying the stories, messages, and demands of participants far beyond the tournament itself. Coverage spanned news, sport, culture, and entertainment, while social media content, livestreams and high-profile supporters helped bring the event to millions of people worldwide. In doing so, the voices of young people reached audiences they otherwise may never have had access to.

Across the tournament, the SCWC generated significant coverage across news, sport, culture and entertainment media, reaching millions of people globally. Coverage appeared in leading outlets including Reuters, OffBall, Dazed, Billboard and The Big Issue, while Team England Girls were interviewed live on Sky News UK Tonight. Dedicated editorial features from partners including SoccerBible (5.5M followers), SPORF (12.3M followers) and Choose Love (627K followers) helped bring the stories of participants to new and diverse audiences.

Total articles:

915

Total social posts:

906

*Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat

Total social reach:

291M

*No. of followers on socials



OffBall

"The Street Child World Cup might not have the broadcast deals, the sponsorship activations, or the cultural cachet of that little tournament that follows it this summer. But it represents something the FIFA version of the tournament will do well to remember: that at its core, sports belong to everyone."

Daniel Yaw-Miller,
Offball

sky news

"The Street Child World Cup has kicked off in Mexico City with 30 teams of street-connected young people travelling from across the world to take part. The event aims to use the power of football to challenge negative perceptions of disadvantaged young people and call for greater protection and education."

Sarah-Jane Mee,
Sky News, The UK Tonight

deeds.

"In a world where the voices of over 150m young people across the globe goes unheard, The Street Child World Cup aims to be a supportive platform. Established in 2010, The Street Child World Cup has over the years utilised the power of football to give street-connected young people a platform to speak directly to those in power and turn visibility into commitments that drive lasting change."

Ify Obi,
Deeds

office

"The tournament is about unity, opportunity, and hope. On the surface its football, but at the core it is a powerful advocacy for change. It diverts the attention that spectacle events demand of the public eye, taking a moment to shine the spotlight on issues that deserve the same urgent attention. At the same time, it facilitates cultural exchange. Sports, though competitive, are a means of unification; collaboration in the face of division."

Simon Rasmussen,
Office

Across social media, the tournament achieved more than 24,600 forms of engagement, driving significant growth on Street Child United's platforms. The event was amplified by influential voices including Lewis Hamilton, Sir Mo Farah, and President Claudia Sheinbaum.

Sir David Beckham also lent his support, recording a special message for participants that was shared during the event and across Street Child United's channels, before further amplifying the tournament by sharing content to his own social media audience.

The storytelling continues beyond the event. Street Child United's four-part

documentary series is available on YouTube. Meanwhile, content creator Joshua Coombes has produced a short-form interview series exploring the experiences, perspectives and ambitions of participants and team leaders, helping to ensure that the stories behind the tournament continue to reach new audiences in the months ahead.

The finals were also livestreamed by PX Sports, allowing supporters around the world to experience the culmination of the tournament and witness first-hand the talent, leadership and resilience of the young people involved.



Together, these communications efforts transformed Street Child World Cup 2026 from a single event into a global conversation, ensuring that the voices of participants continued to resonate long after the final whistle.



RETURNING AS CHAMPIONS

The Street Child World Cup does not end when the teams board their flights home. For many of the young people who competed in Mexico City, the recognition they received on their return was itself a powerful act of visibility - a signal to their communities, governments and countries that street-connected young people are advocates who deserve to be seen, heard and protected.



SPORTING CHANCE, SOUTH AFRICA GIRLS



One of the South Africa girls' team members, Zethu, was invited to share her experience of the Street Child World Cup in a live interview on one of South Africa's leading radio stations CapeTalk - presenting the voices and demands of street-connected young people directly to the nation.

KDM, INDONESIA: BOY'S SHIELD CHAMPIONS



The India boys' team, who reached the Men's Cup final in Mexico City, were honoured on their return in a ceremony at a cricket match between India and Afghanistan - presented by a Member of Parliament alongside the father of India cricket captain Shubman Gill. For young people whose existence is too often ignored by the systems around them, being recognised on a national sporting stage was a powerful statement of what street-connected young people can achieve.



STREET CHILD UNITED BRAZIL, MEXICO IKOOTS & HURACAN FOUNDATION ARGENTINA - WELCOMED HOME

The SCU Brazil boys returned to their community in Penha, Rio de Janeiro, as Street Child World Cup champions. Ikoots Mexico and the Argentina boys were also welcomed back into their local communities with celebrations in recognition of everything they had achieved in Mexico City. For all three teams, the reception they received at home was a powerful reminder that the impact of the Street Child World Cup is felt not just on the world stage, but in the neighbourhoods and communities these young people come from and represent.



MÁS SUEÑOS, MÉXICO, GIRL'S CUP CHAMPIONS



The Más Sueños girls returned home to formal recognition from the British Embassy in Mexico, who acknowledged the remarkable achievement of the tournament's Women's Cup winners.



YFC RURKA KALAN, INDIA BOYS



The India boys' team, who reached the Men's Cup final in Mexico City, were honoured on their return in a ceremony at a cricket match between India and Afghanistan - presented by a Member of Parliament alongside the father of India cricket captain Shubman Gill. For young people whose existence is too often ignored by the systems around them, being recognised on a national sporting stage was a powerful statement of what street-connected young people can achieve.

SPORTING CHANCE KENYA: GIRL'S CUP FINALISTS



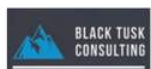
The Kenya girls' team were invited to the Mexican Embassy in Nairobi for the opening ceremony of the FIFA World Cup, where they were formally recognised for their achievements at the Street Child World Cup as part of a celebration that brought the two tournaments together.

MUSLIM HANDS, PAKISTAN BOYS



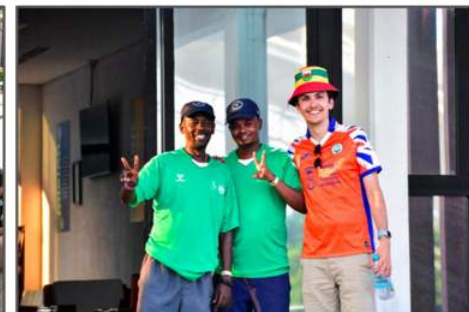
Pakistan midfielder Ibrahim brought the story of the Street Child World Cup to a national audience, appearing on television to reflect on his experience in Mexico City. He spoke about competing on the global stage, the cultural exchange between teams, what he learned about his rights as a street-connected young person, and the friendships he built with young people from across the world. For the many street-connected young people in Pakistan who will never see themselves represented on national television, Ibrahim's appearance was itself an act of advocacy - proof that street-connected young people have stories worth telling and demands worth hearing.

Our Partners



Thank you to our event partners for joining us in championing the incredible young people at the heart of the Street Child World Cup. Your support makes this mission possible.

Special Thanks



To all our volunteers, thank you for being part of the Street Child United family. Your time, care, and commitment help make the Street Child World Cup possible, and ensure that street-connected young people feel seen, heard, and protected.