



State of the World's Street Children: Violence

6. SARAH THOMAS DE BENÍTEZ

Born in Manchester, England, Sarah has spent twenty years working as practitioner, consultant and academic to improve the well-being of street children. Arriving in Mexico in 1985 as a young diplomat in the British Embassy, Sarah resigned from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1988 to join the International Children's Trust as its first Latin American field director. Together with husband Gabriel Benítez de Thomas, Sarah co-founded the first 'JUCONI' Foundation (Junto Con Los Niños) for street children in Puebla, Mexico, serving as Executive Director for six years and President for nine. JUCONI Mexico was quickly recognized by UNESCO as an 'Innovator in Education'. In 1994, Gabriel and Sarah co-founded a second JUCONI Foundation in Ecuador, serving as co-directors until Gabriel's death in 1996. Sarah then led the pioneering inter-institutional META Project, developing a methodology from the practices of four NGOs to improve the quality of services for street children in Latin America. Since 2000, Sarah has advised governments and NGOs across Africa, Asia and Latin America on their programmes for street children. Sarah received her Master's in Public Policy at Princeton University and a second Master's in Social Policy at the London School of Economics (LSE), recently submitting her PhD thesis to the LSE's Social Policy Department on street children's experiences of social policies in Mexico.

Mother of Biko (16) and Vita (11), Sarah is currently a research fellow at the LSE for the Economic & Social Research Council's Identity & Social Action project: 'The Multiple Childhoods of Mexican 'Street' Children' and a consultant to NGOs in South America. She plans to take a bit of a rest in 2008.

Publications include:

- "Bodies on the Line: Identity Markers Among Mexican Street Youth" (2008) in *Children's Geographies*, Special Issue on 'Contested Bodies.' Co-authored with Herrera, E. and Jones, G.
- "Tears, Trauma and Suicide: Everyday Violence among Street Youth in Puebla, Mexico." (2007) *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 26(4): 462–479. Co-authored with Jones, G. and Herrera, E.
- "Reactive, Protective and Rights-Based Approaches in Work with Homeless Street Youth" (2003). *Children, Youth and Environments*, 13(1).
- "Approaches to Reducing Poverty and Conflict in an Urban Age: The Case of Homeless Street Children" (2003) in Ch. 9 of *Youth Explosion in Developing World Cities*. USA: Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars.
- *Green Light for Street Children's Rights* (2002). Brussels: European Network for Street Children Worldwide.
- *What Works for Street Children: the JUCONI Programmes* (2001). Baltimore: International Youth Foundation
- "The CRC and Street Children's Rights - a Framework for Analysis" (2000). *Working Paper*, Centre for Research on Child Wellbeing Princeton University.
- *Creando soluciones para niños en situación de calle* (1999). México: META & UNESCO.