



I want to be a stuntman and work in Bollywood when I grow up. I will do better, I know, because I will speak with the heroes in English. Akshay Kumar is my favorite because he is an action star and also very handsome.

I am studying in a municipal school. But I spend most of my time helping my father in his roadside tea stall. Many students and working people come here. They often carry an English newspaper. I ask them for the newspaper to practice English. Now I speak in English with other people who know English.

Photo Story by **Abhijeet Singh**, University Student

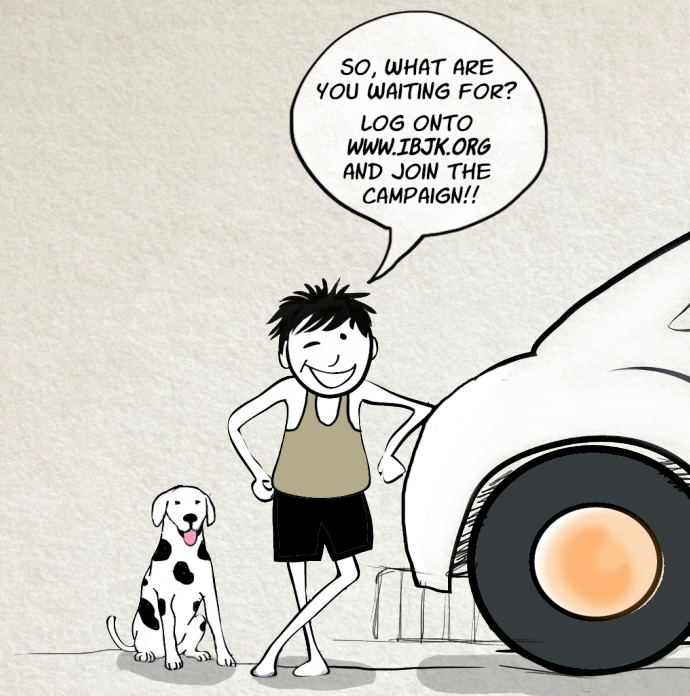
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### About ActionAid India

ActionAid India, is an anti-poverty agency working in India since 1972. In the 25 states and 1 union territory that we work in, we reach out to over 6 million people who belong to marginalised and socially excluded communities. All our efforts across the regions we work in, are striving to build a sustainable and socially just future for the communities we work with. Children's education, nutrition and protection are at the centre of our focus, in each of these initiatives. We measure the progress of our work by the progress that children and women in the communities achieve. For more: [www.actionaid.org/india](http://www.actionaid.org/india)

### About CHETNA

CHETNA (Childhood Enhancement Through Training and Action) is a grass-roots Indian NGO working for the empowerment of street and working children in Delhi and neighboring states. CHETNA believes that children are not on the street by choice, but because they are left with no other alternative. For more: [www.chetnango.org](http://www.chetnango.org)

# TALES OF THE STREETS TOLD BY ITS CHILDREN



Tales of the streets. Told by its children

A campaign by  
**act:onaid**

Supported by







Staying out in the hot sun,  
chasing sparrows, bulbuls and butterflies  
the quarrels over playing with dolls  
falling from swings then springing up again,  
trinkets made of brass  
those souvenirs of broken bangles  
those paper boats, those puddles of rain

~Translation of a song by Sudarshan Faakir

Childhood is a memory we love going back to. The playing grounds, those friends, the several pranks we pulled at each other, the playing in the rain.... How lucky we were and how lucky we are.

## IS EVERY CHILDHOOD A HAPPY ONE?

Is every childhood a happy one? Are all children that lucky? Every day, in the many trips we make back and forth, through the busy streets of Delhi, we come across numerous children who are living on the streets and struggling to survive a childhood that we cannot imagine. Studies estimate that this city has at least 50,000 children who are forced to live on its streets. Sleeping underneath the flyovers, near railway tracks, on footpaths these children are subjected to a childhood that robs them off

their rights, their dignity and the nurturing care needed to build a productive life for themselves and their own. Faced with harassment, abuse and neglect, the hard lives lived by street children in many ways reflect the failure that we are as a society.

When Nelson Mandela reminded us that a society's soul is best revealed by the way it treats its children – it pushes us to wonder – what do we make of Delhi our own city and its society? What lead us to fail our children at such a massive scale? Why does it not hurt our conscience and how are we able to continue to ignore it? The sight confronts us everyday -- children forced to beg at the traffic lights, a scene so routine that we have stopped seeing them? Have we stopped caring?

## WHAT IS 'IBN BATTUTTA KA JOOTA' ?

*Ibn Battutta Ka Joota* is a campaign that seeks to make a difference for street children. The name of the campaign is inspired from poet Sarveshwar Dayal Saxena's popular children's rhyme by the same name. Ibn Battutta is said to be the world's greatest traveller and thus epitomizes the situation forced upon street children in a positive way. *Ibn Battutta Ka Joota* seeks to activate the passive spectator amongst us into an advocate for street children. It seeks to turn our focus back to these children and their lives and highlight their aspirations and desires. It is an attempt to bring out stories of street children in a collaborative way, where any one of us can become a storyteller. It is only when we start listening to street children and talking about them that action can be taken to secure their rights.

*Ibn Battutta Ka Joota*, is a people's campaign, which is aimed at making Delhi a child-friendly city – where we are able to help children living on streets reclaim a childhood worth living and remembering.

**ActionAid India** and **CHETNA** are two voluntary organisations that are creating this opportunity for citizens of Delhi to collectively bring focus on the issue of street children and together think of ideas and plans that can help children forced to live on the streets of this city, change their lives for better. The aim is to turn this into a people's movement where individuals, organisations and the government can come together and work on mission-mode to make Delhi a child-friendly city.

## HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE?

It's easy. Look around you and play the role of a messenger for a child living on the street. Let your camera capture her life and let your pen become her voice. What we require from you is a photograph of the child whose messenger you would like to become and a description of the child in not less than 200 words. There are of course things to remember while photographing a child. We also have tips to help you make your story as close to the reader's heart as possible.

We will circulate these stories through social media to build a campaign of awareness on the rights of street children. Through this campaign we will create a critical mass of public opinion and advocates of the rights of street children to design and implement interventions with the help of civil society organizations and the government to put street children back to where they belong – in school, at play and at home!

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## THINGS TO REMEMBER WHILE PHOTOGRAPHING A CHILD

\*Treat a child with respect and care \* Never make the child uncomfortable \* Please avoid revealing the identity of a child who may have undergone abuse of any kind \* Try and capture a happy posture as the campaign wants to highlight the positive side of children \* Even if you want to capture a hardship faced by child, the treatment should keep in mind child's dignity and privacy \* Please take consent of the child and where possible, his/her guardian's \* **DO SEND** an additional photo that does not show the child's face directly.

For a detailed list of rules visit - [www.ibkj.org](http://www.ibkj.org)

## TIPS TO REMEMBER WHILE WRITING THE CHILD'S STORY

Keep it original. The story should briefly provide the everyday life of the child, how and what forced her to come on the streets, her dreams and aspirations. Write in first person using her quotes, as if it is being written by the child. Keep it simple and honest. Every child is unique and every child has a story we can all learn from.