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Street Angels: a child's view of Kabul

October 4, 2014



There are an estimated six million children working part or full time on the streets of Afghanistan. A photography project which gave cameras to some of these children shows us a unique perspective on their lives.

A project run by the French Institute in Kabul – street children were given cameras and asked to document their lives from their perspective. The resulting best photos were displayed at an exhibition at the Institute.

The children were followed, getting an insight into life working on the street as they try to balance attending school with supporting their families – and see what new opportunities this introduction into the world of photography has given them.

Abdul Mutin, one of the childrens, said “My name is Abdul Mutin, I am 13 years old and I am a student at Aziz Afghan High School. I work in Pul-e-Surkh, Kabul.

I wash cars and polish shoes. In the morning after prayers I go to the Mosque. I then have breakfast and leave for school at 9.00. After school I come home at 13.30. After eating lunch I go out and work until 22.00.”



Around Kabul and across much of Afghanistan there are thousands of children like Mutin who work to support their families for a variety of reasons.

“The situation in Afghanistan now is good, better than in the past. The security is good now and you see many buildings under construction. The streets are cleaner too, but unfortunately poor people still struggle with their expenses.

His father is old and sick so Mutin must work to support us,” Abdul Mutin’s mother said.

A project called Street Angels, organised by the French Institute in Kabul, gave cameras to children working on the streets and asked them to document their lives from their perspective. The resulting best photos were displayed at an exhibition at the Institute.

“A man came to me and asked if I wanted to learn to be a photographer. He told me there is a course where you will learn and get 200 Afghani [under \$4] a day. So I went to their office and met a foreigner called Guy. He taught us how to use a camera,” Mutin said.



Safia Farahmand Amiry, Coordinator, Street Angels project, said “There is around six million children in Afghanistan that are working on the street, and that’s really a disappointing number because these children are the next generation of this country, and if you want to develop this country, let’s start with these children.”

“Photography is an art but it is also about telling the stories of people and about environment. So when they are doing this, it doesn’t mean that they will only be only going to do photography. They will then maybe decide to do architecture, maybe they will become engineers, maybe they will become town planners. Because what they are depicting, showing here is very interesting images of buildings, and of spaces and of people,” Nurjehan Mawani, Aga Khan diplomatic representative for Afghanistan said.

Mutin said “My pictures show the situation in Afghanistan. The lives of the workers and the poor people here in Afghanistan.”