

**LbE**

**Nr. 9 Civil society and political commitment**

**Rehabilitation of street children - Democratic Republic of Congo**

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**1 female off voice (Feature-Text + Outro)**

**2 fictional characters (Intro+ Dialog) :**

- **Philomène (name can be changed):** young woman who knows a lot,  
Alphonse's big sister

- **Alphonse (name can be changed):** young man who is more naive, asks  
a lot of questions, Philomene's younger brother

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**6 voice overs :** - **the preacher Tshisuku Tshiaka (ca. 50-year-old man)**

- **Baby Ntumba (30-year-old man)**

- **Koba (15-year-old teenager, male)**

- **Galvanie (17-year-old teenager, male)**

- **Solange Ghonda (ca. 40-year-old woman)**

- **Antho Ntumba (ca. 45-year-old woman)**

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**Teaser LbE**

**Alphonse:**

Hello Philomène and hello everybody!

**Philomène :**

Hello Alphonse!

**Alphonse :**

Welcome to our Learning by Ear series on civil society and civil participation.

**Philomène :**

Today we're focusing on street children and, more precisely, how they are reintegrated into society.

**Alphonse :**

How they are what?

**Philomène :**

How they're reintegrated -- the way they readapt to society in order to lead a more or less "normal" life.

**Alphonse :**

And where are we going?

**Philomène :**

To a special center -- the Kinsupa center -- which gives a second chance to young children. We're heading to the Democratic Republic of Congo, to the capital Kinshasa, or just nearby:

**Report**

## 1. SFX : Street + children)

### 2. CLIP: preacher (French)

"We've got one child here called Elie. He's seven years old. His mother divorced his father and he came to Kivu when he was very young. His father remarried and his father's new wife had a child. Elie was tortured by his dad when he wet his bed at home. His body is covered in scars. One day, about three months ago, Elie was abandoned near the center with this note in his hands that said Elie was not an orphan and had the words "help me and God will help you". There wasn't an address. If there hadn't been this center, this child would be on the streets."

### Reporter:

The pastor Tshisuku Tshiaka knows hundreds of stories like Elie's. Everyday, he sees dozens of children arrive from the streets of the capital and the surroundings. Tens of thousands of children live on the streets in the cities of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The conflicts that have engulfed the country, poverty and domestic violence are the main reasons for the children running away from home or being abandoned by their parents. These children -- nicknamed Shegue (**pronounce: [ʃege]**) -- are left to their own devices. Often they are reduced to begging. Sometimes they are integrated into gangs. Koba knows all about life on the streets:

### 3. Clip: Koba (Lingala)

"I'm 15 now. I left home a long time ago -- I've been on the streets here in the city center for about six years altogether. It was my decision to leave home. We manage to survive. Our work consists of cleaning cars but we also beg. My friends protect me a lot. Very often we fight among ourselves and then my friends

intervene to separate us but sometimes they also make sure my attacker doesn't touch me again".

**Reporter:**

It is a godsend for the children to come across organizations such as pastor Tshisuku Tshiaka's National Prison Fellowship in Congo. The NGO is based in the eastern periphery of Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Baby Ntumba was saved by the organization at the age of 17. After five years on the streets he was able to receive professional training. Today he's 30 years old.

**4. SFX keyboard + Clip: Baby (Lingala)**

"Now I'm in IT. And I play an important role in this center by doing data entry and IT. I would never have thought this a few years ago when I still lived on the street."

**Alphonse :**

But I can imagine it's not always easy to convince street children to come to such a structure, even if it's an NGO like the Kinsupa center!

**Philomène :**

You're right, the more time you spend on the street the harder it is to make social contacts, to trust others. But listen to Reverend Tshisuku Tshiaka again. He's the NGO's president and he explains how the organization built up trust with the street children:

**5. Clip: Tshisuku Tshiaka (French)**

"Every day, we made an appointment with the children in our church and we fed them a bit. We prepared meals every lunch time for them. Several hundred children came to eat. Then we found this house to rent where we still are and recruited the children; we liaised with social workers and educators and negotiated with the children explaining to them the importance of sleeping at the center and the dangers of sleeping on the streets. These children are not on the street because they want to be. It's because their parents are dead or poor or because they've been accused of witchcraft."

**Reporter:**

For Pastor Tshisuku Tshiaka, the street children are the direct victims of the poverty that has incapacitated the country. This is why NGOs such as the National Prison Fellowship are so important because not only do they offer young people a roof over their heads and food but also psychological support as well as the chance to receive education and professional training.

**6. Sound: children singing**

**Reporter:**

Antho Ntumba is a cook at the Kinsupa center.

**7. Clip: Antho Ntumba (Lingala)**

"We give them three meals a day. We try to vary the food so the children get a healthy diet. We look after them and make sure they are clean. We have different ages. Teenagers and younger children. We give a bit more to the older ones. But they all have enough to be full. They eat rice and in the evening I give them manioc with fish or vegetables."

**Reporter:**

About 30 children are learning how to read and write. Pastor Tshisuku explains that education is an important aspect of the rehabilitation center:

**7. Clip: Tshisuku Tshiaka (French)**

"We're not an orphanage; we're an accommodation, reeducation and rehabilitation center. We set aside about 24 months for rehabilitation. We try to bring them to school standard. We also offer professional training courses in dressmaking and carpentry. But we don't have enough equipment because the Congolese government doesn't support the center."

**Reporter:**

Education is one of the Democratic Republic of Congo's major challenges. Today's traumatized children are the adults of tomorrow. Solange Ghonda is the ambassador of the United Nations Children's Children Fund to the Congo:

**8. Clip : Solange Ghonda (French.)**

"Today we're trying to fight for the situation to change and we can't say that nothing has been done. But we don't have the means. That means that some provinces are moving faster than others where things are a bit slow."

**Reporter:**

Faced with a lack of accomodation centers or training, many children are doomed to spend their lives on the streets, begging to survive. But this doesn't mean that the 17-year-old Galvanie has lost hope that one day he will lead a better life:

### **9. Clip: Galvanie (Lingala)**

"I've been on the streets since the age of 11. My mother separated from my father and because I didn't know where to go I left home. Since then I've been cleaning cars, doing odd jobs here and there, begging from passers-by. I was in a center set up by "Maman Aeda", a white woman from the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo but since she left the center has shut down. If I find some work I'll be able to get off the streets. I would like to be a mechanic or sew or do something else with my hands."

### **Music**

## **2. Part : Dialogue**

### **Alphonse :**

It's not rare to see children on the streets in Africa!

### **Philomène :**

No, it's not but it's not because it's common that it makes it any less shocking. You know, most street children live in awful conditions. And when they become adults they can't find their place in society because they've been on the streets for so long!

### **Alphonse :**

Is that why some organizations are trying to help these children?

**Philomène :**

Yes, but according to the convention on the rights of children, governments should also be doing everything to make sure that there are no longer any children on the streets in Africa. The Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, has signed most of the conventions and international declarations protecting the rights of children but, as we just heard, the situation is still very complicated.

**Alphonse :**

And it's dangerous for these children to live on the streets, isn't it?

**Philomène :**

Of course, it is. It's dangerous for different reasons. Often because they don't have enough to eat, then also because of illness and because they are often subject to violent attacks and nobody is there to protect them. Not to speak of the psychological effects of years on the street without much love and affection.

**Alphonse :**

Well, I'm glad to have you big sister, even if you often annoy me!

**Philomène :**

Yep Alphonse, we're lucky to have grown up in a family. But remember you can support these street children by making a donation to the associations which help them or better still by giving them some of your time.

**MUSIC**

**Outro :**



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**Reporter:**

That was another Learning by Ear program on the subject of civil society and participation. To listen to the program again or to send us your feedback, go to [www.dw-world.de/lbe](http://www.dw-world.de/lbe). Thanks for listening and don't forget to tune in again next time!