

# The Honorary Graduand: John Wroe

## Honorary Doctor of Education

John Wroe is a proud Welsh social entrepreneur who has dedicated over two decades to advocating for the rights of street-connected children. With a background in education and the arts, John has applied creative methods to drive social change. Before founding Street Child United, he was Executive Director of Momentum Arts, where he led inclusive arts programmes with marginalised communities for over 15 years. His work has consistently focused on using sport, the arts, and advocacy to challenge stigma and create meaningful opportunities for young people living on the margins of society.

While volunteering in South Africa in 2008, John encountered a street-connected boy who remarked, “When people see us by the side of the street, they say that we are street boys. But when they see us play football... we are people like them.” This moment sparked the idea for an international sports event – the first Street Child World Cup, staged alongside the 2010 FIFA World Cup in Durban.

That inaugural tournament brought together teams of street-connected children from seven countries to play football, share their stories, and demand their rights. The initiative became the cornerstone of Street Child United, formally founded in 2009 under John’s leadership.

Under John's stewardship, SCU has organised multiple Street Child World Cups in Rio de Janeiro (2014), Moscow (2018), and Doha (2022), as well as inaugural Street Child Cricket World Cups in 2019 and 2023. These events combine football or cricket tournaments with arts festivals and advocacy congresses, providing participants with a platform to call for legal identity, protection from violence, education, and gender equality.

These efforts have led to tangible policy and legal reforms, including government-led censuses of street children in Pakistan, education rights dialogues in India, and the simplification of birth registration processes in Bangladesh—impacting more than a million street-connected children.

John holds an MBA from Anglia Ruskin University and a B.Ed (Hons) from Homerton College, Cambridge—academic foundations that have underpinned his lifelong commitment to inclusion and education. As well as being a Winston Churchill Fellow, John was awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) in Queen Elizabeth II’s 2015 Birthday Honours for his innovative and high-impact work in child rights advocacy. Although John originates from Swansea in Wales, he has spent most of his adult life in Cambridge in England. Because of the impact of street child united in Islamabad and Karachi he is considered a “VIP” a Very Important Pakistani.