



Time required

About 15 minutes

Resources

- Film clips from Africa United as on www.damaris.org/cm/media/aueveryone#clips

AN ASSEMBLY BY SOS CHILDREN ABOUT THE ISSUES IN THE FILM 'AFRICA UNITED'.

Suitable for year 11 and above.

1. Start assembly by playing the film clip 'You know it makes sense' from Africa United.
2. Say that while the clip is certainly quite funny, it has a very serious side to it. Dudu, the boy in the clip, is an AIDS orphan. An orphan is a child who has lost one or both parents. There is also what is often referred to as 'social orphans', which are children whose parents are alive, but are unable to look after them for some reason. In total, there are 163 million orphans across the world. It is a number that is so big it is difficult to imagine. In fact, 163 million children are the same as all the children of Britain 13 times over.

Being an orphan on its own is not necessarily a problem. I'm sure you all know somebody whose parent or parents have died, but who still have a good life, being cared for and loved by other people. Being an orphan is only a problem when the parents aren't replaced by an alternative carer, like step- or foster parents, grandparents, older siblings, other relatives or adoptive parents.

Plenty of research has been done to show that children who are orphaned and have no alternative carer are at increased risk. They are more likely than other children to not attend school, to suffer poor mental and physical health, to become victims as well as perpetrators of crime, to become child workers and to, like Celeste in the film, be forced into sex work.

3. Play film clip 'You don't look like a sex worker.'
4. I know that you all have your own issues to deal with: friends and family, your school work to think of, your own worries about the future and your own lives in general. In doing that, you might not find the time to think about other people. I would like to tell you that you should:

In today's world, where countries are so intimately connected through trade and information flows, we are more dependent on other countries than we think. If the market in China goes down, we will see that reflected in our own economy, for example. If the harvest fails in southern Africa we notice it in our shops here. In the same way, we notice the consequences of all those 163 million children who don't get to fulfil their potential. They could grow up to be scientists who do life-changing research, or they could become presidents and prime ministers impacting on the lives of millions of people. They could become great authors or musicians, or doctors who might save many lives. Like Beatrice, perhaps.



5. Play film clip 'When I'm a doctor.'

6. There are many ways in which we can help children like Beatrice to get to follow her dreams. One way is to influence others to make decisions which will be good for children around the world. You can do this by getting involved in politics: perhaps by writing to your local MP, by making sure you vote for a party with sound policies on international development, or by being part of a lobbying group or organisation yourself.

You can also think about how you spend your money. Next time you reach for a chocolate bar: check that it has the fair-trade symbol on it. The fair-trade symbol guarantees that the farmer who produced the cocoa was given a proper salary for his work, which means he can send his children to school. By boycotting countries with governments which don't take children's rights seriously you are also making your voice heard.

Finally, there are many organisations across the world which works to help children like Dudu, Celeste and Beatrice. To do that, most of them rely completely on donations from the public.

7. Show slide from SOS Children's Village Lubango, Angola.

SOS Children's Villages is an international development organisation which focuses on looking after orphaned and abandoned children. Currently, there are 508 SOS Children's Villages in 124 countries across the world. The one on the photo is the Lubango SOS Children's Village in Angola. An SOS Children's Village is a group of 10-15 family houses, just like any houses with bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom and a living room. Each house is the home of an SOS Mother: a local woman who loves children but has no children of her own. In the house, she looks after between 7 and 10 orphaned and abandoned children who have nobody to look after them. In most SOS Children's Villages, there is also an SOS school, a medical centre and a nursery. All these facilities are open to not just the children who live with the SOS Mothers in the village, but to everyone in the surrounding neighbourhood as well.

If Dudu, Celeste and Beatrice had come to live in an SOS Children's Village from a young age, their lives might have turned out differently. Dudu would have had access to the ARV drugs he needs to fight the HIV infection weakening his immune system throughout the film. Celeste would have been in school, rather than working in a bar at such a young age. Beatrice would have had the love and support of an SOS Mother to help her pursue her dreams. Please remember children like Dudu, Celeste and Beatrice now and in the future, and if you can, act in some way to help them.