

# family matters

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SOS CHILDREN'S  
VILLAGES

A loving home for every child



AUTUMN 2013

# Welcome to the education edition



**A year ago, we witnessed a very special moment when we watched the children who had just moved into our newest SOS Children's Village in Zambia make their way into a classroom for the very first time. As the girls and boys, aged three to six, went into the SOS nursery, some were apprehensive, some more confident. But before long they were all sitting on the floor with Elizabeth Phiri, the head of the nursery, singing songs and beginning their journey into learning.**

Quality education is one of the most powerful ways to create the kind of positive long-term change that benefits individual children and wider society. Wherever our work touches lives around the world, we see how giving girls and boys the chance to learn can tackle the root causes of poverty, social injustice and family breakdown.

As you'll see from the stories in this issue, here at SOS Children we encourage learning and try to make it easier for families to support their children's development. That's why we pay particular attention to helping breadwinners to keep their children in school. By working closely with communities and local authorities, we create places to learn and promote high teaching standards. We also reach deep into communities to bring education to those who would otherwise be missing out – whether because of conflict, natural disaster or social exclusion.

Speaking of reaching out, it's something that our SOS Ambassadors do very well. In this issue you can read how Jackie Long found time away from the Channel 4 News studio to help raise awareness about our work with children in Syria. A bit further afield we were thrilled to welcome Manchester City FC captain Vincent Kompany to help launch Hong Kong Friends of SOS Children. At the same event, Bloomberg TV's Susan Li made her first public appearance as our newest SOS Ambassador.

Whatever brings you to SOS Children, whether as an ambassador, advocate, supporter, child sponsor, fundraiser or donor, your involvement makes a tremendous difference to children and families who find themselves, often through no fault of their own, in desperate situations.

We simply couldn't do what we do for them without you.

I very much hope that you will enjoy this issue of *Family Matters* – if you have any thoughts or comments on any of the topics covered, as ever, we'd love to hear from you.

In the meantime, thank you for playing your part.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Meryl'.

**Meryl Davies,  
Director of Fundraising,  
SOS Children**



## Keep in touch

There are plenty of ways to keep up-to-date with news from SOS Children. Stay in touch via our website or follow us on Facebook, Twitter or Google+. As well as *Family Matters*, which is published twice a year, you can sign up for monthly eNews updates at: [www.soschildren.org/subscribe](http://www.soschildren.org/subscribe)

> Little boy reading in Indonesia.

# News from around the world

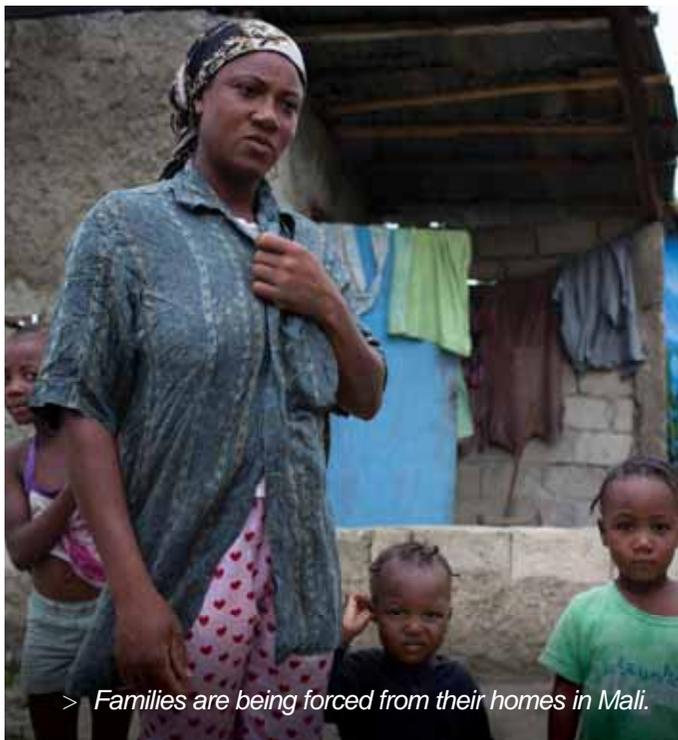
## Stepping up aid to Syria

With more than 5.5 million people in Syria made homeless by the civil war, including a million children, more people are relying on humanitarian aid just to get by. The price of food is rising rapidly and drinking water, medicine and basics like infant milk are in increasingly short supply, putting babies and small children at risk. As part of our emergency relief work, SOS Children is providing shelter and food for families plus nappies and milk for infants, trauma support for children in refugee camps, and help to



> *The situation in Syria grows more desperate by the day.*

enable children to carry on with their schoolwork. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we are helping to bring a little normality to people whose lives have been devastated.



> *Families are being forced from their homes in Mali.*

## Emergency measures in Mali

Emergency relief work has begun in the Mopti region of Mali, where masses of people are arriving following violence in the north. Well over 200,000 people have been forced from their homes, including 40,000 who are now living in Mopti. Mothers and young children are suffering the most, with many infants at risk of malnutrition. SOS Children is helping to feed 1,000 children plus 1,300 pregnant women and new mothers. We are also offering counselling to children who have been caught up in the violence, including those who have suffered human rights violations. Beyond immediate relief, we will provide housing and shelter to more than 1,000 people who have lost their homes.

## Central African Republic care crisis

Earlier this year, we launched an emergency programme to support children and families affected by the brutal conflict in the Central African Republic, an area that has seen recurrent violence over the last decade. Half of the 4.6 million people affected so far are children, with a growing number of unprotected lone children arriving at refugee camps. We aim to reach 10,000 people who have been forced from their homes, many of whom have fled to neighbouring Chad and Cameroon. Key priorities are to help unaccompanied children, pregnant women and new mothers. With a team of local childcare experts, five SOS medical centres and other key facilities close to the areas most directly affected, we are well-positioned to deliver care to those who need it the most.

> *Taking care of vulnerable children in the Central African Republic.*



# Footballers pitch in to kick-off Hong Kong Friends

July saw the launch of the Hong Kong Friends of SOS Children at an event that included a press launch with Manchester City FC team captain and SOS Ambassador Vincent Kompany. Supported by Manchester City, BT and Pinsent Masons, the event was attended by many of our corporate partners in Hong Kong. Bloomberg TV anchor Susan Li was also there to mark her new role as an SOS Ambassador. Up until now, our generous supporters in Hong Kong have been donating via the UK. However, the new group will make it easier for Hong Kong donors to offer better support to vulnerable children and families. Commenting, Vincent Kompany said:

***“I’ve been supporting SOS Children for around 10 years. One of the best things about the charity is that when you donate, you know that every penny you give goes to the right projects.”***

You can keep up-to-date with all of our breaking news at [www.soschildren.org](http://www.soschildren.org)



> Meryl Davies and Susan Li receive their first donation.

> International football star Vincent Kompany in action at an SOS Children's Village.  
Photo © Axel Nédée.



# Bringing learning to life



> Early learning in Guinea-Bissau.

Can you imagine how tough it is to get by in today's world if you can't read or write?

That's why education is at the heart of our drive to help families and communities break the cycle of poverty and enjoy the health, wellbeing and quality of life that goes hand in hand with sustainable development.

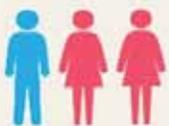
From nursery, primary and secondary schools to vocational training centres, specialist technical schools and two international colleges, we try to bring learning within reach of as many children and communities as possible, from the earliest years to adult learning. Whether we build a school from scratch or refurbish in partnership with local authorities, our education centres – almost 500 of them attended by around 145,000 children worldwide – are run to inspire a love of learning and nurture the knowledge and skills that young people need to make their way in life.

## Global literacy facts in brief



**776 MILLION PEOPLE WORLDWIDE CANNOT READ OR WRITE**

**= 16%** of the world's population are illiterate



**2 out of 3** of all illiterate people are **women**.

*“Every literate woman is a victory over poverty.”* Ban Ki-moon

**INDIA** has the highest number of illiterate adults



That is **39%** of all illiterate adults worldwide.

**= four times the population of FRANCE**



**Almost 75% of the world's illiterate adults are found in only 10 countries:**

- |               |                     |
|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. India      | 6. Ethiopia         |
| 2. China      | 7. Egypt            |
| 3. Pakistan   | 8. Brazil           |
| 4. Bangladesh | 9. Indonesia        |
| 5. Nigeria    | 10. DR of the Congo |

# Reaching far and wide

Where people are marginalised, vulnerable and likely to be excluded from education, we find creative ways to reach deep into communities to make learning available to them – as you can see here.

## Special needs care

The SOS school in Lilongwe, Malawi has space for over 500 children, including 120 children with special needs who can easily move about in the wheelchair-friendly classrooms. By teaching all children under the same roof, the hope is that students with disabilities will mix more freely with their peers to encourage mutual respect and understanding.

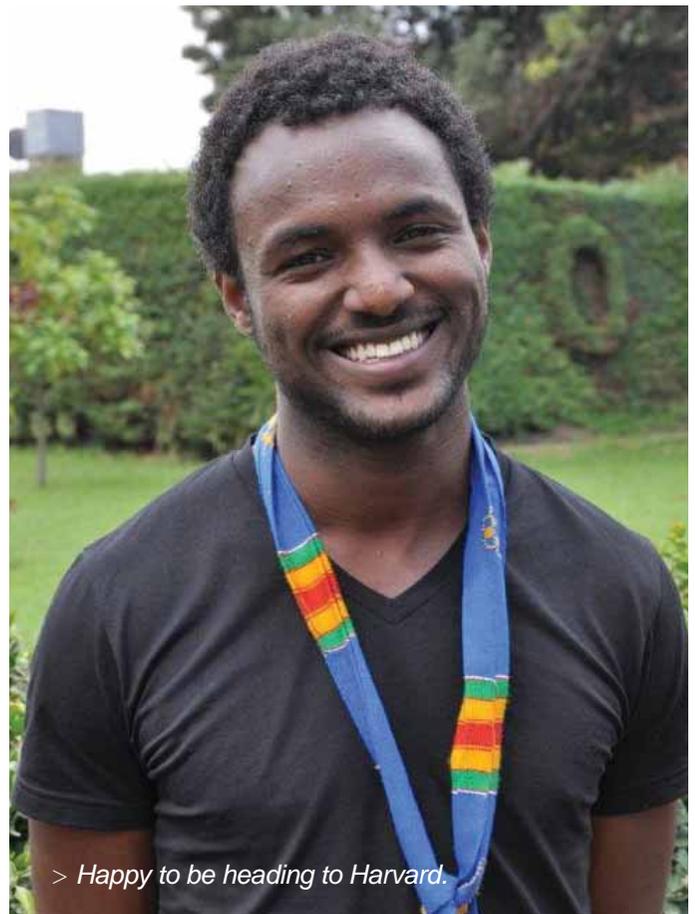
## By government appointment

Back in 2008 very few children in Kpalassi, Togo went to school because they were busy working in the fields to boost the family income. Then SOS Children began collaborating with community leaders and local authorities to help revitalise the village and encourage parents to send children to school. Over the coming years, with our guidance, the school was extended and greatly improved. A major step forward came with government certification, which would guarantee much higher teaching standards. As a result of these moves, by 2011 almost 90% of local children were going to the village school.

## From crisis to classrooms

Even before the 2010 earthquake, Haiti's education was in a dire state, with high fees, no common curricula and poor teaching. Our reconstruction programme has included rebuilding schools and training teachers. As a result, thousands of children are benefitting from a high-quality education, which is helping to rebuild this shattered nation.

> *Schools in Haiti have risen from the rubble.*



> *Happy to be heading to Harvard.*

## How lessons change lives

**What does it take for a young boy from Ethiopia, who once had no-one to take proper care of him, to make it to Harvard?**

For Mekidem it all began when, aged eight, he went to live at the SOS Children's Village Hawassa in Ethiopia. On starting at the local SOS school, he was motivated from the word go, saying:

***"Ever since I was little I've loved numbers and science."***

After achieving consistently high marks, he went on to study at the SOS International College, Tema in Ghana, a senior school that takes young people from all over Africa. Students graduate with an International Baccalaureate and can go on to study at international universities. After excelling on his course, he won his place in the US at the world's leading university to study for a Bachelor of Science degree. Mekidem said:

***"At Harvard I will probably major in aerospace engineering or applied maths. I am so grateful to SOS Children for making my dreams come true."***

# Breaking down barriers



> Boys in Sri Lanka head to their SOS school.

**Even when school is free, hidden hurdles can still get in the way. Here we find out how SOS Children is overcoming the obstacles to help more children finish their education.**

## Cash crisis

Progress to cut the number of children missing school has stalled and cost is often the major issue. For the poorest families, food will inevitably be a greater priority than school. When families are surviving below the poverty line, school-related costs – uniform, shoes, books and stationery – can force millions of children to lose out.

## Child labour

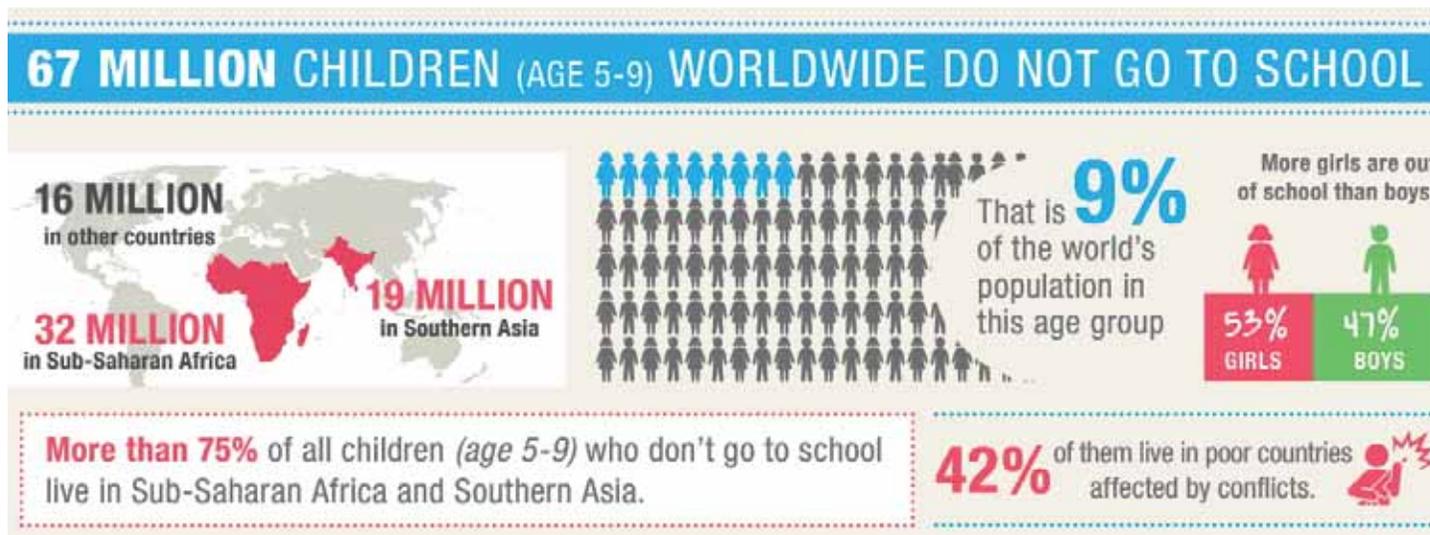
Many households depend on children's wages, no matter how meagre. About 150 million children aged up to 14 are estimated to be involved in some form of child labour worldwide – often in work that is risky or illegal.

These children are less likely to learn to read and write which significantly increases the probability of poverty later in life. In some families, an older child may be the main wage earner. Girls are frequently kept at home as carers or to do domestic chores, and where HIV / AIDS is rife, it is often children who stay at home to look after sick relatives.

## Barriers to education

- School fees and costs
- Poverty
- Child labour
- Culture of low attainment
- Poor health / malnutrition
- HIV / AIDS stigma
- Disability and special needs
- Conflict and armed violence
- Distance from school
- Lack of a birth certificate
- Shortage of trained teachers
- Domestic duties at home.

# School attendance: who is missing out?



# Your support makes a difference

**With the right kind of support, we can find ways to overcome the obstacles.**

## Rising up the ranks

When 11-year-old En Siev Eng and her siblings were awarded scholarships to attend the SOS school in Battambang, Cambodia, her relieved mother said:

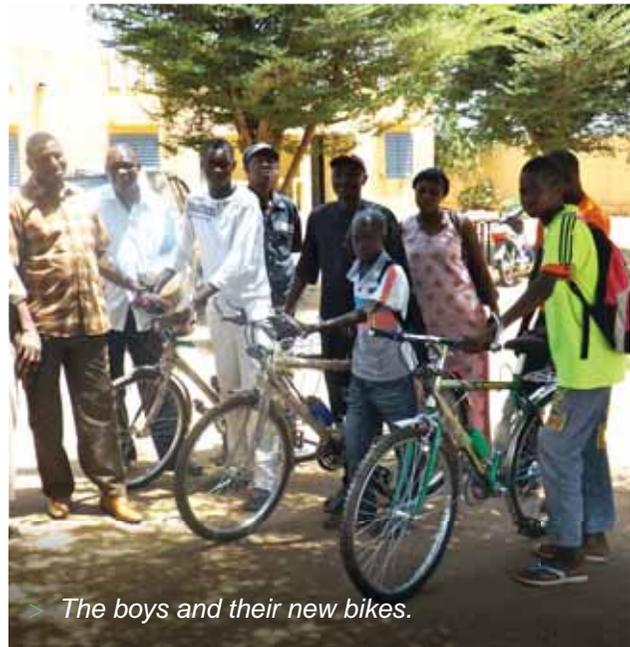
*“I don’t want my daughter to be illiterate like me – I want her to be educated”.*

There is a shortage of schools in rural Cambodia and those that exist are unaffordable for many poorer families. As well as school fees, the scholarship covers the cost of stationery, uniform, shoes and a school bag. En Siev Eng is one of 500 children at the school, which, unusually for Cambodia offers both primary and secondary



education. Having risen to the top five in her class for maths, she can look forward to completing her education.

> *Serious study in rural Cambodia.*



*The boys and their new bikes.*

## Cycles keep learning on track

Souleymane was proud of being the first child in his family to go to secondary school, even though he had to walk miles to get there every day from his rural home in western Mali. But by the age of 15, his family couldn’t afford to keep him and his two younger brothers in school – or for them to be out for hours instead of helping at home. So the boys started missing lessons. Fortunately, when their village was targeted for SOS support, Souleymane and his brothers were each given textbooks and a new bike. With their new wheels they could get to their lessons much faster and stay on course to finish secondary school.

## Bona beats the odds

Bona’s parents had never been to school and couldn’t read which made it hard for them to find work. After the Kosovo war ended in the late 1990s, they moved to the capital Pristina seeking a better life. Their family grew to seven children, but without jobs, they remained squatting in a run-down, two-room house.

The difficulties became especially clear when the children had a bad bout of flu and no-one could understand the medicine labels. Soon afterwards Bona and her siblings were offered learning support and started going to the local school. They are among 460 children receiving SOS family support in Kosovo. Bona’s mum still feels embarrassed at not being able to read, but at least knows her children are learning. Bona said:

*“When I grow up I’d like to be a teacher – I like being able to read labels and help mum with the electricity bill.”*



> *Getting to grips with school in Kosovo.*

# From learning to earning

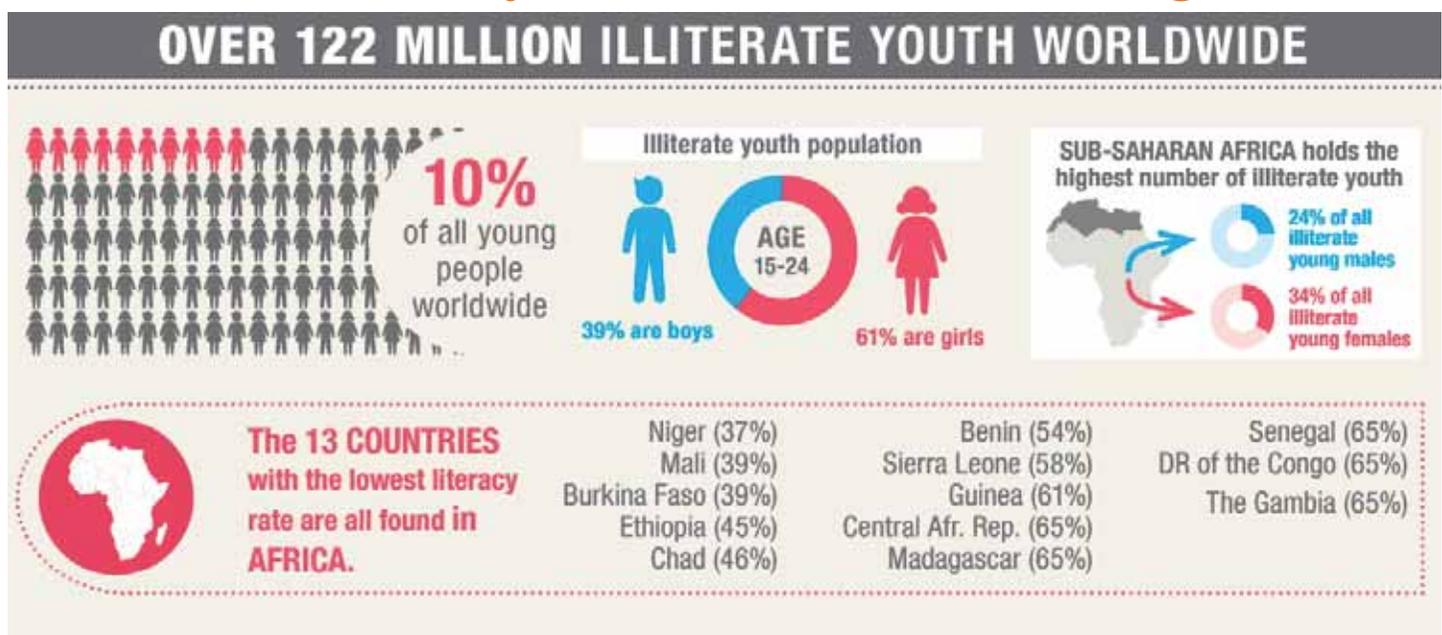
Across the world the transition to adulthood is challenging for all young people. But those without qualifications are particularly vulnerable to unemployment, which is why vocational training is such an important gateway to financial independence.

Worldwide, 54 SOS vocational training centres provide accredited skills and certified qualifications in a wide range of trades from engineering, computing, office management and commerce to plumbing, agriculture, metalwork, printing and catering. Courses are constantly adapted to deliver the most up-to-date curricula relevant to regional labour markets. The centres also work closely with local employers to offer careers advice, work placements and, where possible, ensure progression from learning to earning.

> Skills give young people a passport to the workplace.



## Scale of the youth skills challenge



## Sabir's drive to succeed

When his father died, Sabir left school to support his mother and younger brothers in a slum district of Dhaka, Bangladesh.

***"I didn't want to be a labourer like my father – I really wanted to do a decent job."***

He enrolled at the local SOS vocational training centre to train as a car mechanic. After 21 months in college and a further three months learning on-the-job at a motor service centre, he impressed his employer and secured a permanent post.



> On the road to a skilled career.

## Tailored training for Tashi

Tashi was eight when she was sent with her elder sister to India from Tibet – it was the last time she saw the rest of her family. Having struggled with academic studies, a textiles course at the SOS vocational training centre in Mussoorie has transformed her life. Next year she will graduate as a tailor in traditional Tibetan clothes and fashion.

***"I am so grateful to SOS Children for giving me a chance to learn a useful skill."***



> Tashi shows she's cut out for tailoring.

## Mark carves out a career

One of six siblings in Zambia whose parents died young, every day without a job was a struggle for Mark.

***"I came from a poor family in a poor community and had nowhere to go."***

At the SOS vocational training centre in Lusaka he discovered an aptitude for woodworking. This led to a job with a kitchen fitting company and an ambition to run his own furniture business.



> Mark builds plans for his future.

## Kamini nurses hope for the future

When she arrived at SOS Children's Village Rourkela in India, Kamini was a shy ten-year-old still traumatised by her parents' death in a cyclone. But she went to school, slowly readjusted and moved on to study nursing.

***"I want to carry on with my advanced nursing studies and work for five years before settling down."***

After achieving a distinction in her exams, Kamini, by now a confident young woman, was hired by one of the top local hospitals.



> Kamini puts her nursing skills to work.

# Still different for girls

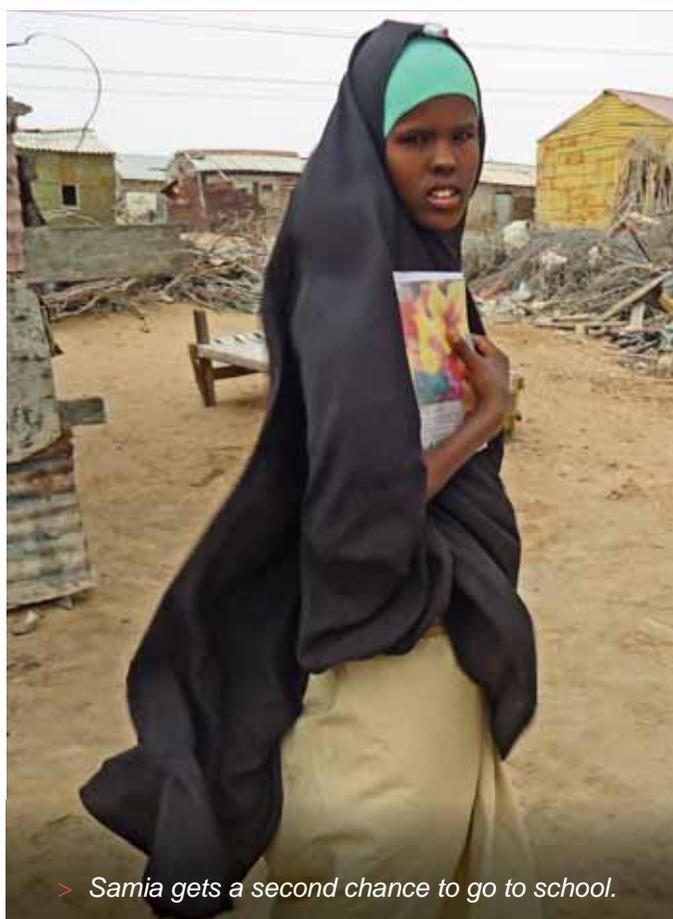
**How would it feel to be denied an education simply because you were a girl?**

**In some parts of the world this is still the norm, despite the many benefits that educating girls brings to families, communities and wider society.**



> School can transform a girl's life.

In most African countries, for instance, girls have less than a 50% chance of going to secondary school. Poor families often marry girls off young and the children of these teen brides are more likely to grow up illiterate. If, on the other hand, a girl finishes her secondary education, she will find it easier to earn an income, have a smaller, healthier family and improve her prospects – which is why we consistently encourage education for girls.



> Samia gets a second chance to go to school.

## Samia's story

Samia knows from bitter experience just how bad it feels when girls lose out. She was 11 when she was forced to drop out of school. Her father had fallen ill and money got tight. In keeping with the local custom, her five brothers carried on at school while she had to stay at home to help run the house and look after her father.

In Somaliland, Samia's plight is all too common. She began to avoid her friends: ***"I used to come top in exams and my friends had called me the gifted girl. I didn't want them to see me helpless at home. It really hurt and I was so lonely."***

A year later Samia's father died and within a month her mother was diagnosed, like him, with HIV / AIDS. The family was stigmatised and fell on hard times.

The turning point came when the family joined our scheme to prioritise education for girls as well as boys. Samia went back to school and received extra help. She has done really well and has set her sights on becoming a doctor. ***"I feel a lot more hopeful – perhaps my country will at last become more enlightened about educating girls."***

## An inconvenient truth

It takes more than teachers and books for a child to flourish at school. Without proper sanitation facilities, it is difficult for girls to manage their menstruation, so up to 20% of them avoid embarrassment by staying at home during their period. UK donors have generously funded separate toilets for girls at Damview Community School in SOS Children's Village Chipata in Zambia, which has led to a rise in attendance and less disruption to girls' learning.

## Zenaye speaks up

After attending her local SOS school in Ethiopia, MBA graduate Zenaye has no doubt about the power of learning:

***"I was very lucky. Thanks to SOS Children, I never felt disadvantaged as a girl. Education made me who I am today."***

# Spotlight on supporters

## Connecting Africa

To help more of the vulnerable children, families and communities we support in Africa benefit from high-speed internet, SOS Children and BT have launched an exciting collaboration to bring broadband connectivity to 20 SOS Children's Villages. Connecting Africa will reach around 700,000 people in 12 African countries including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya and Mali.

The venture will open up numerous possibilities, including access to e-learning, online mentoring and adult education, plus those involved will have the chance to develop their technology skills. We will be able to deliver essential services to communities faster and more effectively, while making it easier to share photos and videos with supporters worldwide. Speaking at the launch during the World Economic Forum on Africa in May, Meryl Davies, Director of Fundraising at SOS Children UK said:

*"IT and connectivity can make a real difference to children, opening their eyes to a whole world of new information and wonderful education opportunities. SOS Children is immensely proud to be working together on this with BT."*

## A day to remember

The day that Susie Edmonds from Portsmouth met Malu, the little girl she sponsors at an SOS Children's Village in Laos, is one she'll never forget.

*"It was lovely to meet Malu. She had made me a garland of fresh flowers and I gave her a little bag of presents. As a child I'd loved reading, so had found some books in both English and Lao, including a world atlas and storybook. The community seemed a very vibrant and happy place. Education has not always been placed that highly in Laos but all these children are educated and schooled. It appears that education is now being prioritised, certainly in the cities. For me educating young girls is so important – it has been proven time and time again to be a big step in reducing poverty. I felt these children were lucky to be somewhere that they are clearly so well loved and cared for. I would urge anyone thinking about sponsoring a child to consider SOS Children – it's a great charity."*

If, like Susie, you want to change a child's life with SOS Children, it takes as little as £20 a month. You can be sure that 100% of your donation will go towards vital support from education to healthcare.

Find out more at:

[www.soschildren.org/sponsor-a-child](http://www.soschildren.org/sponsor-a-child)



> Susie meeting Malu and her family.



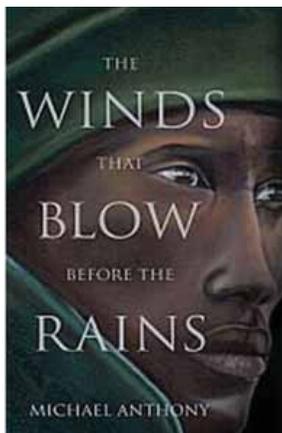
> Children celebrate the arrival of fast broadband.

# Thanks to you

**People from all walks of life have been doing fantastic things to raise funds for SOS Children. However you have helped, we are extremely grateful.**

## A novel read

*The Wind That Blows Before the Rains* is a gripping debut novel written by ex-SAS serviceman Michael Anthony. His vivid page-turner tells the story of a



group of people whose lives intertwine when they are caught up in the Bush War that transformed Rhodesia into Zimbabwe. In an unprecedented move for a first-time author, Michael is kindly gifting all of the book's profits to SOS Children's work in Zimbabwe.

You can order a copy at most online bookstores.



## The game that keeps on giving

Everyone's a winner with Baby Nom Nom, a brilliantly simple but insanely challenging new app where players must beat the clock to feed a hungry baby. Thanks to its creators Playrise Digital, 15% of net revenues from the app will help SOS Children. The partnership was enabled by Playmob, a company that links game developers with charities. Nick Burcombe of Playrise said:

*"We are thrilled to be helping SOS Children's important work. Every player will contribute to a very special cause."*

Available for iPhone and iPad, just head to the app store to give it a go.

## Baby's first birthday

Online baby clothing retailer and accredited social enterprise, from babies with love, celebrated its first birthday in May 2013. With 100% of its profits donated to SOS Children, you can be sure that anything you buy will be helping some of the world's most vulnerable children.

Take a look at [www.frombabieswithlove.org](http://www.frombabieswithlove.org)



## Broadcaster's appeal for Syria

You may have seen Jackie Long reporting on TV about the situation in Syria, a role she combines with acting as an SOS Ambassador. She has spent two decades as a journalist and presenter for Channel 4 and the BBC on shows including Newsnight and Five Live. So we were delighted that Jackie could take some time away from the cameras to speak about her current role as Social Affairs Editor on Channel 4 News at an event to raise funds for babies, children and their mothers in Syria. The event was kindly hosted in Cambridge by long-standing supporter and former Chair of SOS Children UK, Lady Chadwyck-Healey and her husband Sir Charles.

> *Jackie Long and Lady Chadwyck-Healey rally for children in Syria.*



> Students get set for the SOSscape Challenge.

## Suzgo strides out

When science teacher Suzgo heard that an SOS Children's Village had opened in Chipata in eastern Zambia, the town where he grew up, he wanted to do something to help. A lifelong admirer of our work, Suzgo taught at an SOS school in Kitwe before moving to the UK. So in May he got out his trainers to run the 10k race at the Edinburgh Marathon Festival.

***"It was an opportunity for me to do something special for orphaned children."***

He crossed the line an impressive 63rd out of more than a thousand competitors and raised a much-appreciated **£640**.

> *Suzgo keeps up the pace for SOS Children.*



## University challenge

This summer, 14 teams of intrepid students from the University of Cambridge signed up for the SOSscape Challenge. After being dropped on the Essex coast with no maps and no money, they had to get home within 24 hours. To raise the stakes, they also had to take a detour via Stonehenge, adding 120 miles to their trip. Four teams made it back in time and together everyone raised a whopping **£2,379**.

## On your marks

If you're looking for something new to aim for in 2014, how about running the London 10k on Sunday 13 July for SOS Children?

For more details, please contact [tara@soschildren.org](mailto:tara@soschildren.org)

## Insights into India

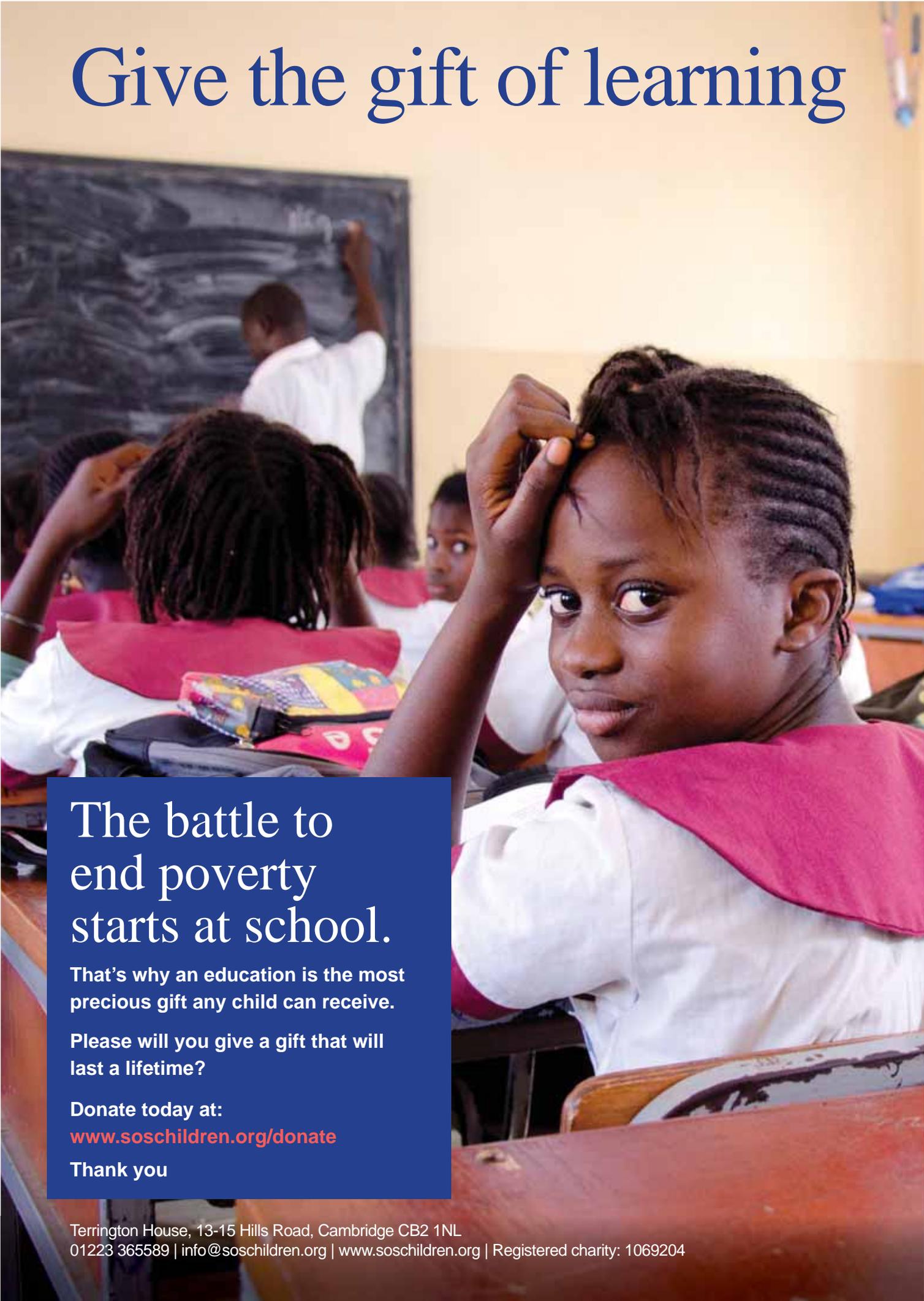
In our next edition of *Family Matters*, we will focus on India and how your support has been transforming lives across the nation.

## Want to get involved?

If you would like to make a difference by supporting our work in any way, your contribution will be most warmly welcomed.

To find out more, please see [www.soschildren.org.uk/how-to-help](http://www.soschildren.org.uk/how-to-help)

# Give the gift of learning



The battle to  
end poverty  
starts at school.

That's why an education is the most  
precious gift any child can receive.

Please will you give a gift that will  
last a lifetime?

Donate today at:

[www.soschildren.org/donate](http://www.soschildren.org/donate)

Thank you

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01223 365589 | [info@soschildren.org](mailto:info@soschildren.org) | [www.soschildren.org](http://www.soschildren.org) | Registered charity: 1069204

*Some of the names in this publication have been changed to respect the privacy of individuals.*