

Family Matters



**Making sure children
feel safe**

**Keeping families
together**

**Young voices,
big impact**



Koos and her daughter laughing in their garden, Somaliland. © Lydia Mantler

Koos, a mother from Somaliland, and her six children have faced immense hardship since the children's father left. They lived in a cramped one-room iron-sheet house, unable to escape the elements during the rainy season.

With no income, Koos couldn't afford necessities like vegetables, but thanks to SOS Children's Villages, she was able to improve her small business and learn valuable accounting skills. Micro-loans allowed her to expand her shop, which became a lifeline for her struggling community.

SOS Children's Villages provided Koos and her family with a new two-room iron-sheet house, lifting their spirits and allowing her children to flourish in school.

"The family situation has changed, and I no longer feel defeated."

- Koos

We've changed the names of all children and some featured adults in this magazine to protect their identities.

Front Cover: Koos and her son discuss his homework in their house, Somaliland. © Lydia Mantler

Greetings and warm wishes to you all. I hope that this edition of Family Matters finds you and your loved ones safe, healthy, and hopeful. The world around us continues to change, and in these challenging times, the importance of nurturing and supporting those close to us is clearer than ever before.

The global cost-of-living crisis continues to have a profound impact on countless families. I know that many of our supporters will be feeling this keenly. Across the world, increased economic pressure, natural disasters and conflict have brought additional stress and hardship, especially for the children and families we support. However, through adversity, they remain strong, and the collective resolve and dedication of our supporters to make a difference has never wavered. Thank you!

Thanks to you, we persist in our mission to create safe, stable, and secure environments for children, families, and young people worldwide. In difficult times, vulnerable children face heightened risks of neglect, abuse, or exploitation. One in ten children already confront these challenges globally and we remain committed to protecting them.

At SOS Children's Villages, we accompany children through each phase of their lives, enabling them to experience the joys of childhood despite past traumas. With our support, they experience loving, and nurturing homes as they grow, access high quality education, and are supported to develop the skills they need to confidently embrace independence when the time comes.

One of the most effective ways we do this, is by helping families facing hardship to stay together whenever possible. In doing so, children can gain a sense of security and belonging, and pave the way for their future success. With ongoing conflicts, such as the war in Ukraine (page 7), our ability to support families affected by war, personal crises, or economic hardship is more important than ever. Our supporters have provided a vital lifeline to ensure we can help refugee families like Olha's, who fled Ukraine when the war began. Through SOS Children's Villages they are supported to deal with the emotional trauma of war and adapt to life in their new country.

In this edition, you'll uncover stories of resilience and hope. For example, from Grace (page 13), who with her caregiver's support, overcame adversity and is now pursuing a fashion career. Read about our efforts to keep families together during crises by aiding mothers like Fatou (page 9), helping her to keep her children in school and start her business.

These stories showcase the strength and determination of those that you support. Continue reading to discover the importance of mental health support for children (page 6) and join us in celebrating the immense power of young people's voices (page 10).

We applaud the extraordinary individuals, from caregivers to our tireless staff around the world, who devote their lives to helping others. Their incredible commitment, coupled with your generosity, is genuinely inspiring. There is no question that the cost-of-living crisis has brought additional difficulties, but it has also reinforced our commitment to each other and the families we support. All children deserve to grow up feeling safe, loved and respected. Thank you for helping us make this a reality!

With heartfelt gratitude,

Alison Wallace

Alison Wallace,
Chief Executive Officer, SOS Children's Villages UK



Making sure children feel safe

As the costs of everyday goods continue to rise, many of us are feeling the financial strain. From groceries and petrol to energy bills and rent, rising expenses are making life more difficult for people around the world.

Unfortunately, for the families that we support, these challenges are not new. For many of them, living in poverty is a daily reality, and the global economic crisis is only exacerbating existing hardships caused by issues such as unstable employment, mental health concerns or lack of equitable opportunity. Hundreds of millions of families are living in worsening poverty, creating a precarious position for these families and an ever more pressing need for assistance and support. On top of this, many children around the world face the daily threat of war, violence and abuse. All of this results in a profound lack of safety and stability for the children.

In Somaliland, despite education being free, families like 10-year-old Agla's cannot afford to pay for school uniforms or the \$2 needed for regular school supplies. In neighbouring Somalia, when 25-year-old mother Amino ran out of food, she left her village and travelled on foot for two days with her two small children. She eventually settled in the overpopulated Kahda displacement camp in



Agla sitting in her classroom, Somaliland.
© Ayanle Ahmed

the capital city, Mogadishu, where Amino began to suffer from malnutrition. Thankfully, she is now receiving treatment at the SOS Children's Villages health centre in the camp.

Although providing supplies such as food, water, and medical care to families like Amino's is a vital part of our work, it is only a part of what we do. We believe living is about far more than just survival. We help break the cycle of trauma caused by poverty, violence, abuse and neglect. We believe that children who feel secure can grow into happy, healthy and confident adults. They in turn, can support their own communities and families to live free from trauma.

In Poland, as part of their recovery, we provide safe spaces for Ukrainian refugee children to play, laugh, sing, express themselves, and simply be children.

Around the world, our 'Safe Places Thriving Children' programmes provide trauma training to professionals who work with children and young people growing up in care.

In Nigeria, where mental health is still very much a taboo subject, we are empowering members of the community to provide mental health support to vulnerable young people.

We believe that every child deserves to always feel safe and secure. This is why our local teams work tirelessly with families and children for extended

periods, ensuring their long-term wellbeing and stability. From counselling to helping families access health care, housing and government benefits, to education and skills training to employment support, we believe everyone has a right to a safe and fulfilled life.

For Agla back in Somaliland, this meant providing her and her siblings with school supplies, and helping her mother get back on her feet with a grant that enabled her to buy two freezers for her ice-cream business. Now Agla and her five siblings go to school every day. *"I want to be a teacher when I grow up,"* says Agla. *"There are no female teachers in my school, and I would like to change that."*

By helping children feel safe and secure, they can dare to dream and make a positive change in their own communities, ensuring they thrive and not just survive.



Agla standing outside her house with her mother, aunt and siblings, Somaliland. © Ayanle Ahmed



Agla and her mother, Somaliland.
© Ayanle Ahmed

Prioritising mental health

Around the world, one in ten children and adolescents grapple with mental health disorders, yet sadly, the majority are left without proper care or support.

The alarming reality is that suicide has become the fourth leading cause of death among 15-19-year-olds, spotlighting the urgency to address young people's mental health. Over 75% of individuals with mental health issues in low and middle-income countries remain untreated, while nations allocate just 2% of healthcare budgets to mental health on average.

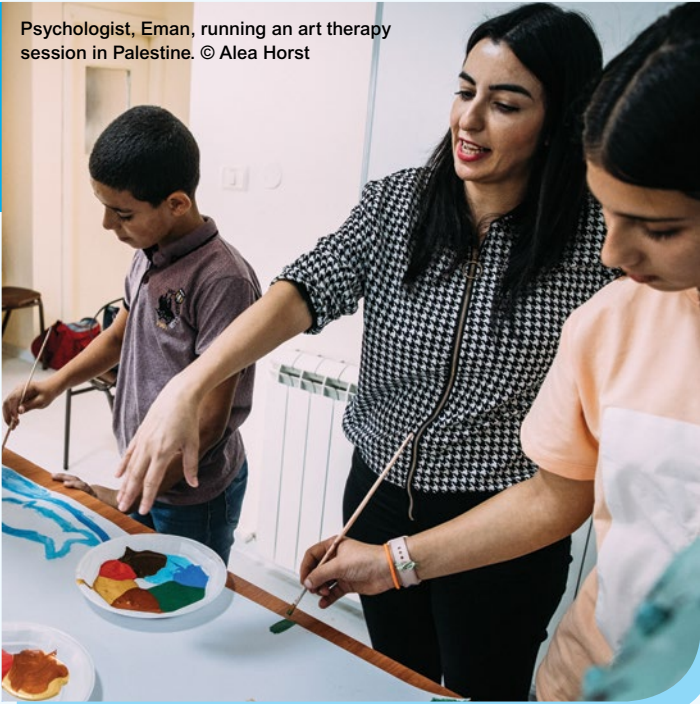
Children in poverty face increased stress and human rights violations, which can lead to long-term mental health disorders if not addressed. Caregivers and parents require tools and resources to support children's mental health.

SOS Children's Villages helps children in alternative care and families by providing mental health support. They also train caregivers and parents to better support the mental health of the children they care for.

For children who have experienced the trauma of violent conflict, abuse, neglect or family separation, trauma-informed care is crucial. This style of care is an empathetic approach to supporting individuals, one that recognises and addresses the impact of past trauma on their mental and emotional wellbeing.

Providing heartfelt mental health support to vulnerable children and families, and passionately advocating for investments in mental wellbeing programmes, can dismantle the barriers of stigma and shame, inspiring more individuals to seek help.

By creating a secure, loving environment; developing trust through consistent communication; collaborating with families; empowering children to build resilience; and approaching challenging



Psychologist, Eman, running an art therapy session in Palestine. © Alea Horst

topics with honesty and openness, caregivers and parents can foster healing and growth.

Investing in children's mental health is a global imperative that demands the attention and commitment of governments, healthcare systems, and communities. By allocating more resources, strengthening caregivers' capacity, promoting early intervention, and implementing trauma-informed care, we can profoundly transform the lives of children and adolescents worldwide.

Tips to navigate tough conversations with children

1. Create a safe space for open communication.
2. Use age-appropriate language when talking.
3. Be honest and concise.
4. Encourage dialogue and expression.
5. Validate emotions and offer support.
6. Let the child know they're not alone and offer guidance.
7. Talk through coping strategies for managing emotions and challenges.

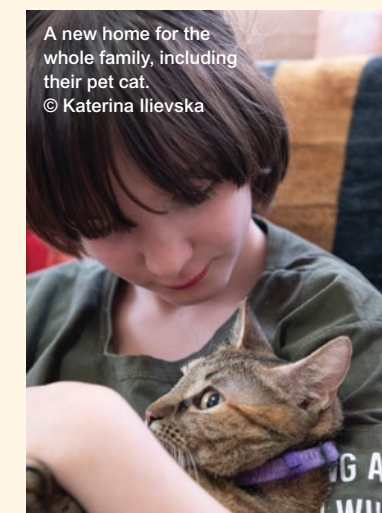


A family from Ukraine in front of their new house provided by SOS Children's Villages in Hemeius, Romania. © Katerina Ilievska

A brighter future for the children of Ukraine

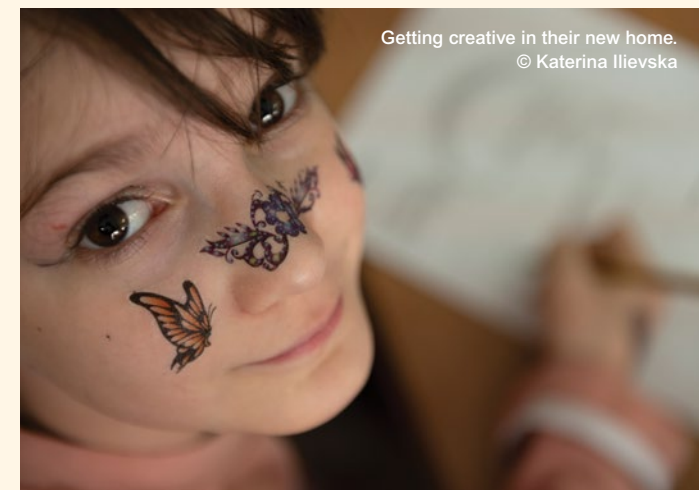
The ongoing war in Ukraine has had a devastating impact on millions of children and their families - leaving many displaced, living in poverty, and struggling to find a sense of normality. Women and children make up 90% of Ukrainian refugees, and now face unimaginable challenges as they try to rebuild their lives.

Despite the challenges faced by these families, there is still hope. Leonid, Olha, and their four children found refuge and a new home in the SOS Children's Village in Hemeius, Romania. The family fled Odesa in Ukraine in February 2022, seeking safety and security away from the conflict.



A new home for the whole family, including their pet cat. © Katerina Ilievska

Their biggest wish is to give back to those who have helped them. Olha travels to Ukraine once a month to deliver relief supplies and help those who want to move from zones of active fighting, and the family also spends their time caring for abandoned animals.



Getting creative in their new home. © Katerina Ilievska

With the help of our generous supporters, SOS Children's Villages has been instrumental in providing vital assistance to families like Leonid and Olha's. We have now reached over 284,000 people since the outbreak of the war.

With our local and international presence, we are uniquely placed to serve refugee families and children, providing essential humanitarian and long-term help to those in need.

The fighting in Ukraine rages on, but we are working towards a brighter future for Ukrainian families, who continue to show resilience and determination to rebuild their lives despite the trauma of war.

Keeping families together

The effects of trauma can last a lifetime, creating a harmful cycle that repeats from one generation to the next. We are committed to ensuring that children can grow up with the bonds they need to become their strongest selves.

It is estimated that 140 million children have lost one or both parents, leaving them in the most vulnerable of situations. Extreme poverty and violent conflict take their toll on communities, which can often force even the closest of families to break down.

Today, in Lebanon, more than half of the population is living in poverty due to one of the worst economic depressions in modern history. Families are unable to make ends meet and many cannot afford to support their children.

"We receive requests almost daily [to take children],"



Carla Choueifaty, Family Strengthening Programme Coordinator for SOS Children's Villages in Lebanon.



Sadly, this is a story we see repeat itself all around the world. The heart-breaking fact is that eight out of every ten children who are in care globally, have families who, if properly supported, may have been able to keep them at home in a safe and loving environment.

Crises can come in all shapes and sizes, from personal crisis such as losing a job or a home, to national or global emergencies caused by war, natural disaster or climate change. Children are especially vulnerable, but in most cases, the best option is for them to stay with their families rather than be placed into care.

Dinner time in an SOS Children's Villages family, Bangladesh. © Alea Horst



In Sri Lanka, where three in ten* people don't have access to sufficient food, children coming into SOS Children's Villages' care have significantly increased.

Divakar Ratnadurai, National Director of SOS Children's Villages in Sri Lanka, has reported a 40% increase in children needing their care. This is the harsh reality for families who struggle to continue caring for their children because of the crisis, leading to this increase in support needs. Preventing this kind of family breakdown is critical to protect the emotional wellbeing of children globally.

Whilst we provide emergency shelter, food and medical aid, our priority is to work with families for the long term, providing parents and caregivers with counselling, advice, financial support and vocational training so they can fully recover and



In a world where one in ten children is growing up alone, strengthening families is essential.

become self-sufficient. We work to keep families together, despite and throughout crises of any kind, wherever possible.

In Senegal, Fatou was struggling to provide for her children following the death of her husband. "I was about to take my children out of school," she says, but with the support of SOS Children's Villages she launched her own poultry business and coffee shop, and her kids stayed in school.

As families become self-reliant so does their ability to model life skills and healthy behaviours to their children, which in turn helps them create their own strong families in the future. This breaks the cycle of poverty, neglect and abandonment and keeps children in safe and loving homes.

Vulnerable families are the worse hit by any crises and often find it impossible to recover from the repercussions, driving them further into poverty and desperation. However, with the right support and guidance, they can stay together, strong, in the face of adversity.

* World Food Programme

Global cost-of-living crisis hurts wellbeing of children in fragile families

Millions of children are at risk of losing parental care due to a cost-of-living crisis that has been exacerbated by the economic impact of the Ukraine conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the effects of climate change. Globally, one in ten children risks losing parental care.

Low-income families like Muthoni's from Kenya, are disproportionately affected. Muthoni's seven children only eat once a day, and she now serves smaller portions to stretch the available food. Despite earning a living washing people's clothes, and reducing her budget to a bare minimum, it's not enough. The price of staple foods like maize flour, vegetables and cooking oil continues to increase.

Our goal by supporting mothers like Muthoni, is to strengthen families at risk of breakdown and to prevent the need for alternative care. Hardships because of poverty account for 49% of the families who we support in this way.

Despite setbacks in poverty reduction and the challenge of eradicating global poverty by 2030, we continue to work tirelessly with our staff, supporters, and communities to reverse this trend.

Humanitarians hear young voices from the Horn of Africa

"During humanitarian crises, children need even more protection from various types of abuse and exploitation."

At this year's European Humanitarian Forum, we had the privilege of hearing from Lucia, a 17-year-old girl from SOS Children's Villages Kenya, who shared her insights on the hunger crisis that has affected her country. As she spoke, the room full of political leaders and humanitarian professionals fell silent as they listened carefully to her every word.

Lucia spoke passionately about the devastating impact of drought and malnutrition on young lives. She shared how the extremely low rainfall had resulted in a widespread drought, leading to a hunger crisis in Kenya. She was not alone; other children from East Africa also spoke, each telling their own stories to expertly describe the harmful effects hunger and malnutrition have on every area of young lives.

"More emphasis should be put towards promoting holistic support for children from the hardest-hit areas."

As with any humanitarian crisis, children are the most affected by such situations. In drought-affected areas in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia, around 7.1 million children are acutely malnourished, including 2 million children suffering from severe malnutrition right now. This is a heart-breaking situation requiring immediate humanitarian action.

Timiro and her baby take a rest on her farmland during a drought. This used to be fertile ground, but nothing grows here anymore in Somalia. © Anne Kahura



Ntetari and her family have been heavily affected by drought in northern Kenya. © Noor Khamis

SOS Children's Villages' emergency response programme in the Horn of Africa consists of both immediate and longer-term strategies. Our actions include:

- **Increasing access to sustainable water, sanitation, and hygiene services.**
- **Ensuring access to food and other basic needs through multipurpose cash grants or vouchers to households.**
- **Providing interim alternative care to children, temporary shelter, and mental health support to children and their families.**
- **Assisting communities affected by the drought and food crisis to recover and strengthening people's livelihoods to improve food security.**

At SOS Children's Villages, we believe that enabling children and young people's voices to be heard in such humanitarian crises is extremely important for raising awareness of what is happening. Their safe and meaningful participation also offers an empowering opportunity to play an active role in making their communities safer places in which to grow, learn and thrive.

Young voices, big impact

Children and young people's opinions must be at the heart of every decision taken about their lives.

At SOS Children's Villages, we empower and support children and young people to be aware of their rights and stand up for them, as well as the rights of others.

"Everything we do for children and young people should involve them."

Gabriella Rask, International Program Manager, SOS Children's Villages Sweden

In Zimbabwe, pressure from the care leavers' network has resulted in an Aftercare Act being discussed in Parliament, to address the lack of aftercare provision for young people leaving care in the country's constitution. "The experiences and insight that care leavers can bring is so different from that of care professionals," says Gift, Zimbabwe's Care Leaver's Network Director, who himself grew up in care.

In Belgium and France, young care leavers have succeeded in changing the law, so siblings are kept together when they go into care, as long as it is in their best interest, and similar efforts are being made in the Netherlands.

23-year-old Roberto from Belgium was separated from his brother when he went into care at 10 years old. Now he works with SOS Children's Villages to keep siblings together. He says, "I think it is very important that children themselves are involved in the decision."

Further afield in Niger, 14-year-old Inoussa, addressed the UN calling for a formal system of foster care, regulated by the state. He says, "I felt like an ambassador for all the children of Niger, defending their rights." But it's not just changes in national law that children and young people supported by SOS Children's Villages lobby for, they also input into every SOS Children's Villages programme to make sure that children and young people just like them can get the support that they truly need.

In Hebron, 19-year-old Palestinian, Haneen, is a member of the Youth Council, working with children and adults to launch new initiatives and projects in the local community. In India, 21-year-old, Sneha is a Youth Advisory Board member responsible for providing feedback, guidance and ideas on how to make the SOS Children's Villages' employability skills training programme, 'Youth Can!' better for young people.

We regularly organise meetings and workshops at SOS Children's Villages to listen to the children and young people because without doing so, we simply cannot make decisions that are in their best interests. After all, they are the experts on their own lives. Through these initiatives, and by championing youth voices and experiences, we are supporting them to change the future for vulnerable children for years to come.



As a member of the Youth Council, Haneen from Palestine makes a difference in her local community. © Alea Horst

Every smile counts

SOS Children's Villages partners with Extra® Chewing Gum

Oral healthcare is often neglected in disadvantaged communities, resulting in high rates of dental decay and cavities among children.

Studies have shown that, globally, 60-90% of children suffer from cavities, contributing to significant health challenges. In countries with widespread poverty, these challenges are particularly prevalent. It is crucial to address this issue by educating children and caregivers about proper dental hygiene practices, and to provide them with the resources needed such as toothbrushes and toothpaste. This is why we partner with Extra® to run our Oral Health Programme in Botswana. Together we aim to educate 16,000 children each year about proper dental hygiene practices. The 'Chew for Change' campaign plays an integral part of our efforts to improve children's oral health and is currently supported through sales of Extra® Chewing Gum in Ireland during the campaign period. In addition to the collaboration on the dental health project, Extra® is also an important partner for our work on strengthening vulnerable families in Chipata, Zambia.



Getting into good dental habits in Botswana

Preventable child deaths: the fight for access to healthcare and vaccines

In the next seven years, 52 million children* under the age of five will die from largely preventable illnesses. This shocking prediction proves that although children have a right to healthcare, access remains limited for far too many.

Every day, lack of access to primary care results in the death of 7,000 babies. Unequal access to vaccines means that 20 million children lack basic protection against disease, leading to the death of 1.5 million children under five from vaccine-preventable diseases annually. These illnesses, alongside diseases like pneumonia and preventable health concerns such as malnutrition, are a global epidemic. One that we are working hard to combat.

SOS Children's Villages, through the support of the much-loved fashion brand DeMellier, has been distributing vaccines and medical treatment for babies and children in Liberia, Somalia, and now Senegal. In Liberia, for example, we have been able to distribute vaccines, and provide accessible, high-quality healthcare to thousands of the most at-risk families from the most vulnerable communities.



An SOS Children's Villages health worker in Somalia giving a vaccination © Fadumo Jama

This work has resulted in a substantial reduction in child mortality rates and childhood diseases.

For women like Esther, a 35-year-old mother from Liberia, this resource has been life-changing. She ensured her seven-month-old son received vaccinations against polio and measles. *"I'm glad that my son has been vaccinated because he was ill, and I know now that he will recover. I will encourage people to come for vaccines. The vaccines are good for babies, so I know it is important,"* says Esther.

Despite ongoing efforts, vaccine supplies in countries like Somalia remain erratic due to continued humanitarian crises, resulting in shortages or unexpected price increases. However, the SOS Children's Villages Mother and Child Hospital in Mogadishu still provides vaccines to over 25,000 people annually, primarily women and children.

The success of programmes like these demonstrates the potential for making significant strides in reducing preventable child deaths.

*UNICEF Global Child Health Report

Crafting a future: Grace's journey to a career in fashion

Grace from Botswana is a passionate young woman with a love for crafts and dressmaking. Sadly, throughout her life she has faced considerable challenges in accessing training opportunities, due to people's perception of her intellectual disability.

Undeterred by these hurdles, she remained steadfast in the pursuit of her goals, and with the support of SOS Children's Villages in Botswana she is well on her way to achieving her dreams.

Grace's big break

With the assistance of her dedicated SOS Children's Villages caregiver, Grace discovered the Collective Communities project, an SOS Children's Villages programme which offers skill development opportunities for young people with disabilities. The project is part of Futuremakers, a global initiative by Standard Chartered to tackle inequality by promoting economic inclusion for disadvantaged young people.

Grace successfully enrolled in a dressmaking course, where she was finally given the opportunity to hone her abilities and channel her creativity.

Grace's unwavering commitment and effort paid off, as she rapidly became the top student in her class. In addition, her involvement in the project allowed her to cultivate essential social skills.

Opportunity for success

SOS Children's Villages in Botswana and Motswedi Rehabilitation Centre organised a careers fair which presented 50 young individuals with a chance to explore diverse career paths and receive guidance on their future endeavours.

During the fair, Grace met a fashion designer who inspired her to pursue a career in the fashion industry. The two are currently discussing a potential mentorship opportunity, to further help Grace in her career.

A bright future

Reflecting on her experiences, Grace expressed, "I am immensely grateful for the chance to learn dressmaking and eagerly look forward to becoming the top designer in Botswana."

Grace is currently working on a dress for her caregiver, who has supported her throughout her life. This project not only showcases Grace's skills and creativity but also symbolises the powerful bond they have.

Grace's journey serves as an inspiring testament to how determination and a strong support system can empower young people to surmount significant obstacles and achieve their aspirations.

Through her involvement in the Collective Communities and Futuremakers, Grace has found a nurturing community that believes in her potential and champions her dreams. Given her talent and perseverance, Grace is undoubtedly destined for greatness.



Grace, creating a new design on her sewing machine. © SOS Children's Villages Botswana

News in brief

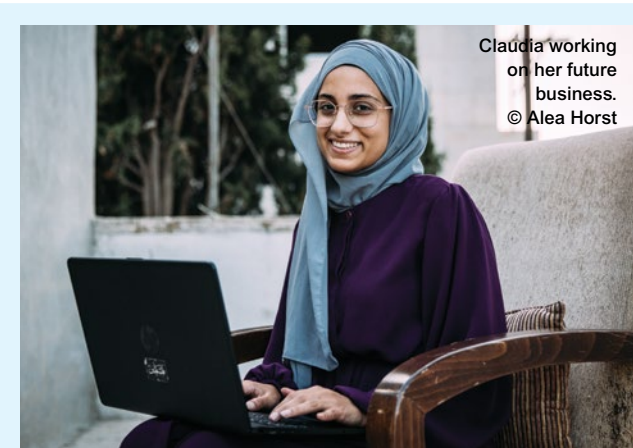
Globally, SOS Children's Villages teams are working tirelessly to support more than a million children, in over 130 different countries and territories. This work is carried out with the goal of providing the safety, stability and human connections that children need to thrive throughout their lives.

Ending the gender digital divide

Over 90% of jobs require digital skills, but women and girls continue to face disadvantages in accessing these. Ingrid Maria Johansen, Global CEO of SOS Children's Villages, calls for an end to the gender digital divide, emphasising equal opportunities and skills development.

"To support young women without adequate parental care to become self-reliant and break inter-generational poverty, we need to ensure equal access to opportunities and the skills of tomorrow...Tackling the gender digital divide means addressing access to digital technology, digital literacy and online safety. We need to bring women and girls connectivity that is affordable and relevant to them. Let's bring down the cost of connections and develop digital skills, devices and platforms which meet the real-world needs of girls without adequate parental care!"

SOS Children's Villages empowers women and girls through technology in projects like Digital Villages and YouthCan!, supported by UK donors and partners.



Claudia working on her future business. © Alea Horst

Claudia's journey: overcoming adversity and starting a business

Born in Jerusalem, Claudia moved to an SOS Children's Village in Bethlehem at the age of four with her sister, for a safer and more stable life. With her SOS family's support, she joined the SOS Children's Villages youth employability programme to develop job market skills and explore entrepreneurship.

After completing the programme, Claudia and her team received a small start-up capital grant to launch a furniture business. They leveraged their skills in graphic design, furniture restoration, logistics, and digital marketing, with additional support from a youth coordinator and mentor.

Despite concerns about limited job prospects and inequality in Palestine, Claudia remains determined to finish her multimedia studies and create a successful business, contributing to a more equal society and providing job opportunities for others.

Her story highlights the power of love, support, and stability for children facing adversity and family separation.



Claudia and team discussing their latest multimedia business idea. © Alea Horst

Tigray's path to recovery: Aid efforts resume in Ethiopia

Life in Ethiopia's Tigray region is gradually returning to normal as aid resumes following a peace deal between the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front. The war displaced 2.5 million people and destroyed critical infrastructure. Aid is now reaching Tigray through convoys and humanitarian flights, with essential services being restored.

SOS Children's Villages continues to assess the region's needs, and has found urgent requirements for food, cash, healthcare, and psychosocial support, as well as identifying the need to address rising violence against women and girls.

Tigray was previously inaccessible due to fighting that started in November 2020. Now convoys can travel through the four corridors opened in the Afar and Amhara regions. Humanitarian flights are going twice a week to the regional capital, Mekelle, carrying supplies and aid workers.



SOS Children's Villages staff hand over essential medical supplies and medication to those impacted by the war. © Binyam Asfaw

A mother's long fight against violence

At 37, Manju, mother to two teenage daughters and a five-year-old son, separated from her abusive husband, becoming the only woman-headed household in her village. Bhumiyadhar, the Indian mountain village where she lives, is marked by high rates of domestic violence and limited opportunities for women.

Manju sought help from an SOS Children's Villages' Family Strengthening Programme in 2019, which provided her daughters with educational support and a livelihood grant. She started rearing goats and found odd jobs, gaining financial independence, and ensuring her children's education. Through the programme, Manju's family and community were supported to understand the long-term impact of abuse and violence on children.

Empowered by the support she received, Manju reported the abuse to local police, who intervened to protect her from her husband. Women from the community now protect Manju and her children if her husband tries to return. The family's newfound safety has led to improved academic performance for her children, social confidence, and a stronger mother-daughter relationship.

"Even in this broken house and many things still to be done, we are the happiest we have ever been," says the eldest daughter Sonali, smiling and full of hope. *"This would not have been possible if we had not been mentored during the worst stage of our lives. Now we can be there for each other truly like a family, and most importantly, we understand what families are supposed to feel like - safe and supportive."*



Manju and her family © Pearl Sandhu

We are so grateful for all the support we receive from our donors and partners.

Gifts left in Wills can be a wonderful way to make a difference for a child's future. If you would like to consider leaving a gift in your Will, please call us on 01223 365589 or email: hello@sosuk.org



Children enjoy activities at one of five SOS Children's Villages child-care spaces in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.
© Alea Horst




Ravenscroft House, 59-61 Regent Street, Cambridge CB2 1AB



SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES

Registered Charity No. 1069204

Telephone: 01223 365 589
Email: hello@sosuk.org
www.sosuk.org

 [soschildrensvillagesuk](https://www.facebook.com/soschildrensvillagesuk)
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