



SOS CHILDREN'S  
VILLAGES

S U S T A I N E R

# Gratitude Report



*\*Children's names changed to protect privacy.*

## A message from our CEO

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Children and young people today face an increasingly unstable, unjust and insecure future. Around the world, we continue to see the devastating effects of armed conflict, prolonged inflation and rising poverty levels, alongside an alarming pattern of record-breaking droughts, heatwaves and floods.

But for children without loving homes or adequate parental care, a crisis is, unfortunately, nothing new. Losing a caregiver or growing up in a family on the verge of breakdown are uniquely disturbing experiences that can pose a serious threat to a child's development and well-being. The trauma associated with such experiences may extend into adulthood and can be worsened by external challenges, such as conflicts or natural disasters.

As a member of our SOS Children's Villages family, you're helping a child find their way through crisis, grief and hardship. As the world continues to be rocked by emergencies and more children and young people are deprived of a stable environment and family, monthly supporters like you are vital sources of support.

**Thank you.**

Thank you for your compassion and action in giving children safe homes, strengthening families and delivering life-saving aid in emergencies. Caring, generous people like you provide more than 7.5 million children, young people and families with safe homes, nutritious food, economic empowerment, professional medical care, education and so much more.

But your impact doesn't end there. You deliver long-term support that helps children and families break generational cycles of poverty, abuse and family separation. As one past SOS participant from the Philippines said, "Now that I'm a mother, the care I experienced is the same care I give my child."

Thank you for your commitment to children in need. Together, we can give every child the safe, loving home and resources they need to thrive!

For the children,



Jill Nosach

*Chief Executive Officer and Child Sponsor*

# Breaking the cycle:

## How you help survivors of child abuse heal with trauma-informed care

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When Rose's\* mother remarried after years of being a single parent, the young girl was ecstatic.

She imagined their new life together—dinners filled with laughter, watching her parents dance in the kitchen while she did homework, a father figure who would bandage scraped knees and read bedtime stories.

But when they moved into her stepfather's home in Kigali, Rwanda, that peaceful dream shattered, leaving her trapped in a horrifying nightmare: Rose's stepfather began to beat her.

Terrified her stepfather's next fit of rage would kill her, the 13-year-old girl fled for her life. But with nowhere to go and no family to protect her, Rose was forced to live on the streets.

"I can't describe such a life," Rose said, tears streaming down her face. "Living on the streets felt like living in hell. People abuse you and you can't sleep because you live in constant fear."

Rose's story could have ended there—another child growing up alone, grappling with trauma and wondering if anyone loved her.

**But because of generous monthly supporters like you, Rose was rescued and welcomed into a safe home at SOS Children's Village in Rwanda.**

Although SOS guaranteed Rose was physically safe and emotionally nurtured in her new home, her healing was far from over.

The abuse she experienced falls under what experts call Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), traumatic events that occur before age 18. ACEs trigger toxic stress, which disrupts healthy brain development and increases risks of chronic health challenges—like heart disease, diabetes, and even some cancers.

*"I can't describe such a life. Living on the streets felt like living in hell. People abuse you and you can't sleep because you live in constant fear."*

**Without the presence of a loving, trusted adult to help regulate this response, healthy brain and body development suffer profoundly.**

But the stable and loving family environments that you help provide offers hope—helping a child heal even after experiencing severe trauma.

These relationships build resiliency, encourage healthy brain development and alleviate the effects of toxic stress—even for children who have experienced multiple ACEs.

Because of your kind, compassionate dedication to those in need, children like Rose have the stable, loving family and mental health resources that research shows are essential to recovering from trauma. Thank you for delivering the comprehensive support children need to heal and build bright, resilient futures.



*People fleeing fighting in Khartoum, Sudan*

# Love in the midst of loss: How you deliver peace in crisis

## Sudan

When civil war erupted in Sudan in April 2023, 13-year-old Abdoulaye's\* life was consumed by violence.

To escape the gunfire, shelling and devastation, Abdoulaye and his parents fled Sudan. But, when they arrived in eastern Chad, the young boy was malnourished, withdrawn and unable to move on his own due to a painful physical disability.

Now, thanks to generous monthly supporters like you who believe no child should be left alone in crisis, Abdoulaye has the trauma-informed care, nutritious food and accessible support he needs to heal!

With SOS Children's Villages' child-friendly spaces, Abdoulaye and other children are protected, processing

their trauma and rebuilding a sense of safety—which is critical in this unprecedented humanitarian emergency.

*“I’m a student, so I can’t give much, but I know that if I give a little, and someone else gives a little, that it will add up to a great impact for kids in need.”*

–Gatod, former participant with SOS Children's Villages school in Sudan and current monthly sustainer

“Children are living through one of the most devastating crises in the country's history,” Limia said. “Millions have been forced to flee their homes—losing access to school, health care and safe shelter. Every day, children face growing risks of hunger, disease and exploitation.”

Because of dedicated and compassionate friends like you who take action and share their love with children affected by crisis, 39,000 children like Abdoulaye have access to the

safe spaces in Chad they need to feel safe, heal and build brighter futures after conflict.

## Ukraine

A dropped book, a slammed door, a burst of laughter—any loud, sudden sound and Anna\* would dissolve into uncontrollable trembles.

The ten-year-old girl felt consumed by anxiety and dark memories from one year ago. In her hometown of Kupyansk, Ukraine, she witnessed her family suffer brutal acts of violence and a bomb reduce her neighbor's home to rubble.

Although she and her family were now safe in Kharkiv, she struggled to process the trauma she experienced.

But, because of generous friends like you, Anna wasn't left to endure the trauma alone. Your partnership ensures Anna—and children like her—have access to critical, trauma-informed mental health support needed to recover from the horrifying experiences of war.

A psychologist with SOS Children's Villages mobile mental health clinic, Natalia, noticed the young girl's debilitating anxiety and approached Anna's mother, suggesting one-on-one counseling sessions.

"It didn't take long for Anna to open up about her fears of explosions, darkness and violence, loss, mistakes and loneliness," Natalia said.



*Anna and her mother*

In a peaceful, quiet setting, Natalia helped the young girl process the trauma she experienced through counseling, art therapy and breathing exercises. This mental health support also helped Anna develop coping mechanisms to help her heal and increase her resilience for future stressful situations.

"Her mother shares she sleeps through the night now," Natalia said. "She is calmer, more grounded and more optimistic about her future."

Including Anna, more than 507 children and families accessed mental health services through the mobile mental health unit in Kharkiv, and 90% of participants reported improved mental health!

Thank you for your compassion and dedication to ensuring every child has the mental and physical health care they need to survive crises and thrive in the future.

### Together, since the war began in 2022, we:



Reached more than **400,000 children and families** with **life-saving resources**.



Created **child-friendly spaces** where children can continue their **education and receive the psychosocial support** they need to thrive.



Provided **psychological and mental health services** to children and families recovering from **the trauma of war**.



Welcomed over **600 children** without parental care into a **safe home and loving family**.



Offered immediate relief—like **food, supplies, psychosocial support and evacuations**—to more than **2,800 children** and foster parents.



Ensured **health care** for children injured in the conflict and provided resources to support **continued education** during hospitalization.

# From grief to hope:

## How your support helped one mother rebuild her family's life in Nepal

When Leela's\* husband passed away unexpectedly, she was left alone and grieving—with no income to support her two children.

Like many women in Nepal, she faced an uncertain future without the skills or resources needed for financial independence and stability. Traditional beliefs often limit young girls' access to education—requiring them to stay home and complete household chores while their male counterparts attend school.

The impact of this inequality extends into adulthood. Without a quality education, many women have little choice but to marry and remain financially dependent on their husbands.

For Leela, this reality became a crisis when her husband passed away. Without professional skills or business training, she struggled to earn a sustainable income for her children. Her family was at risk of poverty, hunger and the heartbreaking possibility of family separation.

“I felt completely lost,” Leela said. “Then SOS Children's Villages stepped in, [and] their guidance gave me hope.”



*Leela and her children*



*Leela working proudly at her small business*

With the help of dedicated monthly supporters like you, Leela received the vocational skills, small business loan, mentorship and financial literacy training she needed to pursue her professional dreams and provide for her children.

As a way to honor her late husband, who dreamed of opening and managing his own veterinary shop, Leela enrolled in an 18-month veterinary course.

Now, Leela is a small business owner of a veterinary shop in her community! She's expanded her business and travels to nearby villages treating animals—from beloved pets to livestock that families depend on for income.

“Life still brings challenges, but I am proud of how far we've come,” Leela said. “My bond with my children is strong. We share laughter, meals and simple moments. They remember their father with love, and I want to keep his memory alive for them.”

Thank you for delivering the life-changing support mothers like Leela need to provide for their children and transform whole communities.



# Your impact on **the future.**

As a monthly supporter, you don't just provide the safe home and loving family a child needs today—you deliver the support they need to transform their future.

Thousands of children graduate from SOS Children's Villages each year and go on to live full, happy lives because of generous friends like you.

Leo\* grew up in an SOS village in Mexico. Now a young adult, he is dedicated to helping others and advocating for children's rights on the global stage.

**"I am grateful I grew up in a healthy environment only a family can give you," he said. "I didn't have to worry about a roof over my head, money or food. At [SOS Children's Villages], they gave me the opportunity to study and develop with the freedom to make my own decisions."**

And he's not the only one.

A study conducted in 40 countries from former SOS Children's Villages participants showed:

**92%** **have strong relationships** with friends and family and feel they give good care to their own children, passing down the care they received to the next generation.

**72%** **feel they are doing well** in providing for their basic needs.

**82%** **feel they are experiencing social and emotional well-being** and are safe from discrimination and harm.

**59%** **have received education and skills training** and feel they are succeeding in the job market and earning a decent living.



## Thank you

for investing in the life and future of a child in need!