



# Family Features

**Phil Spencer on  
location in Ghana**

**Preventing child  
abandonment**

**How our children  
come to us**

**Jolie Pitt boost  
for Darfur**



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#### Next issue: Autumn/Winter 2007

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Family Features is printed on paper from sustainable sources and the polythene envelope used to deliver your magazine is fully biodegradable.

Some names have been changed to protect our children's privacy and the communities in which we work.

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Issue 48

# Welcome to our new-look newsletter!

On Valentine's Day, I suffered a health scare but was lucky to find myself resuscitated and in good hands in hospital. I am now fully recovered but the thought of my own young children being without a father became crushingly real. For this reason, I am particularly excited by the new ten year strategy for SOS Children worldwide.

Globally, we have agreed on a main aim for 2016: to help a million more children live in a family. This will mean 100,000 more children in new families in new villages, as well as helping 900,000 stay with their natural families through support for AIDS-orphan families, grandparent-led families and abandonment prevention programmes worldwide. These programmes have been very successful since we started them in 2002, and the

cost is only about £10 a month to keep a child at home. Children's villages require more resources because they provide everything for children who really have nothing and no one, and so will continue to represent about 60% of our expenditure.

I hope that you will share my enthusiasm for this vision for the next decade and thank you again for the support which has made every imaginable difference to the lives of the children you help.

**Andrew Cates**  
Chief Executive

## What we do



This pie chart illustrates the full spectrum of our work and we have produced a handy A6 booklet entitled 'SOS Children in a nutshell' which expands on each section with pictures and case studies. It's an ideal way to introduce us to potential new supporters, so if you would like to receive copies of the 'nutshell', do let us know!

## OUR AMBASSADORS

# Phil Spencer on location in Ghana

In November 2006, Phil Spencer, of Channel 4's 'Relocation Relocation', travelled to Ghana to experience the work SOS Children does there. Phil tells us all about his adventure...

With my business and living centred on finding accommodation for people, I was keen to learn more about SOS Children's work first hand. So I convinced my sister Helen, a vet who has travelled extensively in Africa, to accompany me to Ghana where we spent a few fantastic days as guests of SOS Children's Villages.

The people in Ghana were some of the most welcoming I've ever met. On our first day, we saw some of SOS Children's outreach work in communities on the outskirts of the capital Accra. We were told about the problems the communities faced and the difficulties that SOS staff encountered in trying to overcome them.



Phil shares a story at SOS Village Tema

I had never appreciated how difficult it is to tackle HIV/AIDS and provide support, advice and practical assistance. But because the disease carries such stigma, many people simply don't want to recognise it for fear of the repercussions, making the epidemic extremely difficult to treat and prevent.

One of SOS Children's most successful outreach programmes is the micro-loan project. Village elders and SOS staff identify people to receive small loans to set up a business, which provides support for them and their families, and gives them a helping hand out of the vicious cycle of poverty.

One lady used her loan to set up a small shop, and although the shop really was tiny, the income she received helped her to care for 15 children. This support was obviously a godsend for her, because as soon as she saw the SOS team she was moved to tears.



Local beneficiary explains his chilli business to Phil

The loans are about US \$50, and each recipient has to produce weekly accounts to make sure they are using the money effectively. The aim of the project is that after 18 months, the beneficiaries are self-sufficient and no longer need SOS Children's support.

Observing the problems people in Ghana faced on a daily basis was a real insight, so it was fantastic to see what a difference a little support can make. Helen and I were equally impressed on our visits to the two Ghanaian SOS Children's Villages, one of which is in Tema, just outside Accra, and the other in Asiakwa, a little further inland.



Helen Spencer shares her thoughts on an x-ray

There were so many heartbreaking stories about the children who lived in the village – a little girl and boy, whose parents had split up, were abandoned when they were

only two and three years old. The children were forced to fend for themselves and survived off scraps in the street for a few months before someone informed SOS and they were brought to the village.

Yet despite these terrible stories, all the kids were so happy. I remember seeing two little boys, from the same SOS family, walking home together hand-in-hand from the SOS School. It was such a moving image, and one that will stay with me forever.

In one family home, an older boy who had moved out to the nearby youth home was unwell, so, just as any other teenager would do, he'd gone home for some TLC from his mum. I realised then that these families are exactly the same as yours or mine and the children will always be part of the family.

During my visit to the SOS Children's Villages in Ghana, I saw a lot of very happy and well cared for children who have been quite fortunate in finding themselves there. The dedication and commitment of the village mothers and directors was truly incredible. My visit was an amazing experience and Helen and I can't wait to go back again.



Enjoying the playground at SOS Village Tema

If you wish to sponsor a child or a village in Ghana please visit [www.soschildren.org/donate-help](http://www.soschildren.org/donate-help)



## INSIGHT

# Before and after joining the SOS family

### How do our children come to the SOS Village?

Before construction starts on a new children's village, we begin our search for orphaned and abandoned children. We contact social services, community members and hospitals and ask them to inform us of any children they believe would benefit from living in the children's village.



Happy to arrive at the village in Yantai, China

consider how the child can be given the maximum support before he or she moves to their new village home. The children already living in the SOS family are carefully prepared for the arrival of their new brother or sister.

The village director ensures that the new child is accepted and supported by his/her SOS family. He/she also keeps a full record of the child's pre-admission biography, listing all the details of his or her origins and background, as well as the decisions surrounding the child's move to the village. This information is very useful when making decisions about the child's needs and it also gives the child a realistic picture of his or her past as they grow up.

All these measures help prepare the child, his or her relatives (wherever possible), the SOS family, and the whole village community for admission. This in turn helps ensure that the new child is given a warm welcome in the village and especially in his or her new SOS family.



Family life in St Petersburg, Russia

Before any child comes to a village, careful consideration is given as to whether is the best place for that child to grow up is in the children's village. As a general rule, it is assumed that children who move into an SOS Children's Village will remain there until they are independent young adults.

At the village, the future SOS mother, the village director and the village counsellor

## Tracking footprints in China

Xinping Yu arrived at SOS Children's Village Yantai in north-eastern China as an orphaned child and today he is the manager of a fishing fleet of 29 ocean-going ships. Xinping's life story is just one among many of young adults whose childhoods were marked by great difficulties but who obtained real opportunities for a bright future through the care they were given in an SOS Children's Village.

The successful integration of youths into working life does not necessarily have to lead to a brilliant career, as in the case of Xinping, but should reflect an independent and self-confident adulthood, which is not usually the path of children with such difficult backgrounds. Most of the children who have grown up in one of the nine Chinese SOS Children's Villages and seven SOS Youth Homes manage to make the transition to adulthood relatively smoothly.



Xinping, proud of his success

To sponsor a child and give them a family for life email [sponsor@soschildren.org](mailto:sponsor@soschildren.org) or visit [www.soschildren.org/donate-help](http://www.soschildren.org/donate-help)

## WORLD UPDATES

# SOS Emergency Relief Programme - Darfur, Sudan

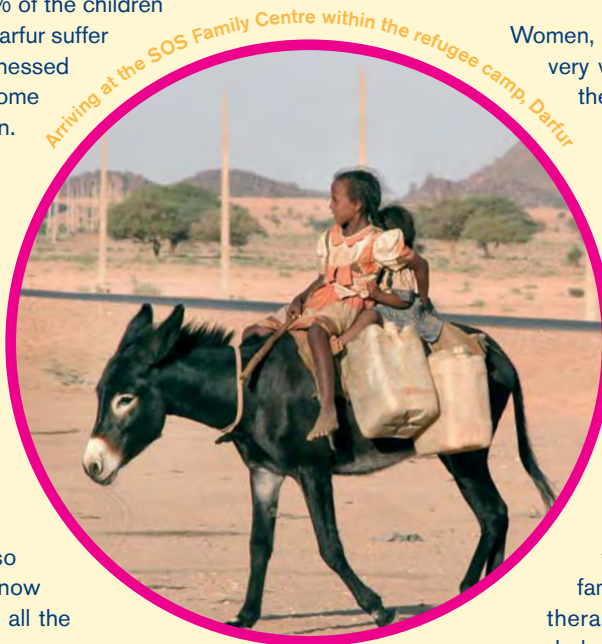
Fear, listlessness, poor concentration and aggression are just some of the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. Studies have shown that 84% of the children at the Abu-Shouk refugee camp in Darfur suffer from PTSD. The children here witnessed such distressing scenes back at home that they have become withdrawn. Little Fariha, for example, witnessed her father's murder, and as a result, she became violent towards other children.

The three SOS Family Centres in Abu-Shouk help children like Fariha understand and come to terms with their horrific memories. Through painting, drama, music and individual or group counselling, the youngsters regain their childhoods. When we first met Fariha, she was so traumatised she couldn't speak; now she is a little chatterbox who greets all the visitors at the Family Centres!

SOS Children runs a family retracing programme in Darfur, but those children who lost their entire families in the war are offered a permanent home in our children's villages in Khartoum

(northern Sudan) or in Malakal (in the south). We are considering opening a third Sudanese children's village in Darfur.

Women, particularly single women, are also very vulnerable and many have described their ordeals to us. Rape is a common weapon of war in Darfur; other women have been abducted or even murdered. At the SOS Family Centres, these women and their children have somewhere safe to sleep and eat. The women are also offered counselling and, to give them a more secure future, we have set up training courses for them in our 'handicrafts' tent. They learn how to make blankets and baskets and are taught how to sell them to make money for their families. Men are also offered trauma therapy sessions by our trained psychologists.



SOS Children supported over 1,800 children and 800 adults in Abu-Shouk in 2006. We are on course to increase this to 3,000 people in 2007.

## Jolie-Pitt Foundation boost for Darfur relief effort

(Press Release 10 May 2007) - Actors Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt have donated one million dollars towards the humanitarian effort in Darfur. The donation from the Jolie-Pitt Foundation will go to three agencies playing key roles in Darfur and neighbouring Chad: the UN Refugee Agency; the International Rescue Committee and SOS Children's Villages. All three agencies are active in providing life-saving humanitarian assistance to the more than two million people displaced within Darfur and the 240,000 refugees from Darfur living in camps in eastern Chad. Jolie has visited

the region three times. During her recent visit to the Oure-Cassoni camp she met staff working for SOS Children, who are providing psychological assistance to traumatized children.

"The children benefit enormously from the therapy," said Yolanda van den Broek, project leader of the Emergency Relief Programme of SOS Children's Villages in Chad. "Children who at first did not speak, did not eat and who were isolated in their own worlds, are now playing happily and are able to interact with others."



Angelina Jolie supports our work in Darfur





# SPECIAL FEATURE

## Family Strengthening Programmes

Family Strengthening Programmes (FSPs) offer specific support to some of the most vulnerable members of society, including child- and grandparent-headed families and those affected by HIV/AIDS. Through skills training, literacy classes, education, counselling and improved nutrition, families are better able to provide for their children and stay together through difficult times.

### The Chitamba Family

In Maputo, the capital of Mozambique, SOS Children has been working with local vulnerable families for a number of years. Family Strengthening Programmes are community-led interventions that can pave the way not only to prevent the abandonment of children, but also to empower families to improve their own situation.



Inside beneficiary's house, Mozambique

Mr and Mrs Chitamba and their five children are one such family to have benefited from our Family Strengthening Programme in Maputo. When the SOS field officer first met the family, they could not afford to pay school fees for the older children and, although the father was occasionally invited to help a friend in his basic carpentry workshop, the work was infrequent and never well paid.

The family lives in a single room, which is used for living, sleeping and sometimes even cooking on an open fire. Sanitation is poor, as the family has to share a tap outside for water and the toilet is simply a pit latrine in the yard.

To help in the short-term, SOS Children is providing the Chitambas with a monthly food pack to reduce the family's immediate struggle. The two middle children have now started at a local nursery school, where they receive at least two meals a day, and the two older children will soon begin primary school.

For the Chitamba family, the future now looks secure, which is the aim of all SOS Family Strengthening Programmes. By providing long-term support to at-risk families, we hope to give them the skills and financial support to be able to help themselves.



SOS FSP-supported sweet shop general

"I was in total despair before I heard about the SOS Family Strengthening Programme," said the mother. "There were days when we did not eat. I could barely produce milk to breastfeed the little one. It's a miracle that this has happened to us. My husband is now being trained in how to run a business and he will soon be able to raise money for our survival."

### How can you support?

- £1,200 will enable 45 people to complete a computer training course
- £500 provides medical support to 130 people at an SOS Mother and Child Centre
- £250 provides support from a community nurse to families affected by HIV/AIDS
- £100 covers a month's medical expenses for 150 children at an SOS Mother and Child Centre

For details on how you can support our programmes, visit [www.soschildren.org](http://www.soschildren.org)

## Malancha's story

Malancha is one of a number of women who have learned new skills at the SOS Community Development Centre in Chittagong, Bangladesh. She is grateful to SOS Children for the support she and her family have received, "Now I am a skilled person" she says.

Malancha is 33 years old. Nine years ago, her husband died in an accident, leaving Malancha alone to fend for her two small children. "After the death of my husband I became totally helpless. My in-laws, who earlier had been so nice, suddenly turned against me. They asked me to leave their house. I moved out of their house along with my kids," Malancha recalls.

Her educational qualifications were only up to eighth class and she had no skills to help her get a decent job. "I started looking for a job but could find none. As a result I had no choice but to work as a maid servant." However the money she earned from this work was simply not enough. She received US\$15 per month; ten dollars of this went on paying the rent. With the remaining five dollars Malancha could barely manage to cover the household expenses. It was impossible for the young widow to send her children to school.

"I used to cry when I saw other children going to school. I prayed desperately to God to help me so that my sons could study," Malancha says in a grave voice.

The lady for whom Malancha worked was very kind. She told her about SOS Children and encouraged Malancha to visit the local SOS Community Development Centre. The visit became the turning point in Malancha's life. She started taking classes in tailoring and was admitted to the Family Strengthening Programme run by the centre. Her children started going to primary school, where they were also given nutritious food and provided with stationery.

Six months ago, Malancha bought a sewing machine and opened a small boutique which she runs from her house. "I asked all the women in the locality to give me a chance. My stitching was appreciated by almost everyone," says a blushing Malancha. Gradually, she started getting more orders and her monthly income increased.

"Today I can live decently in my community and this is possible only thanks to the SOS Community Development Centre. Now I am a skilled person, I don't have to wash utensils in somebody else's house. My kids feel proud that their mother runs a boutique," Malancha explains, with a smile on her face. "I thank SOS Children for helping me and I hope the organisation will support many more needy women like me."



...rates income for local family in Ghana



Malancha and sons benefit from SOS FSP in Bangladesh

...e in South Africa  
...Child Clinic  
...y HIV/AIDS for a month  
...S Children's Village

- £12 will support a child on an FSP in Swaziland for a month
- £5.50 will provide a month's meals for a child at an SOS Community Development Centre in Latin America



...jects, or if you would like more information please email [projects@soschildren.org](mailto:projects@soschildren.org) or call 01223 365589



# Partners and Friends

## School success

Pupils from Glenlola Collegiate School tell us about their amazing fundraising efforts...

"Hello, my name is Ashleigh Hall. I am the Games Captain at Glenlola Collegiate School in Bangor, Northern Ireland. We wanted to support SOS Children and they told us about the construction of a school in Basse, The Gambia.

"We held various fundraisers, including a sponsored walk, to reach our target of £25,000 in March. The sponsored walk was a great success. All the pupils thoroughly enjoyed it and got into the spirit of the occasion. The sponsor money came rolling in, with each girl having a target of £25 to collect. In many cases this target was well exceeded, with some girls receiving £200 in sponsor money.

"We have had other fundraising events, such as a Year 12 show, a cheerleading competition and a mobile phone recycling project. The Year 14s also held their annual Christmas Extravaganza with the proceeds going to the 'SOS Children Fund'.

"We tried our very best to provide the money that will help build the school in Basse, The Gambia."

Thank you very much to all the girls at Glenlola who did indeed achieve their target!



Pupils at Glenlola put their best foot forward for the new school in Basse

## This issue's star supporter



Thanks to the work of one star pupil, Meytar Ronel, Friith Manor Primary School raised an amazing £350 over two days.

Last December, Meytar, Year 5, gave a presentation to fellow pupils about SOS Children, answered questions and explained how she planned to raise money for the charity.

The idea to fundraise began when Meytar heard the story of a friend raised in foster care. She immediately looked online for charities that help children, found SOS Children and her idea grew from there. The whole school took part in fundraising games, including Lucky Dip, darts, and Snakes and Ladders. Donations of dolls and food sold out. Meytar thanked the Head Teacher Mr Hearing, and Miss Carmichael, and the volunteers - David, Anne-Marie, Olivia, Lewis, Anuja, Mason, Kollby, Charlie, Ife, Satoka, Lara and Kira.

Meytar and the school were awarded certificates to thank them for their incredible achievement in support of orphans in Africa.

## Your school in Africa

Thanks to the HSBC Global Education Trust, students and teachers from across the UK were invited to experience an African school room at the annual Education Show at the Birmingham NEC in March.

SOS Children hosted a stand, which teemed with Gambian school books,

## Cambridge Supporter Group

In 1995, a group of Cambridge SOS Children supporters formed a committee to fundraise for the charity and 12 years later the work they started continues to flourish.

Group chair, Sue Fox, reports: "Popular annual events include our tennis tournament and golf day, organised by the ladies and gentlemen respectively. There is gentle competition between the sexes on the committee to see which of these events is the most successful! Our main event varies from year to year; in the past we've held fashion shows and wine-tasting, and this summer we'll be holding a jazz concert.

"We have recently chosen to support medical and educational projects and were thrilled to see photographs of the ambulance for The Gambia to which we contributed. Many members have been privileged to visit villages on their travels and we are fortunate to have the office here in Cambridge to be able to see for ourselves that the money we raise is being well spent. Our annual target is to raise £4,000 and to date we have raised over £50,000.

"We are very grateful to all our friends and supporters and to the staff in Cambridge for their help and encouragement."



Girls from St Monica's RC High School help out at the NEC stand

clothes, instruments and photos, along with sounds to entice visitors and show how SOS Children's work can be used in the National Curriculum and how schools can support the charity.

To get your school involved with SOS Children and include an international dimension to your teaching, or to support SOS Children in your community, please email [bec@soschildren.org](mailto:bec@soschildren.org) or call 01223 365589.



# Challenges

## Keepy Uppy Challenge 2007

SOS Children has teamed up with **The Great Football Giveaway**, another UK-based charity, and together we will be taking 3,000 footballs to children in the African country of Angola this summer. By placing the balls in the care of schools, we're also hoping to improve attendance rates and get children to complete their education. If you'd like more information, please visit: [www.soschildrensvillages.org.uk/keepy-uppy.htm](http://www.soschildrensvillages.org.uk/keepy-uppy.htm)



Children all over Angola will benefit from 'Keepy Uppy' footballs (Patrick Wittman)

Yorkshire Volunteer Co-ordinator, Lindsay Gray, and boyfriend Daniel Farr reached the top of Vietnam's highest peak, Mount Fansipan (3,143m), raising enough funds to buy new beds for the children living at SOS Children's Village Mai Dich (see below) whom they had a chance to meet on their trip.



## Kilimanjaro

Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania is proving a popular hiking challenge among SOS supporters. Already this year, Amy Wareham, Simon Whitehouse, Paul Whitehouse, Natalie Bromley, Ian Sandford and Lee Gilmore have successfully summited Africa's highest mountain (5,898m) raising thousands of pounds for SOS Children. A terrific achievement on both counts!

Right - Simon Whitehouse and friends proudly gather at Kibo and later visit SOS Children's Village Arusha (above) where their sponsorship was directed.



Stuart Ward and Chris Attwell proudly wear their medals

**Congratulations and huge thanks** to the five Flora London Marathon runners who successfully completed the 26 miles and 385 yards on Sunday 22 April, raising valuable sponsorship for SOS Children's Villages. The combined efforts of Chris Attwell, Mike Landers, Mark Smith, Naj Butt and Stuart Ward have contributed over £10,000 to specific areas of our worldwide work.

If you are feeling inspired to take part in next year's London Marathon (Sunday 13 April 2008), look out for application forms in the August issue of the free magazine 'Marathon News', available in all major high street sport stores. Currently SOS Children does not have its own charity places so we rely

on people who gain their own place through the ballot (which closes in October) to run on our behalf.

Meanwhile, all 18 of our charity places have been taken up for the British 10K Run, which also takes place through the streets of London, on Sunday 1 July. You can still apply for a place through the organisers and then pledge your support to SOS Children, as with any regional running/cycling/swimming event or triathlon!



Dressing up for the British 10K Run adds fun to the fundraising

Signed up for a challenge? Support SOS Children and receive a complimentary T-shirt or vest and fundraising advice. Please email [caroline@soschildren.org](mailto:caroline@soschildren.org) or call 01223 365589



# FOCUS ON Children with special needs

## SOS Vocational Training Centre, Khajuri Kalan, India

Losing your family as a result of illness, poverty, or natural disaster is a terrible experience, but some children in our care have suffered even more as a result of physical or mental disabilities. Caring for these children requires additional support, but a number of SOS Children's Villages are able to provide the special care that these equally special children need and deserve.

The SOS Vocational Training Centre in Khajuri Kalan, central India, teaches skills to teenagers with special needs. Up to 50 young people can be taught at the centre, which includes training facilities, two youth houses and a multi-purpose hall. The courses offered include brick laying and masonry, carpentry, weaving and handicrafts, metal work, and screen printing, preparing the youngsters for their independence.

## Adnan's Story

Adnan was brought to SOS Children's Village Khajuri Kalan as an infant. He was abandoned at the temple gate when he was just 15 days old. "Meeza [his new SOS mother] drowned in tears when she took the baby in her arms. I could see the love and compassion in her eyes," the village director says.

"Looking after a blind baby was challenging for me but I was keen to do it," Meeza says. "Early on it was tough...but I learnt steadily and now I know how to teach Adnan various things."



Adnan responds to sounds and turns his head towards the direction from which it comes. He seems to particularly enjoy whistling. When Meeza whistles to him he leaves everything and, to his mother's great pleasure, quietly follows the sound and smiles. The progress he has made during the last few months has been amazing. When Meeza asks, "Where is Adnan?" he points to himself and says, "Here I am!"

Specially trained SOS mothers are needed to give special care



Occupational therapy develops potential at the SOS Medical Centre

## SOS Children's Village Valle de Ángeles, Honduras

SOS Children's Village Valle de Ángeles, near Tegucigalpa, capital of the Central American country of Honduras, provides a home to 90 children with special needs. The village consists of ten family houses and has been specially equipped with ramps, railings and suitable furniture to ensure all the children are able to make themselves at home.

The nearby SOS Therapy Centre has rooms for medical treatment and physiotherapy, occupational therapy and relaxation, along with a hydrotherapy pool. The children with less severe disabilities attend local schools; for those who need extra support, a specific SOS School has been opened. Each child at the village has a special development programme drawn up to meet their needs and give them the best possible opportunities for their development and future independence.

For more details about our specific projects please email [rachel@soschildren.org](mailto:rachel@soschildren.org) or call 01223 365589

# Up and Coming

## Wear something WOW! World Orphan Week, 4 - 10 February 2008

**World Orphan Week (WOW)**, our annual fundraising campaign, is moving from its October slot to February in 2008 and will be getting a whole new face-lift to boot! Our new **Wear something WOW!** campaign aims to get school pupils, companies and individuals up and down the country dressing up and bringing a bit of colour to the otherwise dreary month of February, whilst at the same time raising money to support orphaned children around the world.

There are more details up on [www.worldorphanweek.org](http://www.worldorphanweek.org) but if you'd like more information on the campaign, please contact [info@worldorphanweek.org](mailto:info@worldorphanweek.org).

## Regional Volunteers

This spring, we welcomed 12 new regional volunteers to the team, who will be visiting schools and community groups to help raise awareness and funds as well as organising events, collections and exhibitions. Thanks to their enthusiasm and skills of persuasion, we now have 20 supporters running the London 10K run on 1 July! The volunteers will also be supporting our **Wear Something WOW!** campaign.

If you're interested in becoming a regional volunteer, please contact Bec: [bec@soschildren.org](mailto:bec@soschildren.org) or 01223 365589.

## Wikipedia

SOS Children is in the process of releasing the official school version of Wikipedia as a free DVD encyclopedia. It has 5,000 child-safe articles and images and is downloadable in the image-abridged form from our website. You can find it at <http://schools-wikipedia.org>



Ayesha Khan, head of the SOS Pakistan Supporters Group, and children from SOS Children's Village Sialkot, Pakistan, celebrate the village's first year. Many children orphaned as a result of the 2005 earthquake in Kashmir have since found a new home at the village.

## Alicia Murcia - local artist and supporter

Budding artist and Cambridge PhD student, Alicia Murcia, has been raising money for SOS Children's Village Nairobi, in Kenya, by selling her Flamenco-inspired artwork. Alicia donated 100% of profits from sales of her Christmas cards last year and her exhibition in March raised a further £567. Muchas gracias Alicia!



Alicia Murcia - local artist and supporter

Alicia is planning another exhibition for SOS Children in the autumn and a bespoke SOS Children Christmas card, so watch this space!

## Voices from the villages

*"I know the reason why I was given an SOS mother. It's simple. It's because every child needs a mother!"*

13 YEAR OLD, TIRANA, ALBANIA

*"I thank SOS Children's Villages for everything that they are doing for us. I have no words to really express my feelings."*

UNCLE ON A FAMILY STRENGTHENING PROGRAMME, BUKAVU, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

*"Hello Mummy. I know this is not a very big gift, but the greatest gift I will give you is to get good grades and improve my grades. I also wish you the best. God bless you, and may he give you strength, wisdom and everything else you want because you are a good mother to me. I love you, Ana."*

11 YEAR OLD GIRL, DASSA-ZOUMÉ, BENIN

*"I love life in the village because we have enough food."*

11 YEAR OLD GIRL, DASSA-ZOUMÉ, BENIN

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

