

January, 2009

Dear Friends,

It is time, once again, to present a report of our activities during the past year, thank you for your continued support and, on behalf of all of us associated with SOS Children's Villages of Pakistan, extend to you our best wishes for the New Year. May the coming year be a happy one for you and your family, bring hope for a brighter future for the country and peace to the world's many troubled spots.

Last year I had expressed the hope, that the months ahead would see some improvement in the unfortunate situation in which we were. Not only has that not happened but, sadly, if anything, conditions have become even worse. As one views with dismay the spread of militancy, the upward spiral in the cost of living, the general disarray in all spheres of life, it is not difficult to understand the prevalent despondency. Our domestic problems are further compounded by the freefall in the global markets, which alone has serious repercussions on our economy. At times like this it is for each one of us to take up the challenge and make some positive contribution towards improving matters.

For our part, we continue to plan ambitiously and follow our dream of reaching out to needy children in all parts of the country. This is only possible because you, our donors, give us your continued support, and enable us to give to the orphans life's most precious gift – the gift of hope. This assistance is even more vital than before because the cost of establishing new projects has escalated sharply. To meet the rising cost of living we have also increased the monthly sponsorship to Rs.3000 per child, effective the first of last Ramazan.

If we are to execute the several projects we are planning, without too much delay, we need more support. I would like to appeal to all of you to please assist us by inviting others to consider joining us in our efforts. There are still many people who do not know about SOS and, if they do, erroneously presume that it is a foreign funded organization. This is a fairly general perception and needs to be corrected. We are immensely proud to be self-financing and credit for this goes to the generosity of our people. What is even more impressive is the fact that, out of the 132 country associations affiliated with the umbrella organization SOS Kinderdorf International, outside Europe, SOS Children's Villages of Pakistan is the only association which does its own funding. This is quite a feather in our cap, especially in view of the fact that our country lags behind others in so many respects. We now have projects in many locations and invite anyone interested to visit them and see for themselves what we are doing to transform the lives of the orphans. All our efforts are directed towards making them feel valued and loved, and ensuring that they can develop into confident, productive human beings.

A few highlights from the various projects:

LAHORE

The past year has been filled with much activity with many corporate sponsors and private individuals organizing a variety of events for the enjoyment of the children. Daily Nation and Nawai Waqt invited the children for a milad and also arranged a special showing of a film. Another film was arranged by Telenor and DHL organized a fun-filled programme with competitions, a cricket match and magic show. The visit to Governor House was another highlight. The most meaningful activity is the annual summer volunteer programme, spread over eight weeks, in which over 100 high school children participate. Our children receive

help with their holiday homework and many interesting extracurricular activities are organized.

The monsoon brought tragedy when a boundary wall collapsed and the Village was flooded with over three feet of water. The damage to clothes, furnishings, furniture etc. was colossal but, fortunately, with the timely help of the Emergency Services and police, all the children were moved safely to the school building, which is at a higher level. We are ever so grateful to the DCO, Mr. Sajjad Ahmad Bhutta, for arranging the supply of meals, bedding and essential items.

DHODIAL

We were greatly grieved by the sudden passing away of the Chairperson of SOS Children's Villages of NWFP, Begum Zari Sarfaraz. She has been a generous supporter and source of great strength, ever since the inception of this committee in 1982. She took over from Begum Mehmooda Salim Khan, just last year. They were both outstanding social workers of the country and we are fortunate to have had them associated with us. The new Chairperson is a competent and dynamic personality of the region, Mrs. Kholi Mustafa. We welcome her to the SOS family and are confident that her expertise will benefit us in many ways.

Upgrading of the projects, both the Village and School, are part of a regular programme and result in steady improvement of the facilities. Extra classrooms have been added to the school and a regular teacher training programme started. Training of the mothers is also an on-going exercise, to supplement the training they receive at the National Training Centre.

KARACHI

As in all the projects, the community and corporate sector played an important role in providing entertainment and interesting experiences for the children. Telenor arranged a film show, CIDA coordinated a visit to HMCS Iriquois, Oracle International arranged a fun evening and ARY and CNBC television channels both arranged programmes with the children. Family Educational Services once again organized the popular summer camp and a summer school was also organized, with numerous volunteers helping the children with their studies.

The school had a pass percentage of 100% and, for a change, the boys did better than the girls! With the support of the Infaq Foundation the school has introduced a merit based scholarship scheme. The foundation is also constructing a Technical Training Institute in Korangi which will be ready by March. This has been designed according to our specifications, and will be managed by SOS.

RAWALPINDI

As in other projects, the children in Rawalpindi have had a busy year. Many friends contribute towards making their lives interesting and ensuring that they, too, are exposed to outside stimuli, as appropriate. Telenor, one of our regular supporters, arranged for all the children to see a film, where they were also served refreshments. DHL arranged a magic show, art competition and a tableau in the Village. In addition a tree plantation ceremony was organized.

The construction of the High School for boys completes the SOS Hermann Gmeiner School complex. We are very grateful to all those who support our efforts to provide quality education and, in this regard, HSBC has initiated an excellent scheme on a worldwide basis. Through their 'Future First' programme they are offering assistance in upgrading

school facilities and have approved our schools in Rawalpindi, Multan and Sialkot for assistance. The CEO of HSBC, Mr. Tahir Sadiq, personally visited the Village and School and inaugurated the computer and science laboratories.

FAISALABAD

All the important events of the year were celebrated with enthusiasm, especially Independence Day and both the Eid days. The most exciting event of the year was the re-union of those children who have left SOS. Fifty-five boys and girls, with their spouses and offspring, were warmly welcomed to the Village. A delicious lunch was hosted and all the little ones received gifts. Other events, greatly enjoyed by the children, were the marriages of four of the older girls, which were solemnized during the year. Scouting is a popular activity and plays an important role in the development of the young boys. The PIA Scouts Association provides generous assistance in this respect, and sponsors the participation of our boys in various events.

SARGODHA

The children in this project, as in all the others, celebrated all the national days with great enthusiasm. On Independence Day, in addition to the relevant speeches and 'taranas', games and competitions were organized. On the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr the children organized a mela and on Eid-ul-Zuha, offered sacrifice and decorated the Village. The students of the University are taking a keen interest in the children and organized functions on Defence Day and Iqbal Day. We greatly appreciate such interest as this project lags behind all others in community involvement. A few donors are offering assistance, both in cash and kind, but much more is needed. We hope, that as more people become aware of our activities, the support will gradually increase.

MULTAN

Many visitors have come to the Village and been impressed by the confident, talented children and their attractive environment. Amongst them have been the staff and students of the British International School, teams from several TV channels and the motorcyclist Mukarram Khan Tareen. This is the second time that Mr. Tareen has organized a charity tour to publicize the work of SOS, and will also be visiting SOS Children's Villages in Faisalabad, Sialkot and Dhodial, covering a distance of 2100 kilometers.

Telenor arranged an enjoyable evening for the children and not only screened a movie, but also provided snacks and a delicious dinner. The Solex Group of Chemicals sponsored a musical evening and the Basant Mela was a fun-filled event with donors, sponsors and the community participating enthusiastically.

The construction of the SOS Hermann Gmeiner School has been completed and 630 children are already enrolled.

Credit for the success of the projects in this city goes to the Chairperson, Mrs. Mughis Sheikh and General Secretary, Mrs. Mahnaz Fareed who together, make a formidable team.

SIALKOT

This project is flourishing, with the Chairperson Mrs. Shahana Shabbir and her daughter-in-law, Azizah, making an inspirational team – very similar to the situation in Multan. Several visitors have been welcomed to the project, one of the most popular being Mr. Nick, a

representative of Etiko, an international chain of sports gear, which has made a huge donation of 1000 footballs, to be shared by all our projects. Other popular visitors were a group of twenty-five DHL employees who organized a fun-filled programme for the children. The children really appreciate such generosity of spirit which provides them with happy memories.

A successful schooling programme is ensuring that they do not lag behind other children academically. Three of the earthquake orphans, who are admitted here, did exceptionally well in the matriculation examination, and have been admitted to college.

QUETTA

It gives me great pleasure to announce that we finally have our own premises in Quetta. Since we did not have sufficient funds for the entire project it was decided, to construct those buildings which will later become the youth facility. These four units can accommodate 50 children. A common facility is also included and makes for a functional, mini SOS Children's Village. Sincere thanks to the Managing Committee and, in particular, the Construction Committee for the successful completion of this phase.

By the time this reaches you, the children should have moved into their new homes as they are complete in all respects, and only the gas connection is awaited.

There are presently 31 children residing in two rented houses and they are doing well in their studies at the Army Public School.

Subsequent to the recent earthquake in Balochistan, offers were made to the administration and extensively through the media, that orphans should be referred to us for admission but it appears that the loss of life was, fortunately, limited.

The construction of the main SOS Children's Village will be undertaken in stages, as funds become available, and donations will be appropriately acknowledged. This needs to be done on an urgent basis because, as word spreads about our presence in the area, there will be pressure on us for admissions.

KASUR

The SOS Rural Support Programme continues to go from strength to strength. This is due mainly to the motivation of the management team and the enthusiastic participation of the local community. Amongst the many achievements are two water supply schemes to provide drinking water to a population of 15000, two street paving projects with the collaboration of the local Tehsil Municipal Administration, donation of two auto-rikshaws to the DCO for waste collection, construction of two rooms in the Kamalpura SOS facility by a local philanthropist, and the formation of a 'Milk Producers Group' which has installed a chiller unit and their own milk shop in Kasur city.

A Teachers Resource Centre has been established at district level and our regular teachers attend classes after school hours. In collaboration with CIDA, six Gender Resource Centres are successfully functioning and there are demands from other Union Councils for similar facilities.

EMERGENCY PROGRAMME

Children from the earthquake affected region are still housed in temporary accommodation where they will remain until we are able to construct projects in their area. We have been very generously offered free accommodation and provisions by Malik Riaz Hussain in Bahria Town, Rawalpindi for up to 100 children. A large group is in rented accommodation in Dhodial, some are in the SOS National Training Centre in Lahore and another group in

the SOS Children's Village in Sialkot. We are most grateful to the Human Development Foundation (USA) for their continuing sponsorship of 100 children and to Children of Hope (Canada) for financing the education of 155 children.

On the anniversary of the earthquake, Telenor invited all the children from the Emergency Shelter in Rawalpindi to their corporate headquarters in Islamabad. A delicious lunch was served and a fun-filled programme was organized. The employees joined in the programme and all the children received gifts.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

KARACHI : The boys will finally have their own purpose-built premises when the SOS Youth Home is completed this year. For many years the youth have lived in rented accommodation, which was never satisfactory. They will be very pleased with the new facility and especially the spacious sports grounds. The Project Committee is headed by Mr. Mahmood Chapra.

JAMSHORO : The SOS Children's Village is under construction and will be ready for occupancy by the end of next year. SOS Children's Villages of Sindh organized an architectural design contest for the project, arranged the funding and are supervising the construction. Sincere gratitude to the Managing Committee, with its deeply committed Chairperson, Mr. Yacoobali Zamindar for their achievements, and to the Jamshoro Project Committee, headed by Mr. Javed Jabbar – especially in view of the travel-time from Karachi for monitoring progress. Ms. Ava Cowasjee, Vice Chairman of the Sindh Committee is closely involved in the construction activity and assuring quality control.

QUETTA : After the completion of the youth facility, which is serving as a temporary SOS Children's Village, the construction of the main Village will be split into phases.

ISLAMABAD :

The construction of the SOS Children's Village, which will house Kashmiri children, is scheduled to start almost immediately, as necessary permissions are in place. Subsequent to the earthquake, Nestle Pakistan very generously donated a family home as well as the entire Community Centre, which includes common facilities for the children and administrative offices. Other family homes have been donated by the SOS Pakistan UK Supporters Group, Giving Hope the British Airways charity, Procter and Gamble and local philanthropists.

FAISALABAD : The SOS Children's Village has been functioning since 1988 and the Primary School building was constructed in 1995. A High School for Boys and one for Girls are yet to be constructed as well as an administrative block, which will also include a library, computer and science laboratories. Construction of the latter block has been started and hopefully the high school buildings will also follow soon.

FUTURE PLANS

It has been a long wait but, finally, it appears that we will be able to start implementing our plans for the earthquake affected areas. As mentioned before, we have been relentlessly pursuing the allocation of suitable land in Muzaffarabad, Rawalakot and Mansehra for the establishment of projects, specifically for earthquake orphans. The Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir has generously purchased land for this purpose in the two former

locations, and the formal handing over is awaited. The Government of NWFP is also supportive and we hope that the third site will be made available soon.

We apologize for this long delay to our donors who have either, already sent donations or made pledges to finance projects, but the matter was not in our control. The initial delay was due to seismic studies being carried out, then identification and allocation of land and, where necessary, procurement and purchase. However, we will now move as rapidly as possible.

Soon after the occurrence of the earthquake, HSBC offered to finance a Primary School. The plans for this are ready and this will be the first construction in the Rawalakot complex. As soon as sufficient funds are available the SOS Children's Village, Youth Home and High Schools will follow. Since the site in Muzaffarabad has only recently been confirmed, the planning will take a little longer. We intend to dismantle the condemned units in the damaged project and re-use as much of the material as possible, which will require careful planning.

For us the real work is only now beginning when, unfortunately, the needs of the earthquake-affected are no longer a high priority. Nevertheless, the orphans we have in temporary shelters must be accommodated in permanent homes and we must also reach out to the many more who need our support. We make a special appeal to all of you to assist us in making these projects a reality and also invite others to support us in meeting this challenge. For our part, we renew our commitment to the orphans to keep them at the heart of everything we do, and champion their rights with energy and passion.

Before ending I must acknowledge the tremendous contribution of the many volunteers – both in Pakistan and abroad – who serve on our committees and enable us to pursue our goals. They are the secret of our success and demonstrate the true spirit of altruism by giving of themselves. Without their dedication and selfless commitment it would not have been possible for us to achieve all that we have, or to maintain standards and plan ambitiously for the future. Sincere thanks to all of you – committee members, donors, fundraisers and friends of SOS – for sharing our dreams and making them a reality. For providing the orphans with opportunity and a life of dignity. For showing how much can be achieved when we all work 'Friends of SOS' together. Thank you for keeping the children in your hearts and making SOS Children's Villages of Pakistan an outstanding success story.

Yours sincerely,

Souriya Anwar
President