

# **SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES OF PAKISTAN**

## **SUMMARY OF WELFARE ACTIVITIES**

Greetings from all of us associated with SOS Children's Villages of Pakistan. Another year has passed by and it is time, once more, to present a report of the year's activities, to thank you for your continuing support and to wish you a joyful and prosperous New Year. May you all enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that your support of SOS makes a difference to so many lives. Without this support we could do nothing and together we are able to achieve so much.

The aftermath of the earthquake is still our top priority as we continue to provide for the orphans and widows, and pursue our plans to establish projects in the quake affected areas. We presently have about 300 children housed in Emergency Shelters in Lahore, Rawalpindi and Mansehra and in the SOS Children's Villages in Rawalpindi, Dhodial and Sialkot. More children are steadily coming in and we anticipate a huge influx once we are able to establish projects in AJK. We are prepared to provide for them without limit and, ours is the only organization authorized by the Government of Pakistan to admit the orphans. The SOS Children's Village and Community School which we had constructed in Muzaffarabad, prior to the earthquake, is situated very near its epicentre and a major fault-line runs right through the project. Six of the original fifteen family homes are habitable and will be used as a Youth Home. We intend to construct only a Boys High School on this site and establish the Village, Primary School and Girls High School at some other location. Similar complexes, composed of an SOS Children's Village, Youth Home and Community School, are planned for Rawalakot and Bakrial (N.W.F.P.). We have received some generous offers for assistance in the construction of these projects and are awaiting allocation of land. We request others to also consider assisting us in achieving our goal. Apart from the rapid escalation of construction costs in the past few years, the many other factors to be considered when planning projects in this area, will make for very high budgets. However, if we are to make a meaningful contribution to the rehabilitation effort, it must be done, and we look forward to your support. We have assurances from all concerned that our request for land will receive high priority and hope that this will soon be finalized so that we can proceed with our plans. In the meantime, the children are adjusting well to their new surroundings and amaze us all by their resilience and acceptance of their loss. They are happy and confident and show no sign of the trauma they have experienced. I would like to express special thanks to the Human Development Foundation and Telenor for sponsoring 150 and 100 children respectively. British Airways staff are taking a keen interest in the Emergency Programme and crew members have been visiting the children. They have raised funds for a family home in the planned SOS Village in Islamabad and have also donated a minibus, office equipment and stationery items. LEGO System has sent a large consignment of toys.

People around the world have expressed concern and sympathy for the victims of the earthquake, as was so admirably expressed by the magnitude of assistance and relief work. This concern continues and four Kashmiri orphans were invited by a Japanese organization 'Ashinaga', to participate in a summer camp, along with other children who have been similarly bereaved by disasters. Unfortunately, due to delays in the issuance of passports, only two could go. It was an amazing experience for them and, besides making many friends and enjoying the hospitality, they were taught the importance of accepting the loss and rising above their sorrow to become stronger individuals. In June, Justice @ Nasira Iqbal was invited to take two young persons with her to attend an Interfaith

Dialogue in Vienna. She decided to take children from SOS and selected Farasat, a high school student from AJK and Abida, a talented young girl from SOS Dhodial who, incidentally, has just gained admission to the National College of Arts. They participated in the Dialogue with young people of differing faiths and nationalities and learned the important lessons of mutual respect and tolerance.

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## **LAHORE**

Every effort is made to bring happiness into the lives of the children and various programmes are planned to achieve this objective. The New Year was ushered in with a huge bonfire, music and gaiety, greatly enjoyed by all. Basant followed soon after with the girls wearing yellow clothes and the boys all flying kites. The annual reunion of former SOS children is held each March and this year witnessed a large turnout. This included spouses and over 60 'grandchildren' who enjoyed the sumptuous lunch and visited the homes to spend time with their 'families'.

Many well wishers of the children arrange programmes for their enjoyment and in April, one of our regular supporters, ICI, once again organized such an event. Dinner was served, games organized, goody bags distributed and, to top it all, Ali Zafar was invited to perform. Without any doubt this was a red letter day for the happy children! The children were told about Mother's Day in May and encouraged to express their gratitude to their 'mothers'. They made cards and contributed their pocket money to buy flowers and gifts for their respective 'mothers' who were overwhelmed and deeply moved by these gestures. During the summer a large number of students volunteer to work with the children and, besides helping them with their holiday homework, also organize many extra-curricular activities. They took them on outings to Joyland, Sozo Park and KFC and, at the end of the session, hosted a big party leaving them with many happy memories. Summer is also the time for trips to other projects. A group of boys from SOS Multan visited Lahore and played cricket and football matches. They were also taken sightseeing and made many new friends. Similarly a group of children visited Rawalpindi and enjoyed the hospitality extended to them. Boy Scouting remains a favourite activity and groups of Scouts have participated in a local camp as well as those held in Islamabad and Karachi. This is an exciting and valuable learning experience for them and they acquire many new skills. Along with all this activity there is great stress on the children's education. The matriculation examination results, with a 100% pass percentage, were a matter of pride. The Intermediate results were also good and one of the girls who passed the B.Com examination has enrolled in the MBA programme. The older children all fast during Ramazan and many iftar parties were held. Eid-ul-Fitar was appropriately celebrated with the children purchasing new clothes and shoes. A colourful Eid Mela was organized so that they could spend the Eidee they had collected. The annual SOS Walk, to raise funds for subsidizing the school, was held in December. As usual, the Governor Punjab generously hosted a party for the participants and the children enjoyed refreshments and entertainment by a musical group and performers of the Lucky Irani Circus.

## **DHODIAL / ABBOTTABAD**

Besides the repair of the boundary wall and buildings damaged by the earthquake, major development work has been completed in the Village. This includes the addition of a fifteenth family house, the renovation of the sewerage system and relocation of the Girls Vocational Training Centre. Presently the girls from the Village are receiving instruction from an experienced teacher and will soon be joined by girls from the community. A Health Centre serves the immediate needs of the children and staff and also caters to students admitted in the school.

The SOS Hermann Gmeiner School and College, which are located on the premises of the Village, now serve the needs of 305 children of whom 120 are from the community. In view of the impressive standard maintained by the school, it is gaining popularity. An art classroom and a computer laboratory have recently been commissioned. The school encourages extra-mural activity and is assisted by the Adventure Foundation in this respect.

Five girls are studying in college. One is studying medicine at the Abbottabad International Medical College, another will do her MBA from Hazara University whilst a third has recently obtained admission to the National College of Arts, Lahore. We find that the girls in all the SOS projects are doing remarkably well and almost all take admission for higher studies but, possibly, Dhodial Village takes the lead in scholastic achievement. Subsequent to the earthquake, thirty children from the disaster area were provided shelter in the SOS Village Dhodial. A building has now been rented in Mansehra and can accommodate fifty children. The SOS Youth Home in Abbottabad houses forty-six boys all of whom attend school and college locally. The SOS Vocational Training Centre for Boys is located on the premises of the Youth Home. The facility provides facilities for training in the trades of electricians and welders and also, computer training. Boys from the Youth Home attend the evening sessions and are awarded certificates by the Skill Development Centre in Peshawar. The children in these projects have the advantage of being able to benefit from the programmes of the Adventure Foundation on a regular basis. In January, ten of them participated in the Downhill Ski Course held in Kala Bagh, and three children took part in the 13th National Ski Competition organized in Malam Jabba. In the summer, children participated in the National Children Mountain Conservation Meet and also the Young Wilderness Adventure Course.

## **KARACHI**

The projects in Karachi are buzzing with activity and the children in the Village have a busy year-round schedule with a good balance maintained between their studies and fun filled activities.

Great stress is laid on providing the children with a good education and this year's matriculation results were very encouraging. Of the six who appeared, three obtained 'A' grades. Two children qualified for admission to the Army Public College and four to other colleges. Tuition is provided to help the children in weak areas and a series of workshops were held for the senior girls and boys to help improve their general knowledge, English language skills and awareness of current affairs.

Due to popular demand the SOS Hermann Gmeiner School now operates two shifts and positive comments are received from the parent community. The success of this institution can be judged from the matriculation result which was 100% pass in the Arts Group and

99% in the Science Group. A feasibility report has been prepared for upgrading the school to college level.

The Medical Centre for women and children, sponsored by the Lane Foundation, provides excellent service, not only to our children, but also to the community, staff and students of the school. A doctor is available six days a week. Also courtesy of the Lane Foundation, one of our boys was operated on at OMI to correct a cleft lip. Another very complicated case was referred for surgery to specialists in India with Ms. Kay Lane personally travelling with the child and taking care of him throughout. He required lumbar spinal fusion and is now back home and undergoing physiotherapy.

A six week summer school was organized to help the children with their holiday homework. This was followed by the popular summer camp, arranged each year by Family Educational Services. The children participated enthusiastically in all the activities and especially enjoyed the excursions to different places. The most exciting were visits to the Zoo, Dream World, a Farm House and a sponsored lunch at KFC. On the last evening a sponsored dinner and performances by Heart Beat and Najam Sheraz wrapped up the enjoyable programme.

Malir Defence Housing Authority arranged a musical evening with Moeen Akhtar, Ali Haider and Ahmed Jahanzeb and also donated 40 ceiling fans which were required to replace old ones.

The boys in the Youth Home have been included in some interesting activities which included Scouts programmes organized by the PIA Boy Scouts and a desert-hiking tour to Ahmad Pur Sharkia, also arranged by PIA. Due to certain complications the construction of the new Youth Home has not yet commenced but it is expected that these will soon be resolved. In the meantime plans are ready for the SOS Technical Institute at Korangi, to be constructed by INFAQ. Work is expected to commence shortly.

## **RAWALPINDI**

Due to its proximity to the capital city, this SOS complex receives a steady stream of visitors. We are always happy to receive them and introduce them to our way of working. Amongst them have been many dignitaries from abroad, representatives of international and national organizations and, ofcourse, our own supporters and sponsors. On the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha in January, Mrs. Rukhsana Aziz, wife of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, was the chief guest at an Eid programme telecast by PTV from the Village. Many famous stars thrilled the children with their performances. In June, the Pakistan Arts Council organized a puppet show at which the District Nazim, Raja Jawaid Akhtar, was the chief guest.

Also in June, Telenor arranged a funfair at which the chief guest, Mr. Ishaq Khan Khakwani Minister of State for IT & Telecom, was received by Mr. Tore Johnson, Chief Executive of Telenor Pakistan. An SOS Telethon was also sponsored on GEO TV. In October Telenor again organized a sumptuous dinner and entertainment for the children at which a cheque for Rs.3.2 million, representing the contribution of the employees, was presented by Mr. Jon Frederik Baksaas, President and CEO Telenor Global. This is allocated for the financing of a family home in a new Village and a minibus. Besides this, and the sponsorship of earthquake orphans, many other forms of assistance such as mobile communications and the sponsorship of fundraising programmes and newspaper

supplements, have been committed as part of the DUA programme of Telenor. Employees all over the country are encouraged to visit SOS facilities and lend their support. We greatly appreciate such wonderful gestures of corporate social responsibility which enable us to provide for the children.

Other corporate groups also organized activities for the children, with the Pakistan Tobacco Company arranging musical entertainment and an iftar dinner with KFC Chicky at a local hotel. ARY TV arranged a fun show for the children and, on World Tourism Day, the Tourism Development Corporation organized a trip to Taxila Museum on the Safari Train. The SOS Hermann Gmeiner School is gaining popularity and admissions from outside are gradually increasing. There is an urgent need to complete this complex by constructing the Boys High School and it is hoped that this can be done in the near future. The Youth Home facility is stretched to its limits with 61 boys, of which 26 are from AJK. The boys are busy with educational pursuits with four boys in college. One is studying chartered accountancy and another doing his MBA. Girls are also attending college and one has been admitted to the Master of Education programme of Fatima Jinnah University.

The Technical Center provides training in various trades to 102 students while the SOS Automobile Technical Training Institute has 66 boys undergoing training as mechanics, auto electricians and motor cycle mechanics.

## **FAISALABAD**

The beginning of the year coincided with Eid-ul-Azha and the children enjoyed a festive celebration followed by a picnic organized in Funland, on the day following Eid. Soon after 18 children arrived from the Dhodial Village for a 10 day visit. They enjoyed visiting Gatwala Park, Funland and other interesting places in the vicinity but, most of all, enjoyed the interaction with the children and made many friends. Another happy occasion was the annual reunion of the children who have left SOS and came back to visit their 'homes'. As in other Villages, a summer camp of one month's duration, was organized. Scouting is a popular activity and PIA invited the Scout group to a mango party. PIA also included our boys in their programmes held on Independence Day, Defence Day and Quaid-e-Azam's death anniversary.

Over the years the Rotary Club has maintained an interest in the children and, on SOS International Day, sponsored an entertaining programme with dinner and ice cream provided by KFC and Walls. A birthday cake, commemorating the birthday of Dr. Hermann Gmeiner, was also enjoyed by the children and guests. Groups of children visited the Rawalpindi, Sargodha and Dhodial Villages and were well looked after. In turn children from Rawalpindi came to visit. These exchange visits are a regular feature of our organization and enable the children to make friends and see other places. Since the children are permitted to visit their relatives for a week during the summer holidays, these inter-village trips are usually organized for those who have no relatives. In September two girls were married and as everywhere, this is a festive celebration. The traditional ceremonies are organized and all expenses met by the Executive Committees and Friends of SOS.

The management of Serena Hotel is most supportive and takes a keen interest in the welfare of the children. An Eid Milan party was arranged by them the day after Eid-ul-Fitr, which was covered by ARY and AAJ TV. A magic show, music and dancing had the children absolutely enthralled.

Dobotex, through Interloop (Pvt) Ltd., have been most generous in their assistance in developing the project. After the donation of a beautiful Community Hall and administration area to the Village, they have contributed three units for housing the Youth Home Boys. These were inaugurated in October by Mr. Jeroen Van Dooren, Managing Director of Dobotex. Our sincere thanks for this kindness. Thirty boys reside in the present Youth Home and the plan is to shift the school going boys to the new facility, whilst those who are attending College or undergoing skill training, will continue to reside in the present location. The SOS Hermann Gmeiner School presently comprises of a Primary School and plans are being prepared to add High Schools for boys and girls.

## **SARGODHA**

A great deal of effort has gone into introducing the SOS Village to the local community and the response has been very positive.

A campaign was launched with the assistance of Qartaba Builders and co-sponsored by Daily Express. Interviews were conducted by Radio Pakistan, a video was shown on cable TV, pamphlets were distributed and a quarter-page advertisement appeared for one month in the Daily Express. As a result of all this the collection during Ramazan was the highest ever and, we are confident that this will continue to increase, as people become aware about the need for support.

On the occasion of Eid people brought clothes, toys and other gifts for the children. The Eid Milan party, also sponsored by Qartaba Builders and Daily Express, was a great success. A local music group performed and the children also joined in singing folk songs. Many local dignitaries were invited to the function and several large donations were received.

During the year many groups of school children visited the Village. They brought gifts, sweets and ice-cream for the children and also cash donations. Students of Sani School System collected money and made a generous donation of Rs.10,000. We are always happy to have other children visit because this gives our children great pleasure and, through the visitors, others will learn about our need for community assistance. SOS Sargodha is one of our projects which, so far, has not been able to generate sufficient local support and we hope that this will soon change as members of the public consider sponsoring children on a regular basis.

All National Days are celebrated with great fervour as the children are taught the importance of our history.

A group of 16 boys have moved into the Youth Home and are enjoying their relative independence and senior status. A commendable aspect is the pride they take in their premises and the effort they have put into decorating their rooms. Quite unlike some of the other youth facilities!

In the summer vacation the boys visited Abbottabad and stayed at the camp of the Adventure Foundation. Besides visiting the SOS Village in Dhodial and the Youth Home, they made many other side trips including a trekking expedition to Thandiani.

## **MULTAN**

Eid-ul-Azha was the first event on the calendar and was celebrated with a barbeque and picnic, which the children thoroughly enjoyed. The Village staff organized a successful hide collection campaign which also generated publicity for SOS. Eid was followed by the visit of 20 children from the Dhodial Village. They were taken sightseeing to Askari Lake, the Fort and Jinnah Park. A singing competition was organized between the two Villages and the children participated enthusiastically. When leaving they urged their new friends to visit them in the summer.

Pakistan Day was celebrated on March 23rd. The children paid tribute to Quaid-e-Azam and other leaders of the Pakistan movement. A group presented skits while others sang national songs.

In April, a mega Spring Festival was held in association with the Rotary Club, Midtown Multan. It started with a delicious lunch sponsored by the Club after which Rotary members played a cricket match with the children. This was followed by a magic show, musical chairs and a musical programme. The children enjoyed a memorable evening. Also in April, the annual Milad-e-Nabi was organized. Many sponsors and Friends of SOS attended and appreciated the recitation of the holy Quran, hamd and naat by the children. The envelope collection campaign, organized during the month of Ramazan, is proving to be very successful as more schools are added to the list. This year 46 schools contributed and a sizable amount was collected.

During the summer some of the older girls visited Rawalpindi, Islamabad and Murree, while a group of boys went to Lahore. Others were taken on local trips. Numerous visitors have visited the Village during the course of the year and many of them arranged for special treats for the children. The children thoroughly enjoy welcoming visitors.

The SOS School is functioning very well in a temporary facility and already has almost 400 students, of which approximately 300 are from outside. In October a Fun Fair was organized for the purpose of collecting donations for the School and proved to be most successful. There is a huge demand for good educational facilities and in a short time the institution has made great progress. The construction of the new school complex has begun and we are grateful to a donor in Dubai and another in London for their assistance in financing this project.

## **SIALKOT**

The project was completed in the summer of 2005 and was ready, in every respect, to commence admission of children. This proved to be most fortuitous when the earthquake suddenly made it necessary to arrange accommodation for orphaned Kashmiri children. In March 2006, the first batch of children arrived in the Village and were given a warm welcome by the Managing Committee. Sweets and gifts were distributed to them and they were overwhelmed to find themselves in such cheerful and comfortable surroundings. Another 35 children from Peshawar and Sialkot are also housed in this project.

In April, a Mehfil-e-Milad was arranged in the well decorated auditorium. It was attended by Committee members and Friends of SOS, and lunch was served to all present.

The Asean Ambassadors visited the project in May and were received by the Committee members. Independence Day was celebrated with great fervour. A special programme was

organized and the children gave excellent performances. In the evening they were all taken to see the illuminations.

Eid-ul-Fitr was an exciting day for the children with the Committee members and donors present to share their happiness. All the children received new clothes, shoes, sweaters, bangles, hairclips and all the other things which make the celebration a happy one for children.

## **QUETTA**

The SOS Children's Home, which was opened in Quetta in May 2005, could not accommodate more than 14/15 children and, when this number was reached, it was decided to rent a second house in the same complex. More children will soon be arriving. They have all come from impoverished backgrounds and great emphasis is being laid on their education. They are receiving tuition and are admitted to an Army Public School which is a remarkable transition from their previous situation to an English medium school. Due to the generous assistance of the EME Centre they are getting a substantial rebate in school fees. The children have been on various recreational trips and, on Eid day, visited the Governor House and the Chief Secretary's residence where they met many dignitaries.

The plans for construction of an SOS Children's Village have been prepared and tenders for construction will be called shortly. There is very limited local support, apart from the generosity of the Governor of Balochistan and Merck Marker. We invite the community to familiarize themselves with the work of SOS and help provide for these deserving children. They are the responsibility of all of us and we hope you will open up your hearts to them, as others have, all over the country and abroad.

## **SOS KASUR**

This programme has completed sixteen years of operation and brought hope into the lives of countless people through its various activities. With the support of the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation, Fund and other donor agencies, many initiatives have been taken.

The inhabitants of the area were facing great hardship due to lack of a sewage system. Under the physical infrastructure scheme this has been laid down in 15 villages and will benefit a population of almost 5000 people. Ten taps for clean water were also installed. The Asian Development Bank has assisted in clean water and sanitation facilities for 15,000 inhabitants of 12 villages.

Great stress is being laid on the provision of good education facilities. Five school buildings have been constructed and 66 teachers provided professional training. In addition, 300 children were awarded stipends for text books, uniforms and shoes. Ten formal and sixteen non-formal schools have been established and the current enrollment is 732. Under the auspices of SOS, 12 girls have qualified for the MA examination, 15 for BA, 7 for FA and 26 for matriculation. Quite an achievement in a rural area!

Health needs are also receiving attention. Two Community Welfare Centers, with laboratories, have been set up where maternity, family planning, immunization and general treatment services are provided. An awareness campaign, reaching over 20,000 people, has been launched to educate the population about the local government system so that they can participate in, and derive

benefit from, this programme. A project has been undertaken to develop Kamalpura into a model village and the Tehsil government has allocated Rs.4.2 million for this purpose.

All in all this is an exemplary programme for integrated rural development and the dedicated staff are to be congratulated for their achievements.

## **OTHER PROJECTS**

### **SOS Children's Village, Jamshoro:**

The plans are ready and funds are being solicited. Please donate generously for the completion of this second Village in Sindh.

### **SOS Children's Village Islamabad:**

The procurement of land has been completed and we are grateful to CDA for their support. Plans are being finalized and construction will commence as soon as feasible. This project is urgently required to house the AJK children, presently housed in a temporary facility in Rawalpindi.

From the above report you will have gathered that we have a lot of work ahead of us. Our responsibilities have been compounded by the unfortunate disaster which left everyone reeling. But, it is now time to come to terms with the challenge and do the very best we can. As we plan ambitiously for the future we look forward to your assistance. We thank you for all your support in the past and renew our pledge to serve the children of the nation to the best of our ability. We are ever so grateful to our people whose support makes SOS Pakistan the only self-financing SOS association, outside Europe, out of an affiliation of 132 countries. This is no small achievement for a country which, sadly, lags behind in so many other respects but, proves that there is no lack of generosity, compassion and concern in our nation, if only it can be properly channelled.

I think we can be justifiably proud of where we have taken the organization in the past three decades. Along with your help, credit for this goes to the dedicated and motivated volunteers who serve on our committees. Through their efforts we are able to maintain high standards and, without their involvement, we could not possibly construct and manage the many projects we have established. Their commitment and integrity make SOS an outstanding success story. My heartfelt thanks to each and everyone of you for your contribution to this deserving cause. May God in His mercy accept our efforts and keep you all in His care. Ameen.