40 Years Journey to the TOP

A loving home for every child
Message from the National Director

At this moment of celebrating the 40th Anniversary of SOS Children’s Villages Ethiopia, member Association of SOS Kinderorf International, I feel delighted to note the major achievements made by SOS Children’s Villages Ethiopia in the provision of care and support to abandoned, destitute, spiritually and physically traumatized Children.

It gives me great pleasure and honor to confirm the commendable achievements made by SOS Children’s Villages Ethiopia so far. History depicts that under different governments SOS Children’s Villages Ethiopia served and still serves as reliable partner of the government and is always striving to play a pivotal role to restore the lives of abandoned, destitute, and spiritually and physically traumatized Children.

The first SOS was found in 1949 by Prof. Dr. Hermann Gmeiner at Imist, Austria. Dr. dedicated to helping children who had lost their homes, security and their families as a result of World War II. The SOS idea was greeted enthusiastically in many other countries of the third world. Then, SOS Children’s Villages came up in other parts of Asia, Africa and South America as well.

This organization had begun its services in Ethiopia in 1974 with the opening of the first SOS Children’s Villages in Mekelle. Since its establishment It has undergone through lots of ups and downs in the provision of all rounded development services for children who are without parental care and children at significant risk of losing parental care in the country.

At the earliest stage, SOS CVE was not being recognized and humanitarian feelings were not as such high among government officials, religious leaders and the community at large. The popularization of a long term care for orphan and vulnerable children in Ethiopia caused SOS CVE to remain a pioneer organization.

Thus with the expansion of children need in different administrative zones, SOS started expanding its services delivery areas and its Villages grown up in Harar, Addis Ababa, Hawassa, Bahir Dar and Gode consecutively.

With regard to the major developments among others are official registration of SOS Children’s Villages Ethiopia as a nonprofit, non-governmental and voluntary association, securing a written directive from the provisional military government to keep on providing Child Care services 1982 and the establishment of seven SOS Villages in different administrative regions.

In early 70’s SOS started providing services to 16 Children and four mothers. Statistics depicts that up to the mid of 2014 SOS Provides its services to a total of 9,598 children and youth target groups through family Based Care and Family Strengthening Program. In addition to the services to target groups, SOSCVE gives education, health and daycare service to a large number of children, youth and their families as well as the community at large.

Encouraged by the previous development I would like to confirm you that we are determined to accomplish the 2009-2016 Strategic plans. SOS CVE road map under the strategic plan that crystalizes its mission and identified on three key strategic pillars (ONE Child, ONE Friend and ONE Movement).

ONE Child as the primary strategic objectives planned to enable 23, 000 children to grow up in a carrying family by 2016. One Friend that complement one child designed to mobilize resources to address 23,000 children and ONE Movement calls for developing strong organizational capacities to achieve our objectives. Saying we believe that we are committed to achieve our target constituency without compromising quality in the provision of care, education and health services.
As you all know and expect, the celebration of our 40th Anniversary helps us to familiarize the general public about the SOS CVE expanded programs and even to encourage our visibility. We believe that this event is a means to take up almost all relevant issues of child care and development between and among GOs, NGOs, development partners, stakeholders, social organizations and the community.

The theme chosen to observe the anniversary is “Delivering a better future for Children,” which is indeed crucial to call up on the federal ministry of health, ministry of women, youth and children’s affairs, our donors, ADA, DANIDA, DHL, our partners and stakeholders that works in unison with us to achieve our national effort towards having a healthy and productive young generation.

As the Acting National Director, I can assure you that those commendable achievements happened because of technical and financial support and encouragements provided by the Ethiopian government, our donor partners, stakeholders and our trend of believing in welcoming change as required.

Finally, I want to confirm you that SOS Children’s Villages Ethiopia had been and still continues to be active in the checkered record of strengthening families and communities in fight against abandonment and social neglect.

I firmly confirm that SOS Children’s Villages Ethiopia more than ever is ready in its capacities to visualize its vision “Every Child Belongs to a Family and Grows with Love, Respect and Security,” to our children better in the year to come.
Our Roots

Who We Are

We are a social development organization that enable children to have a loving home with parents or caregivers. We are a member of SOS children's villages International, which was founded by Hermann Gmeiner in 1949 in Imst, Austria to help children in need; children who have lost their homes, their security and their families as a result of the Second World War.

The first SOS Children's Village in Ethiopia was opened in 1974. Currently, we are running SOS children's Villages Programme in Mekelle, Harar, Addis Ababa, Hawassa, Bahir Dar, Gode and Jimma.

OUR VISION

What we want for the World’s children

Every child belongs to a family and grows with love, respect and security

OUR MISSION

What we do

We build families for children in need, we help them shape their own futures and we share in the development of their communities.

OUR AIM

Every child needs a loving home to flourish in, and our aim is to help families make it happen.

OUR APPROACH

We believe that every child should grow up in a caring environment, and our work help families to create a loving home where a child can be a child. We help families care for their children and when children can no longer live with their own families, we provide quality alternative care.

OUR ACTIONS

To achieve it aim SOS Children’s Villages Ethiopia runs a unique program, developed over 60 years, with the support donors and friends. Taking direct action and working with partners in the community, we enable children to live with parents or care givers and to grow up with brothers and sisters in a loving home.
OUR FOCUS

We focus on the care, health, education and general development of each child or young person, over the long-term, so that they can face life’s challenges in the future.

OUR FRIENDS

We need regular support from friends, corporate partners, governments and foundations to give thousands of vulnerable children a loving home and the chance just to be a child.

OUR UNIQUENESS

We are different from other organizations because we provide what each individual child needs. We get to know each child we deal with and work with them to develop an individual development plan. We continue our support until the youth is ready to become independent adult.

Although each child is unique, our vast experience tells us children need long term, resilient relationships, and these are best developed in a family environments, in which the dedicated love of a care giver is essential.

OUR FACILITIES

There are a number of facilities under SOS Children’s Villages Programs.

This are:
7  SOS Children’s Villages
10  Youth Facilities
9  Family Strengthening Programs
4  SOS Day Care center
4  SOS Medical Centers
7  SOS Kindergartens
6  SOS Hermann Gmeiner Schools (1st cycle to preparatory)
2  Vocational training Colleges
1  international General Certificate Secondary Education (IGCSE)
2  Dairy Farms

A loving home for every child
SOS Children’s Villages Ethiopia began its work by providing life-saving provisions such as food, water and health services for a very significant number of children devastated by severe drought and the subsequent famine. Today, its programs have grown significantly to meet the persistent challenges that confront Ethiopian children who have lost parental care and are at the risk of losing, the love, care and protection of their families and/or care givers.

The organization started its humanitarian work with the opening of the first SOS Children’s Village in Mekelle. The second SOS Children’s Village became operational in Harar in 1980. One year later in 1981, SOS Children’s Village Addis Ababa was established as the third Village in Ethiopia. Between the years 1985-2004, additional three SOS Children’s Villages were established in Hawassa, Bahir Dar, and Gode, consecutively. The seventh SOS Children’s Village Programme was also officially inaugurated in Jimma just last year in March 2013.

In addition to its seven SOS Children’s Villages, SOCSVE has 14 youth facilities, eight family strengthening programs, seven SOS Kindergartens, Six SOS Herman Gmeiner Schools, two SOS Vocational Training Colleges, an international school for preparing students for International Scholarships, five SOS Medical Centres, five SOS Day Care Centres, four Youth Education Programs and dairy farms.

Now a days, Under the Family Based Care Program, 1840 children and youth are growing in caring family environment. Of the total, 1040 children are in SOS Families in the Children’s villages, 524 youths in Youth Facilities I and II and the remaining 276 children are in Other Forms of Family Based Care. Moreover, a total of 7748 children as well as 2833 families have been directly participating and benefiting from services delivered by the Family Strengthening Program. The Education and Training Programs have been benefitting over 11,057 children and youth target groups and their families coming from the neighbouring communities. In the meantime, under Health Service Programme units the organization has been able to provide health services including health education for more than 50,000 Children, mothers and male adults.

At times, SOS’s Emergency Programs have been undertaken in Gode and its surroundings. Through its programs SOCSVE has been able to create effective community-based solutions to improve the situation and needs of children.
Family Based Care

Family based care programme unit gives care and protection to children and youth in SOS families in seven SOS Children's Villages and 10 youth facilities. Our Children's Villages give long family based care for children who do not have someone to turn to. We provide what each individual child needs. We get to know each child we deal with and work with them to develop an individual development plan. We continue our support until the youth is ready to become an independent adult.

In SOS Children's Villages, each family creates its own home. The house is the family's home, with its own unique feeling, rhythm and routine. Under its roof, children enjoy a real sense of security and belongingness. Children grow and learn together, sharing responsibilities and all the joys and sorrows of daily life. Hence, the family approach in the SOS Children's Village is based on four principles: Each child needs a mother, and grows up most naturally with brothers and sisters, in their own house, within a supportive village environment.

Besides, the SOS family is a part of the community where SOS families live together, forming a supportive village environment where children enjoy a happy childhood. The families share experiences and offer one another a helping hand. They also live as integrated and contributing members of the local community. Through his or her family, village and community, each child learns to participate actively in society.

In addition, each child has a say and his/her voice is heard and taken seriously. In relation to this, children are grown in a way that they can participate in making decisions that affect their lives and are guided to take a leading role in their own development.

Currently, under the Family Based Care Program, run in its seven program locations, 1840 children and youth are growing in a caring environment in SOS Families and Others Forms of Family Based Care.

**SOS Children’s Village Mekelle**

SOS Children's Village Mekelle is located on the road leading from the salt desert to Makalle, the capital of the province of Tigrai. SOS Children's Village Mekelle comprises 20 family houses, providing accommodation for up to 345 children and their SOS mothers, a village director's house, an administrative unit, a guest house and an SOS aunts' house (SOS mothers in training, who assist present SOS mothers in everyday jobs, and substitute them in case of illness or holidays). There is also a dams under the village that enable small scale agriculture including the keeping of cattle and the cultivation of fodder and vegetables on a subsistence and small commercial basis.

The older SOS youth (from about 16 years of age onwards) are housed in the two SOS Youth Facilities for the period of their secondary/vocational education, giving them more responsibility as
they are only supervised by one youth leader. SOS mothers, village directors and psychologists carefully prepare the youngsters for this significant step towards independence, to which roughly four years are assigned, extendable for prolonged education or job search.

Great emphasis is also placed on education, demonstrated by the launching of the SOS Hermann Gmeiner Primary and Secondary School Makelle in 1998 which is currently attended by some 957 SOS and local children. The school includes 24 classrooms, a library, three science labs, a computer lab, a multi-purpose hall, a sports ground and administrative rooms. As a component of the neighborhood-aid programme, children from very poor backgrounds receive scholarships. Some poor children attending public schools receive financial and other material aid.

SOS Vocational Training Centre Makelle opened in 2001 and started providing training for those who are interested in nursing. It is currently attended by 325 trainees and consists of two classrooms, two demonstrative rooms, a library, student accommodation, a canteen, and administrative rooms.

The SOS Medical Centre Mekelle was launched in October 2001, and provides medical aid to the SOS Children's Villages community, the SOS Hermann Gmeiner School and the SOS Vocational Training Centre. It is provides services to the public and is very valuable to the local community. The center consists of two treatment rooms, a variety of adjoining rooms, and a dispensary.

**SOS Children's Villages Harar**

SOS Children's Villages Harar is the second Children's Village established thirty four years ago, in 1980, in response to the Ethio-Somali war that resulted in serious orphan crises in the region. With the coming of SOS Children's Villages to Harar the lives of many children in need, their families and the community at large have been changed prominently.

SOS Children's Village Harar has 15 family houses and it is a loving home for 150 children.

Two youth facilities in the village are currently providing care and support for 79 youth.

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The SOS Kindergarten has a total capacity of up to 200 children. Vulnerable children from Harar and its surrounding areas are being taken care of by professional staff. In addition, SOS Hermann Gmeiner School Harar, gives primary and secondary schooling 960 children.

The Family strengthening program at Harar Village able to reach 1,800 children and their families. It Provision of strengthening support for families at risk of breaking down. The Villages works directly with families and communities to empower them to effectively protect and care for their children and to prevent separation, in cooperation with local authorities and other service providers.

**SOS Children’s Villages Addis Ababa**

The SOS Children's Village Addis Abeba was opened in 1981 in a residential district in the south west of Addis Abeba, the capital of Ethiopia. It is the third SOS Children's Village in Ethiopia. It comprises 15 family houses, a Village Director's house, accommodation for the SOS aunts (SOS aunts take care of the children when SOS mothers are on leave), a guest house, a bakery, a small shop and an administrative and service block.

About 143 children are taken care of on a daily basis at the SOS Kindergarten, a part of the SOS Children’s Village comprising five classes. As soon as youths reach the age of about 16, they move to one of the three SOS Youth Facilities, where they are taken care of by a youth leader. Being admitted to an SOS Youth Facility means taking responsibility for themselves and is synonymous to making a big step towards independence. Being fully aware of this, SOS mothers, the Village Director and a psychologist prepare them carefully for that change. Usually, youths stay up to four years in an SOS Youth Facility. They may stay longer, however, if they are looking for work, completing professional training or studying at a university.

In 1997, the SOS Social Centre (Day Care Centre) was opened in a suburb of Addis Abeba called Keranyo. More than 150 children are being cared for there at the moment. The SOS Social Centre also provides help to children from extremely poor families in order to enable them to attend governmental schools which they would be unable to do without the financial help provided by the SOS Social Centre.

In the very same year, the SOS Medical Centre was opened. It includes a treatment room, a medicine room and side rooms. Approximately 12,000 people receive medical treatment at the SOS Medical Centre every year.

Currently Addis Ababa Village is a loving home for 296 children.

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The SOS Children's Village Hawassa was opened in 1985 approximately 275 km southwest of Addis Ababa on the eastern side of Lake Hawassa.

Today, this SOS Children's Village is composed of 15 family houses, SOS aunts' house (SOS mothers in training, who assist present SOS mothers in everyday jobs, and substitute them in case of illness or holidays) administrative and service area, a multi-purpose hall, staff flats, out-patients' clinic, a workshop and a large kindergarten which is also attended by the children from the surrounding area.

The Kindergarten consists of four group rooms, a playground and other rooms and offers space for about 200 children. When children are about 16 years old, the youth of SOS Children's Village Hawassa move into one of the two SOS Youth Facilities provided, awarding them a higher degree of responsibility as they are only supervised by one youth leader. SOS mothers, village directors and psychologists carefully prepare the youngsters for this significant step towards independence, to which roughly four years are assigned.

Around 1,000 SOS Children's Village and local pupils are taught in the SOS Hermann Gmeiner primary and secondary school adjacent to the SOS Village. The School consists of 16 classrooms, a computer lab, a library, two workshops, a multi-purpose hall and administrative units.

Since 1994, an SOS Day-Care Centre is available for primarily single mothers' children in need. This is planned to prevent young children from remaining unsupervised while their mothers without income spend the day finding food. Roughly 100 children, many of whom were previously malnourished are currently cared for in the nursery, which is very appreciated by locals and the Kebele Administration, who praised this facility as a model institution.

SOS Medical Centre Hawassa was launched to guarantee medical assistance to SOS Children's Village and the community at large. Medical treatment is accompanied by information and preventive work on diarrheic and tropical diseases, fungus infections and HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment.

Lying on a plot of 100 hectares of land, it offers training in dairy, poultry and livestock farming and fruit and vegetable cultivation.

Today Hawassa Village is a warm loving home for 314 Children.
SOS Children’s Villages Bahirdar

The SOS Children's Village Bahir Dar was built in the town of Bahir Dar, situated approximately 565 km from Addis Ababa.

The closest major town is Gondor, about 185 km away. Bahir Dar is one of the most dynamic and fast-growing towns of Ethiopia and lies along Ethiopia's largest lake, Lake Tana which is also one of the two major Nile sources.

The SOS Children's Village Bahir Dar comprises 12 family houses, a village director's house, an administrative building, an SOS aunts' house (SOS Children's Village mothers in training, who assist present SOS mothers in everyday jobs, and substitute them in case of illness or holidays), a guest house, a bakery, a multi purpose hall, and a small shop.

Approximately 100 children from the SOS Children's Village and its vicinity are taken care of at the adjacent SOS Kindergarten, consisting of four classes, a kitchen, adjoining rooms and a playground. The SOS Hermann Gmeiner Primary and Secondary School Bahir Dar was opened in autumn 2003. Over 478 pupils are taught in 12 different classes, in a school equipped with a workshop, a library, a sports ground, and administrative units.

Those children from the neighbourhood which are most in need are selected by a committee, entitling them to material aid such as shoes, clothing, and stationery items for school. Public schools unable to operate due to a lack of equipment are directly assisted with items such as blackboards.

Bahir Dar Village is a loving home for 266 children.

SOS Children’s Villages Gode

The SOS Children's Village Gode has been constructed, with money donated by the Government of Ethiopia. SOS Children's Village Gode was completed in August 2004. SOS Children's Village Gode is situated on the banks of the river Wabishebeelle, about two kilometres from the centre of Gode. Most children in this community are unable to attend school, with only 12.79% of primary school-aged children enrolled at school. The situation at secondary school level is even worse, with an attendance rate of only 2.2%.

The village comprises 12 family houses, the village director's house, accommodation for the SOS aunts, a guesthouse, a workshop, and an administration and service area. A total of 120 children are accommodated at this SOS Children's Village.

In September 2005, an SOS Hermann Gmeiner Primary and Secondary School was opened. The school provides education for some 375 pupils from the SOS Children's Village and its vicinity. It comprises 12 classrooms, a library/computer room, a workshop, a canteen, a multi-purpose hall and administrative rooms. The SOS Kindergarten, which is attached to the SOS Children's Village, was

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also officially opened in September 2005. It offers places for about 105 children. The SOS Kindergarten has a playground of its own.

In order to improve basic health care situation in south-eastern Ethiopia, SOS Medical Centre has been in operation on temporary premises since 2000. Construction of a permanent facility was started in January 2003 and completed in of 2005.

**SOS Children’s Villages Jimma**

SOS Children’s Villages has been represented in Jimma since 1988. The facility was very small compared to the large number of vulnerable children with the extreme poverty that caused them to live without parental care and even at risk of losing them in the town and the neighboring vicinity. Cognizant of the problem SOS Children’s Villages Ethiopia pushed forwarded for the expansion of the village. And it is with the support of the kirk Family, SOS Children’s Villages International and SOS Children’s Villages Denmark the project expansion started.

SOS Children's Villages Jimma, the seventh SOS Children's Villages in Ethiopia came into being after the time those generous donors, representatives of SOS Children’s Villages, the government and the community at large laid the cornerstone on March 26, 2009. the village has 15 family houses.

The Children’s Village has played and still playing a great role towards rendering medical services with its own facilities. To this effect the facility has a capacity of providing basic health, maternal and child care services to clients more than 17,400 annually.

The SOS Kindergarten has a total capacity of up to 239 vulnerable children from Jimma Harar and surrounding areas are being taken care of by professional staff. In addition, SOS Hermann Gmeiner School Jimma gives primary schooling for 456 children.

Today, Jimaa Village is a loving home for 150 children.
Mihiret Hailu lives in SOS children`s village- Jimma. She came to be part of the village recently. Before coming to the village, she used to live with her poor mother in a plastic shelter by the side of a main road in Gore, south west Ethiopia. She doesn`t know her father. Her mother is HIV positive, paralyzed on the left side of her body and has lost one of her eyes.

Mihiret, her little brother and their mother lived on the street with sever poverty. Mihiret remembers the time when she and her family live in misery with lacks of food, clothing and shelter, medical treatment and security. At times, Mihiret and her brother used to gather leftover food from hotels and sometimes they got some food from the local community.

Considering the dire situation of the family, Jimma town Labour and Social Affairs Office requested SOSCV-Jimma to admit Mihiret and her brother.

Today, Mihiret is a very cleaver grade 3 student who stood first from all the classes under first cycle (i.e. grade 1- 4). So she lifted the winners` trophy high up with an overwhelming average. English is Mihiret`s favorite subject. She likes the subject more than the other subjects. “I like English most, because I want to be a fluent speaker of the language since it is a worldwide language. More so have a dream to give a speech in English language for a wider public one day… ,“ she said.

According to Mihiret, what she loves most in living Jimma Village is the love and affection she gets from her SOS mother and her brothers and sisters. “I love the housing, delivery of quality education, birth day celebrations and caring family environment. It makes me feel loved and secured” Miheret says.

Miheret wants to be a Medical Doctor in her future endeavor. When asked why she said abruptly, ” I want to be a Medical Doctor, because I want to help those who are under serious illness and those who are living under serious poverty with no one to be by their side and in general to make my people free from any disease.” Miheret is studying hard and using her maximum potential in order to make her dream come true.

Miheret is very thankful for the quality education provided by SOSCV Jimma and she is ready to scale up this opportunity. “Going to school is very important, for one thing the knowledge we get from school helps us to broaden our mind and way of thinking; for the other thing, it saves us from being marginalized. Therefore, it is invaluable,” Miheret Said.
Mother Sara, a Real Mother to Her Children

By: Mulugeta Gared, SOSCV Mekelle

It was in the morning of September 12, the second day of the Ethiopian New Year that I and the SOS Children’s Villages Mekelle Director went to Mother Sara’s residence found in Semen woreda administrative, Tabiya Endutry. The moment we reached her home, she warmly welcomed us and felt happy to see us.

Mama Sara Teklehaimnot was employed as a mother at SOS Children’s Villages Mekelle on November, 1975. After she took a one year Mothers’ training based on a six month theory and other six months practical learning. It was the time that even the first SOS Village (Mekelle) in the country was not constructed, and children were accommodated in a rented house.

I was very much impressed by the explanations she gave us on how SOS Children’s Village Mekelle started 40 years ago. Now that her remarkable work while she served as a mother at SOS defiantly be a very good lessons both to those SOS Mothers and Aunts who works at different program locations and those who spent their time with children I sat with her and produce the following excerpts.

Q: How long have you served as SOS Mother here in Mekelle?

More than 19 years.

Q: Why did you decided to be SOS Mother?

I grew up in a rural area whereby the care given for children was insignificant. Even after I came to the town to live with my elder brother who was a teacher here, I was not lucky enough to see the necessary care for children. The responsibility of the parents, the care of neighborhood to the child and the responsibility of the society at large was somehow not acceptable to me. For these and other reasons I joined SOS because I believed I can contribute something.

Q: How many Children were under your care?

First there were four children and later the number has increased and reached to ten. On the whole during my career years I have brought up about 38 children.

Q: What has been the hardest part of starting your new SOS family?

It was really a very hard work as we were new for the situation. The hardest part was to give equivalent love to your children which somehow would not be 100% in the reality.

Q: What was the best thing you did to make those children accept you as their mother and the and home?

The children who came to us were children who do not have somebody to care for them. The best thing I
did was to show them that I give care to them and make them feel loved.

Q: Do you have any memory of the past situation; can you tell us some of them?

There are a lot of memories of course as the time is very long and full of tragedies. But the time during which the ‘Derge’ regime was pushed out from Mekelle and there was no any relation to our National office and even no Village director no administrator and etc. was unforgettable. The first month, ‘DONBOSCO’, a charity organization, had supported us with all the necessary budget and afterwards, our national office has organized a means where we can get our budget by going or sending some representative to border cities where the ‘Derg’ had a control. This time was really very hard and I never ever forget the commitment of the then mothers and aunts and a few other coworkers. We have suffered a lot from artillery granites launched from above. We were forced to dig a hall to hide our children from the air strike. Wow I even do not want to think back about it. On the other hand, I was also one of those who visited ‘Imst’ the first Village in Austria and in the history of SOS Children’s Village as a reward to our unreserved service.

Q: Mama Sara, you accede your all belongingness to your two children Yeebiyo Tafere and Yordanos Tewelde, tell us about it please?

Yes, while I was working as a mother at SOS Children villages Mekelle , I have raised about 38-40 children. Although I do not bear a child, I feel Yeebiyo and Yordanos are my own children. Yordanos came to me as a 5 days old child with her fresh blood. Yeebiyo had a unique love for me starting from the very first day he saw me. So I have given all my belongings including my villa house that laid on 325 square meters and comprehends 12 classes including a toilet and kitchen to both of them. Last year, Yordanos was here to visit me from England. Yeebiyo is now in Humora city, but he is always with me during holidays bringing gifts for the celebration. Therefore, I wish I could do more for all my children, but this is the least that did for Yeebiyo and Yordanos.

Q: What do you feel being one of the first Mothers of SOS Children?

I confirm you that I am proud of being SOS Mother. One thing because it is a blessing to help children in need. The other, I am a mother of 38 Children. Imagine no mother can give birth to 38 times and own so many children except the SOS Mother.

Q: Now you are a retired mother; how is your relationship with your children?

Thanks God I can say I am the most visited mother by her Children. Even the children who were under the care of other mothers always visit me. I have a very good contact both with the office and those mothers there. The village always invited me in all events of SOS events and I perpetual participant

Q: Mama Sara; anything that you want to say?

You know, all SOS employees have to be trustful. They have to execute their responsibility by believing that the good GOD is watching them not the immediate boss. If it is so, I am quite sure that the future of our children will be promising and bright. On top of it you should tell the new family (staff) that we have a lot to share.”
SOS Children’s Villages Family Strengthening program is a new approach which SOSCVE come up with to address more children without separating them from their single parents or default parents. A shift made from family based care to community based work. The FSP has been under implementation since 2007 in Bahirdar and Hawassa co-founded by Austrian Development Agency (ADA).

Up to 2010 the program has helped 279 families and 568 children in those families providing need based support.

SOS Children's Villages Ethiopia implements Family Strengthening Programme (FSP) unit in all programme locations. The programme aims at achieving its primary objectives of addressing the basic needs of children while they are with their families and communities, promoting self-reliance of families and community. The intervention of the programme unit has different components.

Access to Direct Essential Services

The target children under the programme have been provided access to basic essential services for their healthy survival and development. In this regard, the programme unit addresses the education, health and psychosocial needs of the children and families through delivery of direct essential services. These include provision of educational materials and follow-up, psychosocial and legal supports.

We provide scholastic, financial and material supports to children and youth at different schools, training centres. We enhance capacities of teachers and government schools so that the children and youth can get proper education. We distribute food parcels to chronically ill, and child headed families. We also renovate dilapidated houses of right holders with the objective of improving the living conditions of children and their family members. Furthermore, we provide psycho-social support to target groups to help them explore and find better solution to their lives.

On the other hand, we facilitate the delivery of essential services for children through SOS Day-Care Centres. Children (from age 2-5) stay in the SOS day care centres while their caregivers are away to generate family income. The children get nutritional, educational, medical, and recreational services in the centre. Currently, we have day-care centres in all programme locations except in Gode and Harar.
**Strengthening Capacity of Target Families**

Families are supported to build their capacity in terms of material, social and economic self-sufficiency. To realize this development, they will be supported to have entrepreneurial skills and engaged in sustainable livelihood development activities. This might include support to families to develop and diversify their livelihoods, find employment and start income generating activities to make sustainable family income. The programme unit help families to equip with skills that help them to generate income, increase saving habits, reduce unnecessary costs and effectively manage their resources.

We give trainings to families on parental skills and child care in all programme locations. We use different means including coffee ceremonies to facilitate discussion with families on different topics such as on prevention of harmful traditional practices, hygiene and sanitation, creating child friendly environment, family planning, among others.

We also work towards ensuring the social and economic self-reliance of families with the objective of enabling them to secure a sustainable financial income through business and vocational skill trainings, income generation schemes and pro-poor micro finance institutions. Caregivers have been participating in various skill training, like hair dressing, food preparation, basic tailoring and pattern, and embroidery. Strengthening pro-poor saving and credit association was found to be the best strategy to ensure the sustainability of the programme. This marks a significant strategic shift for the FSP unit, from directly providing revolving loan to right holders through linking them to other group IGAs, like pro-poor and community managed saving and credit associations. This will remarkably ensure the impact and sustainability of our programme in the families and the larger community.

**Community Capacity Building**

Family Strengthening Programme Unit is designed in such a way that the programmes are sustainable and deep-rooted in the community. To realize this, FSP Unit in Ethiopia has given much emphasis to build the capacity of the community through partner Community Based Organizations. We have been closely working with locally established, legally registered, community based organizations. We have also signed Memorandum of Understanding with CBOs and respective local government offices. This ensures the sustainability of results in a defined and structured way.

The partner community based organizations have been supported to develop their capacity in terms of administrative, financial and organizational development vis-à-vis the provision of grant, facilitation of experience sharing visits, auditing of financial transactions, facilitation of different capacity building trainings, fulfilment of necessary materials/furniture, and recruitment of professionals. As a result, the CBOs have started raising funds and mobilizing resources from the local community to help vulnerable children.
Agerie Endale is a mother of three daughters. She was a house wife and dependent on her husband’s salary. She expressed her past condition and current status as presented in the following paragraphs.

“I used to stay at home and look after my children while my husband was going to work to get income just enough to sustain the life of the family. I never thought of the darkest side of life for I had nothing to worry much than being a house wife. After a while my husband got terribly sick and died of HIV. I was so terrified to get my blood tested. But, I pulled myself together and took HIV test and found out that I also have the virus in my blood. By then, I faced the biggest challenge in my life - to become a single mother who has no clue about the way to go out and earn a living for my children. It was so difficult for me to handle all those happenings at the same time.

I was so desperate and hopeless. As a result of the challenges I faced, I just moved to my mother’s house and I started living with her, though it was uncomfortable for me to become dependent on my mother with my three children. By looking at my and my children’s condition, SOS CVP FSP admitted the children and started to support the family. My youngest child, Kalkidan, joined the daycare center. Then, I took 2000 birr loan from FSP revolving fund and engaged in selling “Enjera”. I was doing well in the “Enjera selling” business. Then, after I attended trainings which were organized by FS program on Business Skill and Entrepreneurship, I took additional loan from Tesfa Community Development Association for the second time. The trainings helped me well in expanding my business. In addition, I got a chance to participate on crochet making training. Currently, I have changed my business to beverage, soft drink and fast foods selling at a Motel. This is a great opportunity for me that I can run my business and make crochet and embroidery at the same time.”

She further says that, now she is a strong and independent woman who can take a good care of not only her children and but also others. She is currently a member of Tesfa Community Development Association and contributes her share in the association’s effort to support vulnerable children and their families. Agerie is so thankful and she has a common way of expression whenever she want to thank SOS CVP- FSP “I never forget SOS CVP, it changed my life and it was my social insurance in those difficult days.”
The education and training programme unit plays a crucial role for the development of children and youth. SOS Children's Villages Ethiopia is running seven SOS Kindergartens, six SOS Hermann Gmeiner Schools (SOS HGSs), two SOS vocational training colleges, and one international school based on Cambridge curriculum for secondary school (International General Certificate for Secondary Education). All facilities in general and SOS Kindergartens and SOS HGSs in particular offer education to our target group as well as students coming from the neighboring communities.

Since it establishment 40 years ago, SOSCVE has been working in the area of education and training marginalized and vulnerable children and youth to enable them break the cycle of poverty, marginalization and discrimination. Through its educational facilities, more than 5000 children have access to quality education. In addition 1800 youth who are at risk of drop out and drop-outs have been supported to continue their education in 16 different public schools. The public schools have also been capacitated through trainings for teachers and their leaders; and through provision of school supplies, materials and apparatus to enable them improve the quality of their education.

**SOS Kindergartens**

We are running a total of seven SOS Kindergartens in all programme locations. These kindergartens provide early childhood education to kids of aged four to seven. All SOS KGs are attended by children from both SOS Children's Villages and the surrounding community. In our KGs, all the efforts and resources are directed towards an overall personal development of the child. To this effect, SOS KGs pursue the four developmental objectives. These are: physical development; cognitive and language development, affective and social development and aesthetic development. All arrangements and activities pursued in the interest of meeting these objectives have the three key elements of learning namely: "knowledge", "skills" and "attitude" at their centres.

**SOS Hermann Gmeiner Schools**

We have six SOS Hermann Gmeiner primary and secondary schools in Mekelle, Harrar, Hawassa, Bahir Dar, Gode, and Jimma. The schools render quality education to the direct beneficiaries of SOS Children's Villages programme units (FBC, FS), and Scholarship students) as well as other sections of the surrounding community. The schools are very well known in delivering quality education and registering outstanding results in national examinations. Below is brief information about the schools in different perspectives:
SOS IGCSE Hawassa

SOS IGCSE is a special school which works towards preparing students from different SOS Children's Villages in Ethiopia for International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) Examination. Upon the successful completion of the study, students are provided with an internationally recognized and standardized certificate from Cambridge University. The students' assessment is made by an external examining body, Cambridge International Examinations (CIE), UK. The IGCSE school is a two levels programme completed in two years time, IG1 (grade 9) and IG2 (grade 10).

The centre has signed partnership agreement with the International Community School (ICS) in Addis Ababa. The main objective of the partnership is the provision of partial scholarship opportunity for bright SOS children at IB Diploma level. As a result of this partnership, ICS students visited SOS IGCSE and donated large number of books and other. In addition to this, the visit created the opportunity to share experiences.

SOS Nursing College Mekelle

With the growing demand for highly skilled and knowledgeable health practitioners in our country, SOS Nursing School Mekelle has been in operation since October 2001. The college is providing quality nursing training to youth drawn from SOS Children's Villages Programme units (FBC and FSP) and disadvantaged segments of the community.

Nurses are needed not only in hospitals and small clinics, but also in rural areas, where access to any type of modern health care is limited. Besides that, the college gives young people the opportunity to learn a profession with good prospect for employment. It also helps reinforce core values, such as compassion, respect, teamwork, and communication, fully preparing the youth for careers in the medical field.

Most students, as she explains, come from SOS Children's Village programmes in Addis Ababa, Hawassa, Harar and Bahir Dar. The college works in close collaboration with government health offices at the federal and regional level.

SOS CVE Vocational Training College

In 1985, the SOS Vocational Training Centre Kality became operational in the suburb of Addis Ababa. Interested SOS youths from all over Ethiopia get priority to undergo up to three-year high-grade professional training in wood-work, auto mechanics and metal work at the centre. SOS Vocational Training College Kality provided technical and vocational education and training for youth drawn from SOS Children's Villages Ethiopia (from FBC and FSP) and the surrounding community.

....Continued to page 18
The college has a good reputation in delivering quality training that helps the students to secure jobs even prior to their official graduation. It also produces furniture to SOS facilities. It has a good partnership with relevant government offices, and private companies. The college also serves as one of the few centres of competency in Addis Ababa where graduates of technical and vocational colleges take competency exams.

The college also organizes short term training for SOS youth during summer time when the schools closed with the objective of attracting more youth to the college after completing secondary education and help them to be able to fix minor things at home.

Health Programme Unit

Our aim is for children to be healthy in all ways physically, emotionally and mentally. We do this by giving families access to professionals who can help them prevent and cure illness and trauma. SOS Children's Villages Ethiopia provides health service to target children and families, as well as to other members of the community through SOS Medical Centers located in Gode, Mekelle, Hawassa, Addis Ababa, and Jimma. All the centers render preventive and curative health services to children, caregivers as well as the surrounding community. The services include adult and Pediatric outpatient consultation, antenatal care, health education, laboratory diagnosis and drug dispensary services, minor surgery, and vaccination among others. Of the medical centers, SOS Medical Centre Gode is at higher clinic level.

Emergency and Relief

Though SOS Children's Villages has been working to provide long-term support to children, we do respond to crises by providing relief through our existing facilities and programmes. In 2011 for instance, SOS Children's Villages Ethiopia responded to drought that hit some parts of Somali Regional State. We provided relief food to people in Gode area who lost their livestock due to the drought as well as to some refugees from Somalia, who settled in Morudile, the border area of Ethiopia and Somalia. We distributed rice and edible oil to more than 2200 households in Gode area in two different rounds. We also gave similar items to 600 refugees and 400 hosting families in border area. Furthermore, we rendered water treatment chemicals to each of the household in rural villages. We also distributed donkey carts to selected households.
Bigger and Better Family Festival

(Addis Ababa) August 2014 SOS Children’s Villages Ethiopia Family festival was celebrated colourfully for the 7th time at the newest SOSCV Jimma with a motto "Celebrating 40 years of delivering a better future for children in need" from August 2-9, 2014. The festival basically creates opportunity for many children and youth to show his/her special skills and talents, share experiences, learn the values of different nations and nationalities and get to know SOS brothers and sisters living in different parts of the country.

Family Festival is a very thrilling, stimulating and relaxing experience for the children. It also has strengthened the children’s brother/sisterhood bond.

Children and their families in the surrounding community also join the big family in the SOS Great Run. Representatives of government and non-government offices and the media attend the openings and closing ceremonies which also served as an opportunity to enhance SOSCVE visibility for the wider public.

About 216 of our children from the SOS Children’s Villages in Mekelle, Harar, Hawassa, Addis Ababa, Bahir Dar and Gode accompanied by 20 adults joined the families in Jimma to celebrate the festival. On the week-long festival children aged 6-13 took part in different sports such as football, hand ball, basketball, high jump, long jump etc. and also a 2kms long run. In addition entertaining cultural and traditional shows of each program location were presented by children of the respective villages.

SOS CVE Actively Participated in the Humanitarian Exhibition

(Addis Ababa, August 2014) SOS Children’s Villages Ethiopia showcased its services in the Humanitarian Exhibition and Bazar that took place from August 15 to 18 2014 at the Addis Ababa Exhibition Centre. In the event organized by the Ethiopian Red Cross Society under the theme "Giving Back" a total of 150 national and international exhibitors working on various development and humanitarian activities participated.

Officially Opening the humanitarian exhibition Dr. Kebede Worku, Minister data at the Federal Ministry of Health said this type of humanitarian exhibition should be encouraged both by governmental and non-governmental organization, the media and the public at large as it is a good opportunity to share knowledge and experiences between and among different development actors working in the area. More so it is a means to start and/or strengthen the already established networks and partnership between and among themselves.
In the exhibition SOS CVE presented its main messages around the booth. The SOS CVE stand consisted of photographic and materials publications that displayed the organization strategic intervention and even was complemented by a Video documentary that showed what SOS VCE has been doing so far in the country for the last 40 years.

From the visitors feedback the SOS CVE participation in the exhibition and its stand basically played a great role in positioning SOS CVE as the national leading provider for child care and development, increasing its visibility and visualizing its contribution towards government efforts in Maternal and Child Health intervention.

The four day exhibition and bazar was successful as it attracted over 5000 visitors.

**SOSCVE Celebrates African Child Day & SOS Day**

(Addis Ababa, June 2014) The day of African Child and SOS day were observed in all villages of SOSCVE colorfully. The day was celebrated at the premises of African Union in Addis Ababa in the presence of representatives of government offices, AU, embassies and non-governmental organizations.

The major event of the day was intergenerational dialogue between children and experts (5 panelists) among which Mrs. Aster Asfaw, ND SOSCVE was one. The discussion focused on education in general and how to help marginalized children particularly girls have access to education in all parts of Africa. “Education for children is an outlet of poverty, backwardness and a means to the end-development and SOSCVE is continuously working towards this goal” Mrs. Aster Asfaw, SOSCVE National Director emphasized during the discussion. It was underlined during the discussion that education is a tool of empowerment for children in Africa, enabling them to achieve their maximum potential and enhancing their capacity to benefit from other entitlements that promote their wellbeing.

The day was also commemorated on the eve, June 15 with a four kilo meter run by 1000 children, 152 of them were from SOSCVE. Two of the children who took part in the race representing SOSVE became gold medalists.

A Child friendly, quality, free and compulsory education was the theme for the 2014 celebration of African child Day.

Meanwhile, The birth date of Professor Hermann Gmeiner (SOS day) was colorfully celebrated in all villages of SOSCVE on June 23.

The day was celebrated in connection of SOSCVE 40th anniversary with a theme “Delivering a better future for children in need.”

**The Vocational College Graduates 101 Trainees**

September 1, 2014: SOS Children Villages Ethiopia Vocational Training College (VTC) graduated 101 students on August 30, 2014 in the premises of the college.
Among the graduates who sat for Occupational Competency Assessment Certification, 90 percent of them have passed the examination.

The graduates attended their training from one to three years in woodwork, automotive, metal works and electricity.

Among the graduates 24 are from SOS CVE programs, 26 of them are with full scholarship students while the remaining are trainees who attended their courses with a limited amount of payment.

**SOS CVE Holds Media and Artists Tour**

The familiarization meeting for the media and artists was held on June 6, 2014 as part of SOSCVE 40th anniversary celebration. The meeting involved a briefing at the national office and a visit to two of SOSCVE facilities; Addis Ababa Children’s Village and Kality Technical and Vocational Training Center.

In her opening remarks Wzo. Aster Asfaw National Director of SOSCVE said, SOCVE organised the meeting because it is believed that the media, artists and renowned people have exceptional role in making the issue of children a centre of dialogue among the public, officials and researchers. “The unique approach SOCVE follows in bringing up children by creating a family and a loving home can be a source of inspiration for the media and art people for further work and it can be a noble example for others who work in the same area,” She emphasised.

Participants of the tour program on their part pledged to assist the organization in any way that they can so that it will be able to convey its services in a far efficient and effective ways.

Participants include reporters from the daily monitor, Addis Zemen, the Ethiopian herald newspapers, Fana Broadcasting Corporate, EBS Television as well as artists from Hager Fikir Theatre.
Mr. Hermann Gmeiner laying a cornerstone for Mekelle village Mekelle

The first School under SOSCV-Mekelle

The first children admitted to SOSCVE

The first visit from SOS international to Mekelle
Years of Delivering a Better Future for Children in Need

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