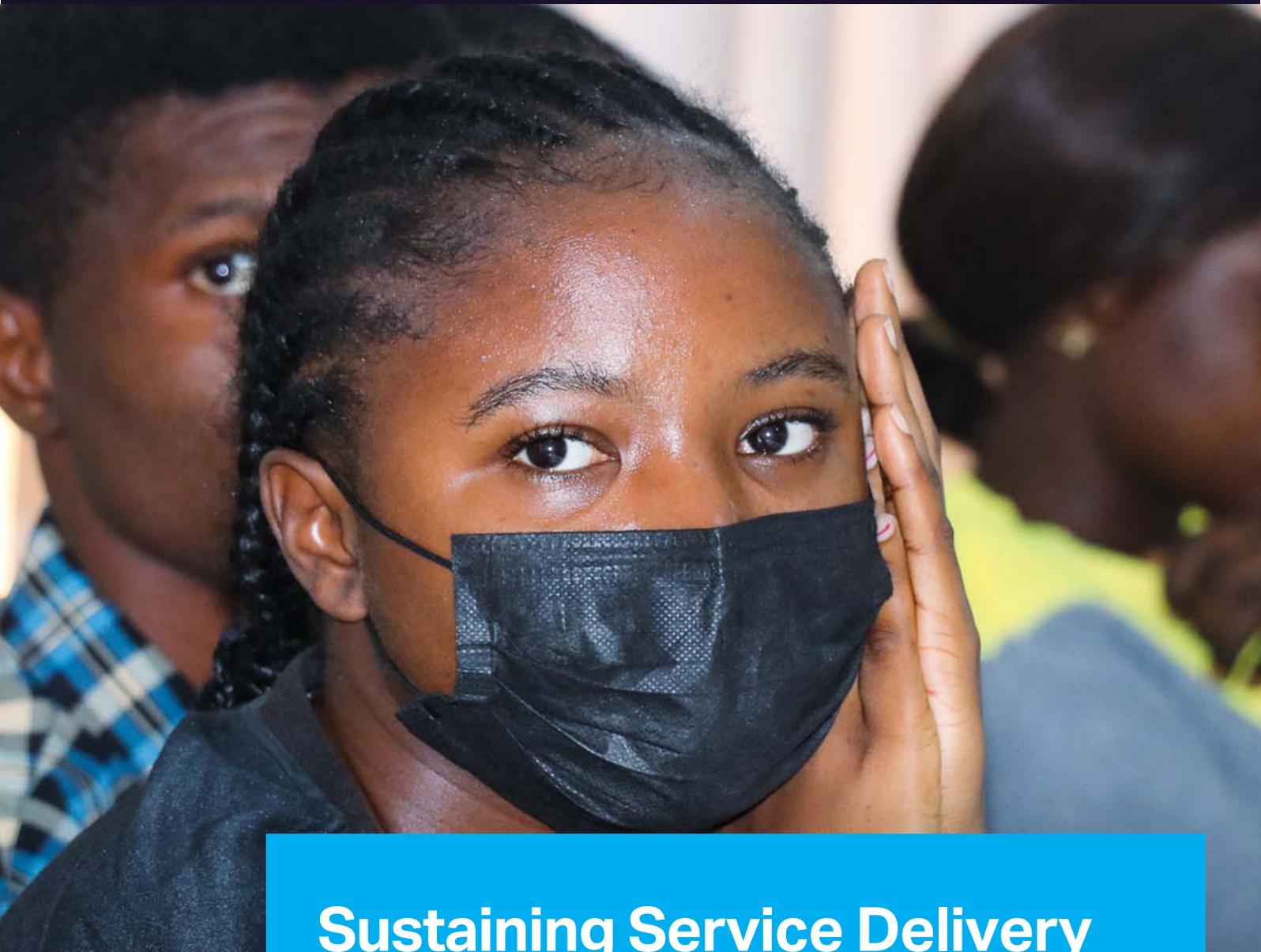




Newsletter

A Publication by SOS Children's Villages in Nigeria



Sustaining Service Delivery & Building Family Resilience Amidst Covid-19 Pandemic

**Creating A Safe
Space For Vulnerable
Girls**

**Community Mental
Health Model In
Nigeria**

**Advocating For
Quality Care of
Children**

From the National Director's Desk



Dear colleagues, friends and partners,

I am grateful that in 2021, the support of our community in ensuring that our vision of building families for every child and helping them grow in love, respect, and security was a daily reality.

Having survived the peculiarities of 2020 and begun 2021, we knew that a new world had unearthed before us and we would require the right mindset, partnerships, and collaboration to thrive in it. We knew that the environment it would take to raise the children in our care will be created from amongst our community - a community of partners, sponsors, and friends.

With every contribution made, we have enabled children without parental care and children at the risk of losing parental care to receive the support they need to grow into self-reliant contributing members of society.

In this edition of our Newsletter, you will read about how several young people in our youth development programmes have secured internships and employment, while some have become viable entrepreneurs. You'll find out how families have been empowered to provide for themselves and particularly their children, curbing the rise in child abandonment.

You'll also read about how vulnerable children are receiving support through our Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, WASH, Food Security and Livelihood interventions.

The consistent support of our sponsors and donors in 2021 helped to shape lives and turn sad stories to good endings. The commitment of our workforce and everyone connected to our organisation helped pave the way for favourable outcomes in the history of vulnerable children and young people in our programme.

For all these, I am deeply grateful. These contributions are especially important during this challenging season when the world is recovering from the effect of the coronavirus pandemic.

Thank you for showing your strong support for the Nigerian child.

Eghosa

Eghosa Erhumwunse

National Director



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Community Mental Health Model In Nigeria

Children's mental well-being plays a key role in their development, and it is significantly affected by that of parents or caregivers. Community mental health care models can be integrated into family strengthening programmes and train helpers in the community to provide mental health support. In Nigeria, SOS Children's Villages has begun to use the Problem Management + intervention, seeing positive outcomes.

Children's mental well-being plays a key role in their development, and it is significantly affected by that of parents or caregivers. Community mental health care models can be integrated into family strengthening programmes and train helpers in the community to provide mental health support. In Nigeria, SOS Children's Villages has begun to use the Problem Management + intervention, seeing positive outcomes.

Problem Management + (PM+) is a mental health intervention targeting people aged 16 or older who are affected by any form of adversity and are experiencing some level of distress. PM+ aims at decreasing early symptoms of mental health issues such as depression and anxiety when there is not yet a need to see a specialist. Certified trainers train helpers in the community to use PM+. Helpers are frontline workers who directly work with families. Since June 2021, 25 members of SOS Children's Villages staff in Nigeria have been trained as PM+ helpers.

"For adult members of families within our family strengthening programme the PM+ intervention is quite useful to ensure psychological issues do not deteriorate into full-scale mental health issues, which can lead to the caregiver's inability to provide adequate care and protection for the children as well as to child-family separation," says Oluwale Amosu,

Programme Development Advisor at SOS Children's Villages in Nigeria. Problem Management + develops over five weekly sessions, supporting people through the use of evidence-based techniques such as problem-solving, stress management and accessing social support. The trained helpers guide programme participants through the sessions so they find out for themselves the source of their emotional and practical issues. The focus is then on what the clients themselves can do and change.

According to Amosu, "PM+ allows clients to identify their problems. We guide them to identify what options they have. This way, they come up with solutions within their circle of influence and control. We enable them to get out of their problems themselves and to take the lead to create change."

Stigma, shame, and cultural beliefs attribute to mental health issues and remain a major barrier to addressing mental health issues. Community models which do not require families to seek the help of a psychologist can help reduce stigma. SOS Children's Villages Nigeria, Programme Development Advisor-Gender Nandi Dakum observes that language barriers and a general lack of awareness of the importance of mental well-being also pose challenges.

"You do not have to go and see a specialist; instead, the trained helpers in the community provide the non-specialized service. This is a huge step for us to make the intervention accessible, use it widely in family strengthening programme and extend it to other people in the community who are not part of our programmes," says Dakum.

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“After the community awareness, clients usually come with basic knowledge on what the PM+ intervention is about and are open to going through particular issues,” adds Nandi Dakum.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, meeting and training helpers in person were often not possible. In some situations, PM+ intervention sessions were held virtually, while remote training of certified PM+ helpers and trainers also proved to be effective in spreading the service.

In 2020, mental health and psychosocial support experts of SOS Children’s Villages adapted Problem Management +, originally developed by the World Health Organization (WHO), for remote use in collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support and the New School for Social Research (NSSR) in New York City. As a result of the collaboration, helpers were trained in Belgium, Burundi, Ethiopia, Greece, Italy, Nigeria, Rwanda, Somalia, Somaliland, South Africa, Sweden, Uganda and the United States.

The training of helpers comprised a wide range of learning modalities, including lectures, demonstrations, role play and group discussions using tools such as Zoom, Mural, Google Drive and WhatsApp. Role-play activities during Zoom meetings, for example, allowed participants to practice and receive live feedback on their newly gained skills. In Nigeria, it has only been several months since PM+ became part of family strengthening programmes, but responses and increased reach indicate positive outcomes for families’ well-being, the care and protection of children and efforts to keep families together.

”

Almost everywhere in the world, people will focus more on their physical health than their mental health. It should be an imperative that in family strengthening we focus just as much on mental health and psychosocial support.

”

Oluwole Amosu.



Sustaining Service Delivery & Building Family Resilience Amidst Covid-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 global pandemic has led to an increase in the mental, economic, and social burden on Nigeria's vulnerable population, due to inadequate preparedness and the resultant impact of the pandemic on the livelihood of the most vulnerable families and their children.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the country's inadequate preparedness level to respond to a public health crisis of such magnitude. This increased the burden on the already poor population due to lockdown restrictions. The situation also disrupted education especially for the most vulnerable children and youths and increased the risk of abuse for children, youth and girls/women during the lockdown period.

At SOS Children's Villages in Nigeria, we adopted a community-based, integrated programme response approach to improve the living conditions of the target group; through the provision of economic palliative support, livelihood recovery, and protection initiatives.

Our goal was to cushion the impact of the pandemic which had threatened the food security of the target group and to strengthen these vulnerable families' resilience and recovery from the effect of the crisis.

At the peak of the pandemic in mid-2020, SOS Children's Villages in Nigeria began the implementation of vari-

ous interventions in each of our six (6) existing programme locations (Lagos, Ogun, FCT-Abuja, Edo, Plateau, Borno) to achieve improved preparedness and prevention against the spread of the Coronavirus through provision of the necessary protective, hygiene, dignity and nutrition support to the most vulnerable population; improved family strengthening measures in project locations through the provision of necessary livelihood recovery support to those most affected by the Coronavirus and improved psychosocial support for children and families and child protection through online counseling.

These interventions were anchored on our COVID-19 Emergency Response Project focusing on the following deliverables: preparedness and prevention; family strengthening measures; psychosocial support for children and families and child protection & safeguarding.

Leveraging our strong presence in Nigeria to help beneficiaries cope with the impact of COVID-19 at the household level, SOS Children's Villages in Nigeria, under the FS component of the ongoing response has reached more than 6000 children and young persons in over 1000 families with food and non-food items in our 6 programme locations – Lagos, Ogun, Abuja, Plateau, Edo, and Borno.

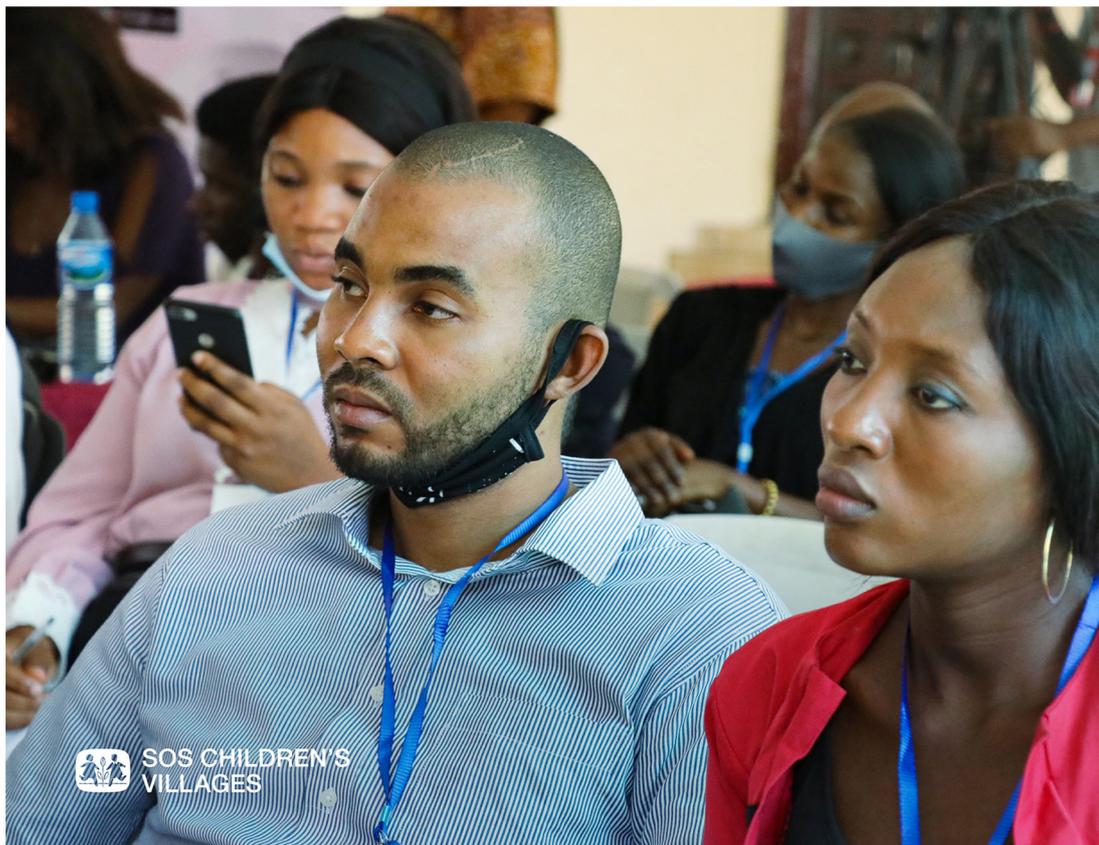
The organization has so far, supported 2,467 children and caregivers and 53 SOS Children's Villages Nigeria staff with mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS).

The technical capacity of 218 members of various community-based child protection structures in all our programme locations has been strengthened to adequately respond to child protection concerns and ensure the prevention of all forms of child abuse.

We have also optimized hygiene promotion activities to improve communities' preparedness and prevention against the spread of Coronavirus, reaching 463 families and 1,101 children and young persons with Hygiene kits, while 3,750 sanitary pads were distributed to 1,250 girls. These activities are being complemented by a Social Behaviour Change mass media campaign using radio spots and Public Service Announcements across 6 States in Nigeria.

As Nigeria gradually eases out of the most critical stage of the COVID-19 pandemic, SOS Children's Villages Nigeria will continue to reinforce its programming to withstand the impact of the pandemic by offering support to vulnerable families and protecting the most vulnerable children, especially children without parental care.

■ Youth Development





Creating a Safe Space For Vulnerable Girls

In cases of social unrest, children and young people are most vulnerable. North-East Nigeria has experienced over 11 years of conflict arising from attacks by Non-state Armed Groups and over 60 percent of the affected displaced persons are children. With our established infrastructure, our network of partners and trusted recognition as a reliable partner in quality care, SOS Children's Villages Nigeria (SOS CVN) remains committed to helping the most vulnerable children and families through our Emergency Response Programme.

SOS CVN has been in Nigeria since 1973, responding to the needs of children without parental care and those on the verge of losing parental care through an alternative care system, family strengthening, and youth empowerment programmes. In Borno State, North-East Nigeria, SOS CVN is implementing a Humanitarian Response Programme which consists of child protection, food security and livelihoods, and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene projects in Gonidamgari and Alajiri communities of Maiduguri, Borno State.

In the quarter under review, SOS CVN has reached 2,022 children (999 boys and 1023 girls) with play therapy and psychosocial support in Gonidamgari and Alajiri communities in Maiduguri. 380 vulnerable caregivers have been provided with food packages and 392 households have been supported with cash transfers to enable them to take care of their families.

As part of the SOS CVN Emergency Response Programme, our child protection programme which focuses on developing community structures to safeguard and protect the rights of children has established Child Protection Project in Gonidamgari and Alajiri Communities. Under this project, SOS Chil-

dren's Villages Nigeria established a Child-Friendly Space to provide a suitable environment for conflict-affected children to enjoy their livelihoods to the fullest and form social bonds. The space provides children with a protected environment in which they participate in organized activities to play, socialize, learn, and express themselves as they rebuild their lives under the guidance of trained community social workers. One of the activities in these Child-Friendly Spaces is the Girls Clubs.

The club also empowers them to shift gender norms, attitudes, and practices in their communities; while also giving them access to mentors and role models. The club exposes the girls to leadership roles and tasks them to aspire to leadership; while directing their energy into education, basic life, and vocational skills. Some of the topics of interest to the girls are Teenage Pregnancy, Body Image, Menstrual Hygiene Management, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Personal Hygiene, and Peer Pressure.

The club meetings consist of 20-30 girls per cluster, in line with the NCDC directives for gathering, and also for effective communication and interactions during their meeting. It also helps with a seamless monitoring and reporting process. This allows for more than one cluster per club location. Participants who are within the ages of 10-25 and are either a part of any of the SOS CVN programmes or reside in the communities of our programme locations have found themselves being more knowledgeable about gender/female issues and can now freely interact, play and ask questions.



A club member, 16year old Amina Shuaibu, who was forcefully displaced from her home in Guzamala Local Government Area, after Non-State Armed Groups killed her father and destroyed their home; together with her mother and two younger siblings found their way to Alajiri community where they live in a temporary shelter.

Amina followed other children and adolescents to the Child-Friendly Space supported by SOS CVN in the community. She joined the Girls Club, tagged "Cigaban Al'Uma"- meaning Progressive Community.

By participating in the play, learning, and psychosocial support, Amina has overcome her fear of interacting with people and has gone back to school. She wants to become a teacher in the future. In addition, her mother was registered as a new arrival under SOS Emergency Response and received food packages and cash transfers to enable her to take care of Amina and her siblings.



Amina has this to say,

"When I came here, I did not like to meet with people. But when I went to the SOS Child-Friendly Space, I met other girls who were happy to be my friends. I am happy to belong to the Girls' Club because I have been able to learn new things and ask questions about things that I am too shy to ask at home. I have gone back to school and will like to become a teacher in the future."



VISION

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

MISSION

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



Children's day celebration: Preparing the Nigerian child for future possibilities

For the Nigerian child, 2021 began with a myriad of uncertainties as the well-being and health of the entire globe had been threatened by the Coronavirus pandemic.

From going into a full lockdown to adapting to innovative measures to get the support and care they need, children in Nigeria did have their hands full in 2020. All of these speak to why the 2021 edition of the Children's Day celebration is a remarkable one.

The celebration presents an opportunity to reflect and explore improved ways to execute the role of caring for children in Nigeria including those who have lost or are on the verge of losing parental care. The volatility of the global economy has continued to show the urgency for care and protection services and why all stakeholders should join hands in solidarity to strengthen vulnerable families to improve childcare.

For SOS Children's Villages Nigeria, Children's Day reiterates the need to constantly find the best ways to maximise impact, build on our successes and leverage lessons learned from almost five dec-

ades of developing each child to self-attainment in Nigeria. Our Alternative Care and Family Strengthening programmes are being reinforced to withstand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and write a new chapter in the history of the development of the Nigerian Child.

We will continue to explore new ways to remain efficient and effective in a world where social, environmental and political changes are highlighting the urgent need to apply dynamic methods to childcare and protection.

Let us all brace up for a new Nigeria where we will all need to catch up and lean into the patterns that our children are creating for the future as the Nigerian Child must be supported to optimize the reality of a tech-driven world towards becoming the new super creatives.

It is our earnest expectation that through our work, our hearts and that of stakeholders and partners are synchronized towards creating a loving home for every child.





Advocating For Quality Care of Children in Plateau State

With the well-being and long-term development of each child being the core of our existence, our alternative care model is structured to keep families together. Where this is not possible, we try our best to keep siblings together and maintain connections with parents and relatives. We also advocate for structures that ensure quality care for children in all forms of alternative care.

In Plateau State Nigeria, where we are implementing several projects including alternative care, we successfully supported the Alternative Care Technical Working Group to develop and disseminate alternative care guidelines for the state in line with the UN Guideline. Through a residential workshop which ran from the 29th through 30th of November 2021, the eleven-man technical working group that

was inaugurated in 2018 by the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in collaboration with SOS Children's Villages in Nigeria, sat to clean up the document including the development of an M&E plan and workable coordination.

In 2019 and 2020, the team had several meetings to work out the deliverables in line with their terms of reference, shared roles in subgroups, and started to collate input towards the agreed content development outline.

Developing the preliminary content took the better part of 2019 and the COVID-19 era set in which meant that work was slowly going on without any face-to-face TWG meeting in the year 2020.

To pull through, a consultant was engaged to harmonize the document to a contextual standard acceptable at the state level. The services of Petlat Consults had been complementary in this regard. In September 2020, the Consultant had a workflow session with the TWG and invited other relevant stakeholders to a focus group discussion to gather more input into the draft of the Plateau State Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children.

The Honorable Commissioner of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development and the National Director (represented) participated in the review of the Guidelines.

The two-day validation workshop featured an in-depth look into the 2017 gazette Child Rights Law of Plateau State; the development process of the guidelines in Plateau State on day one. On day two, participants split into working groups to input and or expunge some contents (such as the earlier included Kafala Islamic practice.

The Guidelines for Alternative Care for Children in Plateau State are being reviewed and validated. The following actions to perform are:

- Get the printable version of this all-important document shortly from Petlat Consult.
- Submit a clean copy through the commissioner of MWASD and engage the state government for endorsement,
- Print in large quantity (not less than 2,000 copies).
- Disseminate the Guidelines appropriately for use by all stakeholders in the best interest of children in the Plateau State.



Connecting Skilled Labour to Corporate Organizations

A report published in March 2019, by Simona Varrella, on the *statista.com* platform puts the unemployment rate in Nigeria around 35 percent, with the research subject being between 15-64 years old. With this number being on an exponential rise, we identified an essential need for the young people in our programmes to acquire employable skills, and more importantly, be matched to opportunities and organizations where their skills are mostly required.

In response, SOS Children's Villages in Nigeria through The Next Economy programme, partnered with Kaneng Rwang Pam (KRP) Group (KRP Communications Ltd and sister organization KRP FEMA) to float a Job Fair in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja and Jos, Plateau state. The Job Fair was one in a series of job placement programmes and activities to get The Next Economy beneficiaries' internships and/or jobs. The Next Economy Programme empowers youths in Nigeria to unleash their talents, build the confidence and skills needed for a successful

career or an entrepreneur. The program is supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and seeks to afford young people in Nigeria the much-needed capacity-building trainings, support, and mentorship that allows them to succeed in life, gain decent jobs and build sustainable and viable businesses and startups.

At the Job Fair which was held on Tuesday 30th, November 2021 in Abuja and 23rd November 2021 in Jos, Plateau, 38 corporate organizations from over 7 sectors seeking full and part-time staff registered to attend the Abuja Job Fair while 20 organizations were in attendance in Jos. More than 90% of the employing organizations in Abuja came from different parts of the FCT. The fair featured two forums – Employers Forum and Employment and Stakeholders Collaboration Forum. It also featured interactions and exchanges between job seekers and potential employers. 12 young 25wait

By the end of the Job Fair, there was a strengthened collaboration among in-

ternship providers and employers in line with The Next Economy framework. There was also an increase in internship opportunities and job placements for TNE Youths. 98% of participants found the Job Fair quite useful and will be happy to attend the next one. Most of the TNE participants got to interact with 3-4 organizations as 18 corporate organizations at the fair offered 80 full-time jobs. While in Jos, Plateau State, 12 young people received job offers while 25 others got on an employment waitlist.





Skills For Employability: 2021 The Next Economy Employability Training

Our continuous collaboration with youth-centred organisations and government at all levels to support all youth-driven activities targeted towards youth employment and economic opportunities has birthed programmes that reduce youth unemployment and restiveness. One of these programmes is the Next Economy programme.

The Next Economy Programme empowers youths in Nigeria to unleash their talents, build their confidence and the skills needed for a successful career or entrepreneurship. The programme is supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and seeks to afford young people in Nigeria with the incubation programme, capacity-building training, support and mentorship that allows them to succeed in life, gain decent jobs

and build sustainable and viable businesses and startups.

Under the Next Economy programme II, as a way to promote sustained economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, 175 young people were supported with employability.

A major milestone was achieved in the internship placement and job placement of the next economy youths. A total of 124 youths were placed on internships within public and private organisations and 55 youths secured jobs in the year under review. Twenty-five (25) other youths were supported with matching grants from the Next Economy Project towards the expansion of their business enterprise for more sustainable livelihoods.

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Gallery

Care Reform



Capacity building meeting on care reform



Inauguration of National Committee on Alternative care by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs



2021 Youth Employability Summer Camp

At SOS Children's Villages, we provide the needed capacity-building training, support, and mentorship that allow youth to succeed in life, gain decent jobs and build sustainable and viable businesses and startups. The is also a high population growth rate in the country coupled with a mass rural-urban migration of young people, most of which lack employable skills has led to a rise in the unemployment rate of the country.

To mitigate the unemployment level amongst young Nigerians, SOS Children's Villages in Nigeria in collaboration with Deutsche Post DHL Group, organized a 5-day Youth Employability Summer Camp (YESCAMP) to empower young people aged 15-25 from across the world to help them build job skills and get ready for employment or entrepreneurship.

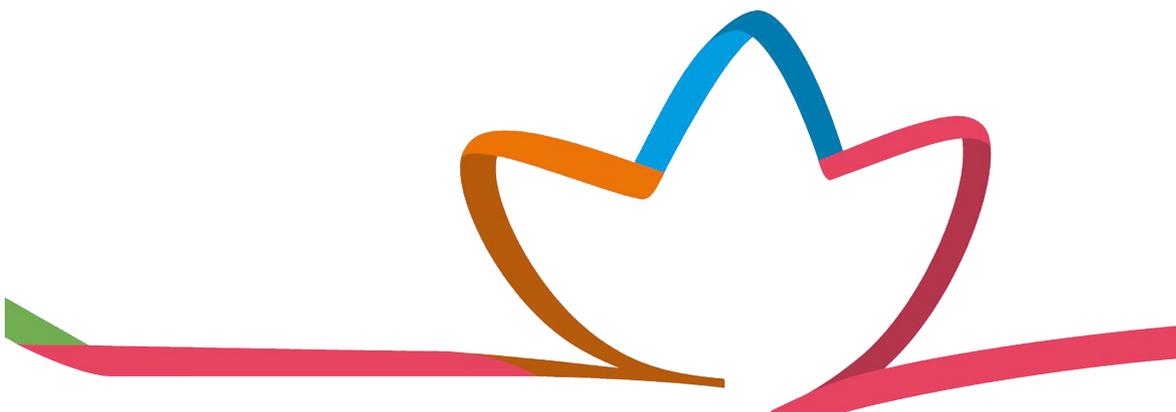
The partnership was launched under the umbrella of Deutsche Post DHL Group's 'GoTeach' programme in 2011 and has since supported young people in our target communities towards becoming contributing members of their communities.

The event which was held from Monday 15th to Friday 19th, November 2021 had in attendance sixteen (16) participants from Gwagwalada and Jos programme locations with the gender distribution of (10- females and 6-males). The resource persons include the CEO of Elevation Craft Limited, Mr. Samuel Omokhaye of Afrilabs, and other staff of DHL who only not shared their time but their skills and experiences.

They shared on Job orientation to help young people understand the job market, soft and basic skills training to improve employability, workplace ethics,

CV writing, and also ICT and Communication skills required to gain employment. The event was a moment of deep reflection for all the participants. Victoria Stephen, a youth from Gwagwalada, on behalf of the participants remarked; "it was an unforgettable life experience as we had the opportunity to learn and connect with other youths from a similar background. Indeed, we appreciate all our resource persons for taking their time to share real-life experiences with us.

Our deepest sincere appreciation goes to DHL Group and SOS Children's Villages for putting all the resources together to give us this amazing opportunity!"





Valuing Water: 2021 World Water Day Celebration

In the communities where we work, we specialise in the protection and care of children. We act quickly to improve water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities (WASH) among the most vulnerable populations because the true value of water cannot be measured.

This year, we commemorated the World Water Day, themed “Valuing Water” in our Borno programme location where we are implementing our WASH project. World Water Day is a date set to raise awareness of the global water crisis, the theme, ‘Valuing Water’ focuses on the environmental, social, and cultural value people place on water.

In Borno State, we commemorated this special event with the handing over of boreholes in Alajiri and Ginidamgari to provide safe water for children and caregivers. The handover event was held in Alajiri Community with Alajiri-Gonidamgari Community Based Organization, Caregivers, and Water User Committee Members in attendance. During the event, the SOS Children’s Villages team called the attention of the community to the need for the maintenance of the boreholes.

As part of our WASH intervention project, SOS Children’s Villages constructed two handpump boreholes: one in Gonida-

-mgari and one in Alajiri. We also rehabilitated two non-functional handpump boreholes- one in Alajiri and one in Ginidamgari. Each of the four boreholes serves over 500 beneficiaries with their daily water needs, including cooking, kitchen gardening and enabling them to practice personal and environmental hygiene to protect themselves from cholera and Covid-19. For sustainability, SOS Children’s Villages formed a Water-User-Committee in each of the borehole locations. Each Water User Committee is made up of 6 members (2 men, 2 women, 2 youths) who were trained on the maintenance of the boreholes.

After the handing over of the boreholes, the Chairman, Gonidamgari-Alajiri CBO, which is the SOS Children’s Villages Key Implementing Partner in the location appreciated the gesture and assured SOS us of their continuous collaboration. He spoke on behalf of all beneficiaries and tasked the Water User Committees of each borehole to ensure proper use and maintenance of the water points.





International Day of the Girl Child

Through our various Girl Child-centered programmes, SOS Children's Villages in Nigeria is empowering the girl child to change her world. With the support of our partners, we reach thousands of girls every year with tailored financial literacy and empowerment interventions, employability and entrepreneurship training programmes, business incubation and mentorship programmes, vocational skills training, mental health and psychosocial support services and our back-to-school interventions.

Our resolve to empower the Girl Child is reinforced by our vision to ensure that every girl has the support needed to be a self-reliant and contributing member of society.

To commemorate the event this year, we organized a sensitization and awareness on Girl Child Education in Gonidamgari and Alajiri communities, Maiduguri Borno state. In Plateau state, a social event was organized to promote Girl Child Education through dramas, dancing and poetry.

The exercise in Borno state was monitored by SOS CVN staff and Community Volunteers. The CBOs and Community leaders were represented by the Secretary of Gonidamgari Alajiri Community Development Organization, while some Caregivers and KIPs were also present. While in Plateau state, Participants cut across students, teachers, CBO, Community Police, safe pace/TVET girls, Community Child Protection Committee, male champions and other child-friendly NGOs.

In Borno state, the girls and the stakeholders of the communities were excited about the exercise. The CBOs, Community leaders, and Caregivers promised to take care of their girl child like any other child without discrimination based on gender/sex.

At the end of the sensitization exercise in Borno state, we received a reinforced commitment from the CBO leaders who said their doors will always be open for any kind of support for girl child education.





Tree Planting Ceremony Celebration World Humanitarian Day

Since the emergence of the corona Virus in 2019, leading to the ongoing pandemic, people on the frontline have been providing life-saving humanitarian support to people in need.

The global event which in itself is a celebration of people helping people also pays tribute to those who have sacrificed their time and risked their lives to support and deliver aid to people worldwide undergoing many humanitarian crises.

This year, in a bid to celebrate humanitarian workers and partners working to support children who have been affected by the covid-19 pandemic crisis and also to highlight the immediate consequences of the climate emergency for the world's most vulnerable people and ensure that their voices are

heard, our humanitarian programme in Borno state Nigeria commemorated the day with a Tree Planting ceremony.

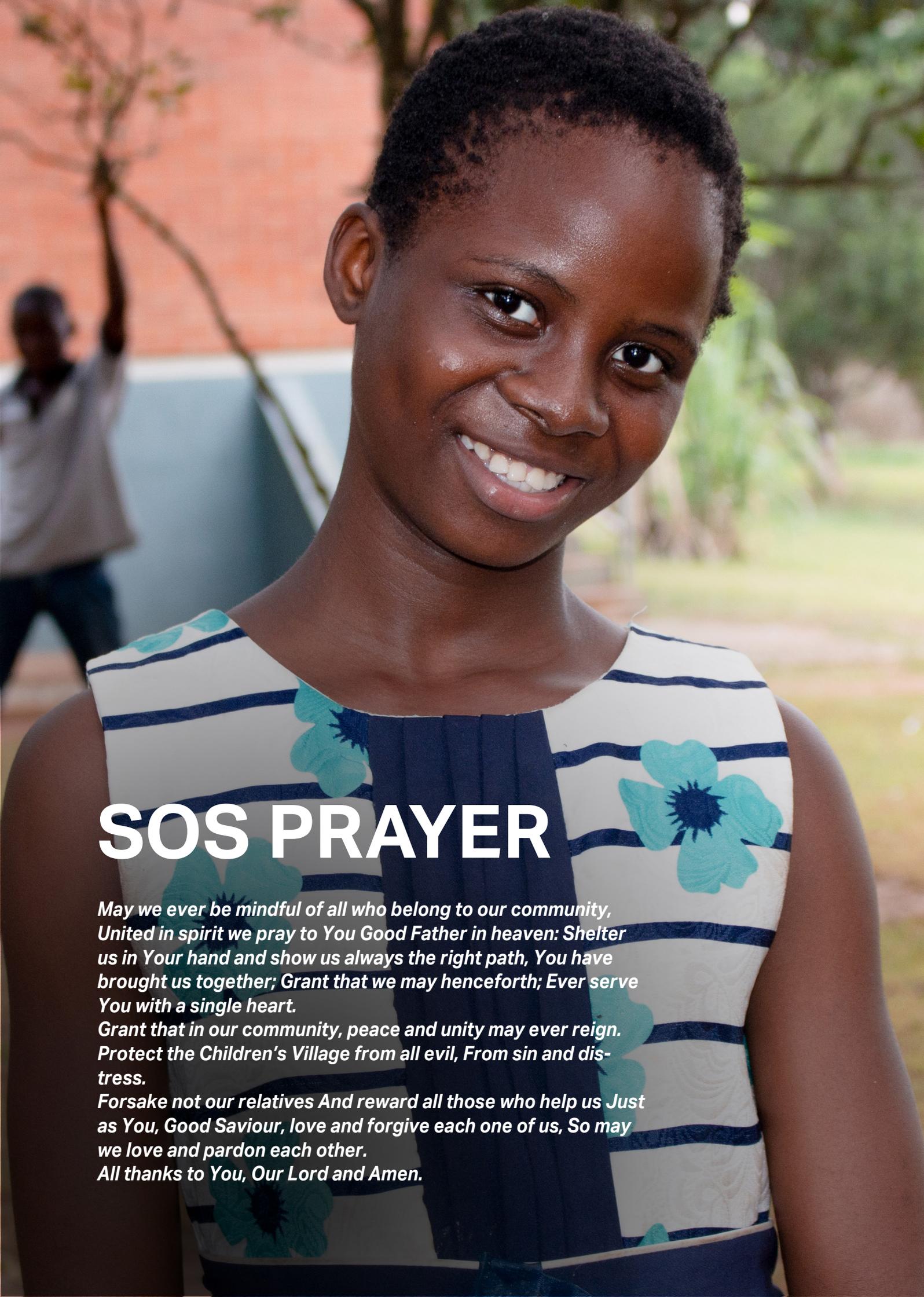
In Borno State, Desertification is a major environmental and livelihood challenge driven by climatic variability, and human activities, such as deforestation and high reliance on firewood for cooking.

To celebrate the 2021 World Humanitarian Day which talks about the climate crisis, members of the Girls' Club, as well as other young people in the community planted trees. The trees were planted in Gonidamgari and Alajiri communities of Maiduguri, Borno State. Through this activity, they raised awareness about deforestation among children, youth and caregivers, thereby contributing to the Sustain-

able Environment Pillar of the Borno State Government's -25-year Development Plan.

Girls, boys and caregivers were asked for tree species of their choice. Based on the choices indicated by the children and caregivers, SOS Children's Villages supported the community with seedlings of the following species: guava, lime, mango, neem, satellite, date palm, moringa, sugar apple and black currant.

The children and caregivers planted trees in the SOS Children's Villages Child-Friendly Space in the community; after which each adolescent was given the seedlings of their choice to plant at home and nurture.



SOS PRAYER

May we ever be mindful of all who belong to our community, United in spirit we pray to You Good Father in heaven: Shelter us in Your hand and show us always the right path, You have brought us together; Grant that we may henceforth; Ever serve You with a single heart.

Grant that in our community, peace and unity may ever reign. Protect the Children's Village from all evil, From sin and distress.

Forsake not our relatives And reward all those who help us Just as You, Good Saviour, love and forgive each one of us, So may we love and pardon each other.

All thanks to You, Our Lord and Amen.



Dine and Learn- Youth Dinner & Sensitization on Irregular Migration

At SOS Children's Villages, the overall goal of our intervention in the life of every child is to support them to grow into independent and self-reliant adults who can contribute to the societies in which they live. In light of this, the Lagos programme location organizes an annual send forth dinner to usher the young adults exiting care into an independent life in society.

Given the increasing number of youths in Nigeria lured into illegal migration, and the life-threatening situations in which they often end up, there is a need to sensitize our young people before they exit care.

The event which took place on the 21st December 2021 at the Express Hotel Lagos had in attendance about 75 youths comprising of the celebrants, 17 of them about to exit care and those still in care. The sensitization was aimed at exposing the youths to the importance of making the right decisions regarding migration and sexual reproductive health in fulfilling their various future careers, as well as allowing them discuss with experts. The Regional Programme Director, SOS CV Lagos, Mr Ayodeji Adelopo, while giving his speech encouraged the youths to always ensure they strive to become the best, ensuring they do the right things as they step into another phase of their lives, he further said they should never feel alone as SOS will always be their family.

There were also presentations from a sexual health expert who spoke on 'Sexual Reproductive Health Life'. While emphasizing sexual life, abstinence, and prevention of unprepared outcomes, the expert made the youths understand that unwanted outcomes most times aren't limited to getting

pregnant alone but contracting sexually transmitted infections (STI) or disease (STD), which can also result in the emotional breakdown (heartbreak) which can lead to a mental/psychological breakdown. Also present were experts from the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) who discussed "Irregular Migration", while emphasizing the dangers of irregular migration and the risk of migrating irregularly to include loss of lives, legal implications, human trafficking, and enslavement amongst others.

The event came to a close with Mr. Adelopo acknowledging and presenting a gift to one of the youths Master Wisdom Oliver as the best dressed for the event while the youth engaged in interactions as they dined.





Catching up on Education with New Learning Devices

At SOS Children's Villages Nigeria, we promote education, participation and steps to independent life. We do this by ensuring equal access to education, promoting the employability of young people, enabling a smooth transition to independent life and offering clearly defined after-care support.

According to our National Director, Egghosa Erhumwunse, "education is a fundamental part of development in children. Without this, we are unable to shape our society for the future.

As a result of the COVID-19 induced disruption experienced in the education sector in 2020, and the subsequent lockdown of all sectors by Nigerian government, education just like any other sector has suffered a major setback. As part of SOS Children's Villages' effort to improve and promote learning and close the existing educational gap created by the lockdown and subsequent school closure, a home alternative learning opportunity has been

created through the use of school-on-air. This is a set of carefully selected topics for various classes delivered online in the comfort of the beneficiaries' home. To close this gap among SOS Children's Villages beneficiaries (children and young people) 200 tablets were distributed to both SOS Family Care (SFC) and Family Strengthening (FS) families. In SFC a total of 28 tablets were given to fourteen family houses, two for each family while 172 tablets were distributed among 86 FSP households with each family having two tabs in five communities for this purpose.

With the support of our friends and donors, we are providing unique practical support over the long term so that each child or young person can develop resilient relationships and face life's challenges in the future. Our work is based on the best interests of the child, and we ensure that each child has an individual development plan tailored to suit the child's uniqueness.

The last years' experience has left many children and young people of our target group completely cut off from academic activities, when most caregivers especially those in FSP could not afford to provide children with alternative means of learning while other their counterparts have resolved to learn through technology and ICT enabled platforms. The initiative is proffering solutions and investing in the future of the children.

The distribution took place in community town halls for both SFC and FSP with families of the beneficiary present, in attendance also were the members of the Community Based Organisation who described the initiative as the first of its kind in the history of the five communities. The children and young people in our programme now have access to learning material that cuts across various subjects. The initiative will surely heighten improvement in children's academic performance.



Humanitarian Response

Improving food security & Livelihood of vulnerable populations.





Mitigating against the Impact of COVID-19 on the Education of Vulnerable Children

Education and health are core components of our programmes in SOS Children's Villages. We are constantly increasing effort and commitment to the healthy development of children – especially, vulnerable children without or at the risk of losing parental care. In Nigeria, we work with various stakeholders such as the government and schools in our communities to ensure that children within our target group receive the care and adequate support services that they require to develop into self-supporting adults.

In our Lagos programme location, we identified one major area that has affected children's learning process - the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education system. While this is a global academic concern, we observed that parents and caregivers are particularly concerned for the health and safety of their children when they return to school and battle with the recurring question of the school environment being safe for their children to return to learning.

In response to this, SOS Children's Villages in Nigeria supported the government by providing Infrared Thermometers to twenty-six (26) primary and secondary schools in Isolo, Lagos. This will create an enabling environment that is safe for learning by ensuring that health monitoring and body temperature checks are carried out constantly.

An event was organized to handover these items. In attendance were Traditional Leaders, The Permanent Secretary of the Lagos State Ministry of Education, Mr. Abayomi Abolaji, school principals of the 26 benefitting schools, teachers, and the pupils of each school.

Representing the National Director of SOS Children's Villages in Nigeria- Mr. Eghosa Erhumwunse, the Regional Programme Manager- Mr. Adedeji Adelopo spoke on the protocols put in place to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. According to him, "One of the protocols that the NCDC has put in place for the prevention

of COVID-19 is that temperature should be checked regularly. The reason we invested in this is that schools can hygienically check students' temperature." Said Mr. Adedeji Adelopo, representing the National Director, SOS Children's Villages.

He also enjoined other stakeholders to join in and support the government by making sure the children are protected as they remain in school.





Creating Access to Safe and Conducive Learning Environment for Children

Enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC) is Education as a basic right. The UNCRC states that “Every child has the right to receive an education of good quality which in turn requires a focus on the quality of the learning environment, of teaching and learning processes and materials, and of learning outputs.” This right to education necessitates that, the education system in place should cater for all children to a standard where learning is enabled and result-oriented.

In communities where we work, we contribute our efforts to ensure that children learn in an enabling and conducive environment as one of our core programmatic areas in SOS Children’s Villages in Nigeria, is Education. In partnership with the Edo state government through the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), SOS Children’s Villages in Nigeria con-

structed blocks of classrooms and water boreholes with the aim of improving infrastructure in schools located in the Uzebu & Umegbe communities of Edo state.

The handover ceremony featured representatives from the Edo State government, officials from SUBEB in Edo State, and the school officials. Handed over were:

- Renovated blocks of classrooms at Uyiosa Primary School and Owina Primary Schools in Uzebu Community.
- Newly installed WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) facilities at Umegbe Primary School, Umegbe Community.

The Regional Programme Manager, Mr. Adedeji Adelopo - representing the National Director of SOS Children’s Villages in Nigeria, Mr. Eghosa Erhumwunse, - said,

“Edo State government has remained a notable partner of SOS Children’s Villages Nigeria and it is our aspiration to continue to work together to support vulnerable children to build a sustainable future. As we continue to work together to explore new dimensions to empower children with education in Nigeria, let’s remain resolute and motivated in this path of nobility”.

This school-based intervention by SOS Children’s Villages in Nigeria is supported by the BMZ-funded Family and Community Empowerment Project in Edo state. This intervention is to facilitate improved access to a clean, safe, and conducive learning environment for students in these communities.



SUCCESS STORIES

Our favorite stories to tell are 'people stories'. As we follow the impact of our project on the lives of our beneficiaries, we hope that these stories do not just inspire generosity but also demonstrate the difference your contributions are making in the life of our target beneficiaries, as they encounter barriers and obstacles to attain life-sustaining results.

Victor's Story

Victor is a youth with an entrepreneurial spirit. He has shown interest in various vocations over the years. He has been trained on mechanical repairs, electrical repairs, event planning, decoration, and recently running his poultry farm. He is also a graduate of our youth empowerment programme, The Next Economy (TNE). Given his business acumen, he has expanded his poultry business, and this serves as alternative means for him. Victor started his poultry farm with three birds. He has been able to grow his farm from a cage holding 3 birds to two expanded cages presently housing 60 birds.

As a Mechanical Engineering student of Federal Polytechnic, Nasarawa he got placement for his Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) with Total Nigeria PLC where he learnt

how to make use of automated mechanized machine as well as solar energy for modern automation processes.

For his project, as part of a group of 15 he was able to participate in the production of a Trophy-like Piston Alumi-

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Victor would be rounding up his National Diploma programme by the middle of 2022. He hopes to save enough money to enable him to seek a direct entry admission into the university. Victor is visionary and ready to expand his poultry to take care of his immediate needs and increase his savings.

Following his enrolment into The Next Economy programme (Entrepreneurship Trajectory), his business profile alongside other youths was uploaded on a crowdfunding platform to allow

them to raise funds through family members, friends and donors who believe in their business models and wish to support them. He hopes that this platform generates enough money to help him

with his expansion plans.

Presently, he has also delved into another small-scale business. With the support of his mother, Victor sells fried groundnuts neatly packaged in bottles.



Chidubem's Story



Chidubem Stephen came into the alternative care programme in 2008 and was reunified with his family of origin in 2018. Chidubem throughout his stay in the alternative care programme exhibited brilliance in his academics. At one point, he gained admission into the Gifted Academy, Gwagwalada on a scholarship by merit. He has a great interest in ICT. Presently, he has gained a part-time admission to study Computer Science at Nassrawa State University.

Building on his areas of interest, Chidubem found himself in both Technical Vocation and ICT-related areas of trainings. He is now a trained and certified mobile phone technician, a craft and knowledge that now serves as an alternative source of financial support to him in school.

Chidubem enrolled in a special ICT technical training programme that covered laptop and mobile phone repairs. The duration of the programme was for

6 months, and by the second month, Chidubem started independent repairs of gadgets. With his little savings and financial support from well-wishers, Chidubem bought a second-hand laptop. This laptop has helped him improve his skills in laptop and phone repairs.

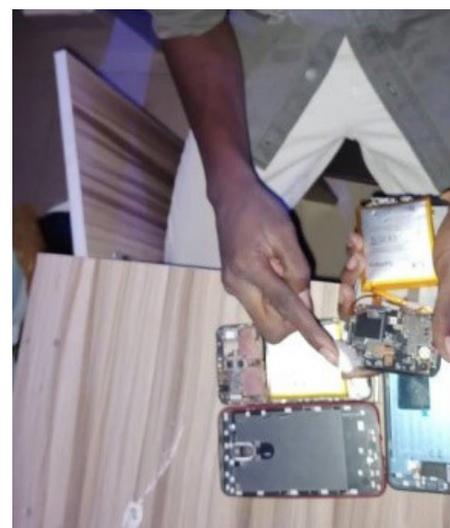
The youth development unit facilitated a two-month Java coding classes for youths in SFC and FS. Chidubem was part of the training. The youths acquired basic coding and programming skills (ICT4D), as part of their preparation for self-reliance and financial independence. He is presently studying Computer Science at Nasarawa state university Keffi. He has adapted easily to the university environment and works to support himself in school. As part of the economic support given to him by the organization, Chidubem purchased a repair toolbox and got a small space within the school environment which he uses as a shop for repair of phones.

Chidubem came out top of the Java coding classes. Along with other successful youths, he will transit to the advanced stage which is Android programming. Business expansion is Chidubem's next interest. Given the location of his

business and our discussions, he plans to add sales of phone accessories to the phone repair. Also in consideration for him is the establishment of a POS stand. This requires a substantial amount of capital. Given the survey done, he would require

about #150,000 to begin a free-flowing outfit. The POS business in the students' residential area is good business and will greatly improve his income.

Although his support has ended and he is now reunited with his family, the unit has continued to offer him support and guidance through his academics and business decisions. The target is to watch him expand his business in the coming years and sustain his determination, having awoken his consciousness to the importance of financial self-reliance. There is a standing agreement with the institution where Chidubem learned phone repairs. The agreement ensures his continuous technical learning, especially during semester breaks.



Chidubem came out top of the Java coding classes. Along with other successful youths, he will transit to the advanced stage which is Android programming.

Innovation for Education

The FS in CVP Abuja supported families on the programme to have improved access to ICT. A total of 76 families (with their 463 children) in Paiko, Dobi, Gwako and Central communities received educational tablets. These tablets enhanced digital skills and improved learning outcomes among the children.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a lot of changes in the society. It brought about innovations in some areas and created opportunities in other areas. One of the sectors that experienced innovations was education. The COVID-19 changed the traditional classroom approach to education. To avoid disruptions in the students' education, online education became the or-

der of the day. This widened the digital divide across the world. Populations with no access to ICT gadgets and the internet were left out in this new approach to education.

The children in our FS communities do not have access to ICT gadgets and the internet, and so would be left behind in their educational endeavors. To avoid this scenario, the location supported 73 families (with 463 children) with educational tablets. This effort helped in bridging the digital divide and improved learning outcomes among the children.

The programme will continue to support and monitor the family's progress towards self-reliance.



Mr. Akabuogu's Story



Mr. Akabuogu was a successful businessman trading in unisex clothing in the early 2000s until he lost everything to a fire accident. The news of the fire incident took a toll on his health, which led to a partial stroke that he battled with for some years. With no source of income and his frail health, he was unable to

support his family and was compelled to send his children to his aged and sick parents in the village. Due to the financial situation of the family in the village, the children had to drop out of school and engage in menial jobs for survival.

Later, he was diagnosed with diabetes. The nature of his health condition required that he be placed on a special diet and medication. But the family could not afford the medications. They resorted to herbal drugs and poor dieting which deteriorated his health. His wife in a bid to support her family collected a loan of 20,000 to start a fufu business. The stressful nature of the business affected the wife's health and she suffered from a severe terminal illness.

The family was in a state of hopelessness, sadness and frustration due to the caregivers' separation from their chil-

dren, ill-health, and poor economic condition. These were evident during the first programme visit to the family.

However, the family's story has changed for good. The programme supported the family with an income-generating activity and foodstuff to improve their incomes and quality of life. The economic support has provided them a stable means of income to address the needs of the family.

As a result, the caregiver has brought the children back from the village and the family is reunited.

Faith's Story



Faith is nineteen years old and has just completed her senior secondary school. She is preparing to go to any good tertiary institution. Throughout her school days, she focused on her studies and was above average. When she was admitted into the SOS Family Care Programme, she could not express herself

freely and felt withdrawn. Her SOS parent did not give up on her and continued to show her love which over time birthed a bright and brave girl.

While in Junior secondary school she represented her class in public speaking on two occasions and came tops. This was a remarkable achievement for her as she did not know she could express herself. Faith did not relent in her efforts to be successful. She showed interest in designing clothes and was enrolled in a tailoring institution.

Her passion to see people look beautiful grew and she moved from the intermediary level of making simple styles to making her designs and sewing dresses for children and adults. In 2018 she made beautiful designs that most of the SOS Children's Villages parents bought for their children that Christmas.

COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, was not a boring time for Faith. Her hands became busier than ever. She became more innovative, designed and made all the first face masks the children and parents used during the COVID-19 lock down.

In one word, Faith can be described as a lady of style and poise. She loves people, making friends and creating new things. She is in the process of rounding up her SSCE, after which she would be applying for admission to study Theatre Arts, which has been her passion

While she waits, Faith is not idle, she has invested so much time in creating different fabric designs that she is bringing to life from her sketchpad through her sewing.

Joshua's Story



Joshua is a nineteen-year-old young person who has always lived out his dreams. Joshua takes his time to attain perfection with each task, but he never gives up. Joshua developed a flair for sketching, drawing and painting at quite a young age.

On the weekends and school holidays, he dedicated his time to attending classes and workshops to build and develop his skills. He began trying his hands on sketching pictures, and reproducing frames. This attracted many to his work and he started making little funds from which he saves and buys more materials for his artwork. All these happened while he was still in secondary school.

During the COVID-19 pandemic-induced lockdown, he spent time mentoring younger boys and girls in the village who showed interest in arts. They all love to attend his classes because of how patient he is with them. Two younger boys will be enrolled in art institutions soon, as they want to be like their big brother Joshua.

Not forgetting academics, he continued to soar and worked hard and has now gained admission into the Nassarawa Polytechnic to study fine arts. He is also currently working and learning more skills with an art institution where his work is being displayed for sale. Joshua is planning an art exhibition as soon as he is done with his programme.

To him, SOS Children's Villages will always be his foundation. In his words, *"I don't know what would have become of me, I am grateful to SOS Children's Villages"*. *Joshua is a young person who believes you can be anything you want to be and you don't have to hurry.*

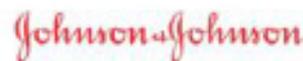
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