

WHAT INSPIRES US IN OUR WORK FOR SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES



STORIES TOLD BY PARTICIPANTS OF THE
HARVESTING 2014 WORKSHOP



**SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES**

Hermann Gmeiner Academy

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THE (HI)STORY OF HARVESTING

Twelve years ago 20 co-workers from 16 countries undertook the journey of Harvesting for the first time at the Hermann Gmeiner Academy. Since 2012 Harvesting workshops have been an integral part of the Hermann Gmeiner Academy's education programmes. Harvesting workshops take place every twelve to fourteen months.

The overall goal of Harvesting is to discover what works well in our daily activities, what gives strength to SOS co-workers and what we can build on within SOS Children's Villages.

How do we do this?

In Harvesting we invite a group of approximately 20 long-standing co-workers to share their diverse and rich work experience and knowledge through storytelling. Colleagues from different countries in various work functions tell stories that deal with issues that are of particular importance to our vision: Every child belongs to a family and grows with love, respect and security.

SOS Children's Villages is a human system. As human systems grow in the direction of what they focus on, in Harvesting we focus on increasing what works well in achieving our mission: We build families for children in need, we help them shape their own futures and we share in the development of their communities. Harvesting participants are invited to do this for the good of the children and young people in SOS Children's Villages programmes who are the essential core of this experience exchange programme.

What are the fruits being harvested?

The fruits that Harvesting participants enjoy are the answers to questions like: "What gets you really going when you are at your best?" These answers touch the personal as well as the organisational level of participants'

endeavours. Looking at moments, patterns of behaviour or circumstances when SOS co-workers are in a “flow”, when they are achieving the best results in supporting children at risk or in need, enables SOS Children’s Villages to grow in that direction. Co-workers learn and benefit from each other’s wealth of experiences in being effective.

Harvesting proves that telling one’s own story and relating it to the narrations of colleagues fosters the feeling of belonging, inspires taking action, gives motivation and is lived appreciation.

Coming together in Harvesting offers participants the possibility to share ideas and reflect on what the vision of SOS Children’s Villages means for the work of each individual co-worker. The goal is about finding the best possible path to unlock the potential of children and young people in our care.



(c) Katerina Ilievska

Read on!

Dear reader, the pages ahead of you are much more than an ordinary report. They are clusters of stories harvested in the first phase of the Harvesting 2014 workshop process. The stories, quite true, are fragments of the rich Harvesting process; still, we fully trust in their power to ignite change. Therefore, we invite you to take a look at the last pages of this report and find the inherent messages of the stories shortlisted as essences and how they can be transformed into learnings. All these stories carry important insights that we call life giving factors. These life giving factors were used to inspire action to our desired future through a four-point-cycle wheeling from *discovery* to *dream* over *design* to *delivery*. These four terms refer to the “Appreciative inquiry approach”¹ that is, together with “Storytelling”² the underlying methodology of “HARVESTING”- a programme carried out by the Hermann Gmeiner Academy.

All the stories you find here were initially told in one-to-one interviews conducted by participants of Harvesting 2014 during the first phase of the workshop. After the Harvesting programme each participant wrote her/his personal story and sent it to the facilitators. Some storytellers used real names of people involved, others decided to anonymise their experiences, especially when programme participants were mentioned. For most Harvesting storytellers English is not the mother tongue. Our intention was to keep the original character of the story and therefore editing was conducted in a minimal form.

¹ D. Cooperrider/D. Whitney/J.M. Stavros (2008): Appreciative Inquiry Handbook. For Leaders of Change. Second Edition, Crown Custom Publishing, Inc., Ohio and Berret-Koehler Publishers, Inc. San Francisco.

² See literature page 37.

While enjoying the stories, we invite you to also ask yourself: When was it you felt at your best at work? Remain a little while with this picture by going back to that moment. Discover the components of your story; how it was, what made it possible and how you were able to make it happen. The discovery of these moments can plunge you into a wave of flow. Your personal discoveries may be similar to those which participants of Harvesting 2014 made as they embarked on the journey of (re)discovering their best moments in their various long services with SOS Children's Villages.

It is such personal stories about moments of flow you are going to encounter in the stories below. They cover many diverse areas as the table of contents shows. Common to them all is this: They are success stories of "moving moments", the mere awareness of which "arouses feelings of joy"³. This awareness alone is a cognitive wealth of experience which when well "treasured, yields still more prosperity" for you as an individual and for the organisation at large.

The Harvesting 2014 team and participants wish you a happy reading experience.

³ See story p. 21 and story p. 28.



(c) Tessa Jol

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN A CHILD'S LIFE

Big courage on little shoulders

A story by Bolu-Olaoluwa Temilola Abiodun

On graduation day Mercy⁴ felt like the queen of her own destiny and all could see her joy and the new expectations as she walked off into the world.

Only a few years before, Mercy was very young and naïve, but even then she could see beyond her present that the future held better things for her.

The trust in herself made her stay focused on her vision of going to university: “Yes if others are there, I can be too”, she would tell herself. But the entrance exams were a big hurdle. She had failed twice and many told her to go learn a trade: “Why waste time and money?” queried a close relative.

However, looking at the life of others without university education, Mercy chose to follow her heart and her dream to become a graduate. But it would not be easy. It would take lots of determination, humility and a lot of hard work. But she was prepared to do all it took to pass the entrance exams.

She decided to register for the exams for the third time. This time she went the extra mile, she studied beyond the normal syllabus, collected and solved questions from the exams of the past 10 years and she also got a teacher/instructor to study with her. She was even ready to learn from a younger brother and anyone who was willing to share knowledge with her, no matter the age or status. **This is not always easy but is a way to learn humility and respect.**

Finally she took the exam and this time she passed. The day she got the positive results was like a miracle. All was set for her to be a university student. On matriculation day she felt it was already her day of graduation. Why? She already saw herself graduating! All the efforts she had put in the preparation for the entrance exams had built in her a strong study habit which saw her through university.

Finally, graduation came. The voice that told her to give up on her dream came again but this time to congratulate her.

Looking back, she considers the decision to get educated a great milestone in her life. It has opened a new world of opportunity for her. It gave her a good employment opportunity, a good family, the chance to meet people from all over the world and much more; moreover she can still learn any trade of her choice if she so desires now that she holds a university degree.

*Youths, you are to be brave. Set goals and pursue them; and if you fail, try again. **Never walk in anyone's shadow, take responsibility for your life.** Be focused and see the sky not as the limit but as the beginning for you. You shall surely make it!*

Temilola Bolu-Olaoluwa Temilola Abiodun is the National Accountant of SOS CV Nigeria. She joined SOS CV in August 2006.

As an accountant in the National Office her activities involve various accounting functions which range from records keeping over monitoring of income account and bookings to preparation of monthly cash flow for national associations and fund development. Preparation of budget performance for the national office and fund development also count to her work task. These are onerous tasks demanding meticulous attention, concentration and trust.

⁴ Name changed.

Her family: Temi is the third of 7 children. She is married and lives with her husband in Lagos, Nigeria. She testifies to happy and positive experiences in marriage and with her husband as a youth pastor. They have a deep love of children, youth and God, and they live in harmony. They together enjoy the company of their parents, siblings, other family members, friends and colleagues. That's why much of her leisure is spent with her family. As a Christian she enjoys reading the Bible and praying together with her family. She takes time to listen to Christian music and read Christian literature.



She devotes much of her interest to the welfare of the young people in Lagos – a very populous city. It is most disheartening how many children and young people lack good parental care and have to face life without good guidance.

In her own little way and in collaboration with her husband and a Christian youth she tries to bring together as many of them as she can under mentoring schemes in order to equip them for a better future. These shared times of mutual interaction have proven very helpful, she concludes.

My life and career with SOS CV - A passion

A story by Eveline Erlsbacher

When I joined the SOS Children's Villages Hermann Gmeiner Academy in 2004 I was first in charge of our catering services at the Seminar Centre.

I was very happy about this chance to continue my career after a long period as a single mother of three boys. The decision to join SOS Children's Villages was a decision of my heart: I love to work with and for people, to make them feel good, to establish relationships and work in a team.

A few years later Christian Honold, Executive Director of the Academy, initiated the Documentation of SOS Children's Villages. I was promoted to this very fascinating and inspiring area of work. We take an inventory of records, digitalising the artistic heritage and cultural assets as well as historical documents and photos that document the history of SOS Children's Villages.

I personally felt like a circle was closed and another was opened. Each of them was touched by the other in many ways. Let me describe this feeling to you:

My first touch point with SOS Children's Villages was nearly 50 years earlier: I, together with my three siblings, got a loving home at an SOS Children's Village at Moosburg, in the southern province of Austria, Carinthia.

At the age of seven I finally had the chance to be a child and live in a protected and beneficial environment, attended to and promoted into a self-contained life. **I learned to trust myself and others. I learned to love and to manage life crises. I found a way into a 'normal life', because of these beneficial experiences of reliable relationships and friendships.** This was Hermann Gmeiner's dream for all the children of SOS Children's Villages Programmes.

Now as an SOS co-worker, responsible for documenting the history of SOS Children Villages, I am able to connect my job with my passion: History in general, the SOS history in particular, because it is part of my own life story. With its strong roots and very engaging development, SOS Children's Villages has a touching history! It is a story of people doing great and sustainable work – from the very beginning until today. **That fills my heart with**

gratefulness and the reasonable hope that also in the future children at risk and their families will find the helping hands and feeling hearts they need – as I myself have gotten.

Now, during the Harvesting workshop 2014 I met you: SOS co-workers from all over the world. I realised that you all are actually writing a further chapter of the SOS history. You touched my heart and I felt the power of your engaged, courageous and tender-hearted way of contributing to our joint vision: A loving home for every child.

When **Eveline** Erlsbacher joined the SOS Children's Villages Hermann Gmeiner Academy in February 2004 she initially was in charge of catering services in the Seminar Centre. In **2008**, when "Documentation" (Memory) was established in the Academy, Eveline was promoted to take over the responsibility for a very fascinating issue: The **documentation of the history of SOS CV**. Eveline's tasks are varied. Together with a professional historian she built up an archive database for documents and photos as well as a digitised film archive. So she is able to respond to inquiries about the history of SOS CV. The documentation team also publishes books about SOS CV and arranges exhibitions.



For Eveline her job is much more than a job! Her very own **first contact with SOS CV was in 1964**. Together with her brothers and sisters she got a loving home at the SOS CV in Moosburg, Carinthia. There they spent a protected childhood, promoted and supported to gain ground in a self-contained life. The most important feeling she experienced there was the security of belonging to a family, to be a normal member of society. Not more and not less, as Hermann Gmeiner said. In 1971 Eveline came to an SOS youth programme in Innsbruck because the secondary school she attended was there. Eveline has three sons, whom she raised as a single mother for quite some time. She is very happy that all of them – grown-ups now – are on a good path. Eveline's SOS mother is her children's grandma. Moosburg will always be in her heart: a place to come home, a home. This is why the SOS Children's Villages history is part of Eveline's individual history too.

Saving the life of Maria⁵

A story by Fernando Pio Norberto

It is not always an easy task to save the life of the child in need. However, there is a time when the world calls, like in my situation, and you have to accept.

I joined SOS in 1994 after completion of my studies. At that time, I had many opportunities to get other much cooler jobs but I decided to join SOS with an intention to help children who lost the direct care of their biological families like what happened to me. I got support from other people during the terrible moment in my country Mozambique⁶.

In my profession, I was working with children and mothers with enthusiasm. Suddenly my director became so sick that he could not turn up for work again. This was the moment when I was given the responsibility at my young age to lead.

⁵ Name changed.

⁶ From 1977 to 1992 there was a civil war in Mozambique. It was a proxy war of the Cold War. The ruling party and the national armed forces were violently opposed from 1977 by the Mozambique Resistance Movement which received funding from Rhodesia and (later) South Africa. About one million people died in fighting and from starvation, five million civilians were displaced; many were made amputees by landmines. The first multi-party elections were held in 1994. (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mozambican_Civil_War).

I had my first challenge within my new responsibility when one of the children in the family houses was diagnosed HIV positive. After check-ups the CD4⁷ count was regarded to be low and the doctor prescribed anti-virus medicine to the child. The report I got from the mother was that the child Maria was denying taking the medicine due to various reasons. The first thing that came into my mind was that if the child does not take the medicine she will die with many complications. I had to think of a strategy to meet the child.

We had our talk on her way from school. I enquired her about her school academic matters. She had the pleasure to state that everything was in the smooth manner although she was not feeling okay during the last few days. I pretended as if I did not know of her health issues. I asked Maria if she had gone to hospital. She replied with a gloomy face that she had gone. I went on to ask if the doctor had prescribed any medicine for her. She continued "yes". Now I could ask her if she had started taking the prescribed medicine. On this question her answer was "no". Tears started running down her face. Then she went on saying "I don't see the need of taking the medicine while I know that I am going to die".

In order to start our counselling process, I had to think of strategies first. I told her "Being HIV positive does not mean that you will die. If you do not take your medicine other complications might arise and you could die because of that then." **From this point of time I could see her face turning back to normal and she started listening attentively as we were getting closer to her house.** Obviously my explanation was plausible to her because after the counselling fortunately she started taking her medicine.

Currently Maria is a young adult studying at university. The SOS mother who brought her up retired recently. Before retirement she expressed gratitude for managing her daughter to me. I am happy that Maria is now confident and performing well in her studies with more than 70 years life ahead.

Fernando Pio Norberto joined SOS CV in **1994** as a sponsorship officer. Two years later he was promoted to head of sponsorship department. In 2007 he was appointed as an interim Village Director in Tete. Later on he applied and passed for the vacancy of **Village Director in Chimoio**, the fifth village in Mozambique;

He ensures that the individual needs of each child entrusted to SOS CV is accessed and protected. He unites his team to take part in issues that protect children within the village and beyond. Fernando enjoys working with children. *"It is challenging and interesting"*. Only by knowing each child with his or her behaviour Fernando feels being able to support them and conquer any difficulty in life so. *"The overall goal is that they become independent in the future"*.



Fernando is the fourth born in a family of six, three girls and three boys. Fernando and his twin brother grew up separately due to the civil war in Mozambique and got re-united in 1994 after the civil war. His father passed away when Fernando was still a little boy.

Fernando is married and father of one boy and two girls. The last born is a four years old girl. During his annual leave he enjoys meeting with his family sharing stories of the past. *"It is interesting to hear how all conquer the difficulties of life"*. Above all, Fernando's family enjoys his stories about his profession meaning that he is the father of 100 children in the village and married to ten wives.

Fernando often asks himself: "Why do so many people of the society I belong to abandon it?" Just a few people turn back to their society after succeeding in life. Fernando feels he belongs to SOS CV where he is a full member.

⁷ In humans, the CD4 protein is encoded by the CD4 gene. CD4+ T helper cells are white blood cells that are an essential part of the human immune system (...) They are called helper cells because one of their main roles is to send signals to other types of immune cells, including CD8 killer cells. (...) If CD4 cells become depleted, for example in untreated HIV infection, or following immune suppression prior to a transplant, the body is left vulnerable to a wide range of infections that it would otherwise have been able to fight.

His long staying in SOS Children Village is the fruit of recognising his part in society. Fernando feels responsible to respond to problems within the society - also part of the solution.

Believing in the Child's Dream

A story by Mohammad Faizul Kabir

K⁸ and J⁸ are biological brothers and came to SOS Children's Village at their early age in 1989. K is younger. They have lost their both parents. Unfortunately and for whatever reason their relatives were unable to look after them. So finding no other way they were admitted and integrated into an SOS family at SOS CV C. When they came, they were malnourished and sick. But within some months they were recovered with good support from their SOS mother. Both of them are now adults and integrated into the society having university degree which is only possible because they were brought up in an SOS Children's Village. Otherwise it would not have been possible as they were from a very poor family background. Now they are grateful and also confident in life.

K was lively and intelligent from his boyhood on. He was a student of P High School, one of the reputed schools in the city. His performance was good at school and he has passed secondary school certificate exam with good marks. Beyond that he was the member of young learner's centre of the British Council as well as he has been a good scout. After having completed HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate) at another well reputed institution he tried to get admission at any public university for honours degree. In B nowadays it is very tough to get admission to a public university because of hard competition. Education in public university is our standard and beyond this also cheaper. K finally was selected in philosophy subject at C University. As he had a science background he was eager to study in science ruled subjects. Unfortunately he had no option at that time and so he has been admitted to the Philosophy department. So he was very upset and frustrated as he could not achieve his desired goal – to study in science subjects such as botany, zoology or geography.

Then he came to me and shared all these things. It was clear to me that he needed help. After some joint reflections it was clear that he would like to apply for second time for the admission test. One has to know that public universities provide two time chances. Considering his mental situation and eagerness for studying science I fully agreed with him although it was clear that it was time consuming and also quite expensive. Then he again appeared at the admission test for the second time and he got the chance to study in Geography and Environment at the C University. He got first class marks in Honours and also in Masters. Then he joined the very well recognized R College as lecturer.

At present K lives a dignified life and he often visits his native home where he helps the rural poor students. He also comes regularly to the Children's Village and inspires his brothers and sisters for achieving good education. K expressed his satisfaction about having taken the career of his dream. **He is now a role model for our children in the village.**

I had trust on K that getting a second chance would be of use to him in order to get admission to any good subject that would fit to him. He also had full respect to me and he did hard work for achieving good results. I feel that I have shown courage at that time to allow him for appearing admission test for a second time. I think my caring attitude also helps me to take such decisions.

⁸⁺⁸ Names changed.

Mohammad Faizul **Kabir** participated in Harvesting 2014 as Village Director of SOS CV Chittagong Bangladesh with a total of thirty three years of SOS CV working experiences. He joined SOS CVI in 1981. First as Educational and Recreational Guide and Youth Educator. Later he got in charge of SOS Youth Village Dhaka to setup SOS Vocational Training Centre there. After which he moved from SOS Social Centre Khulna to assume the responsibility of Assistant Village Director of SOS CV Khulna. And from 1991, he is the Village Director of SOS CV Chittagong. His professional background is social worker. He feels happy working for the children and contributing to shaping their future as well he also enjoys to work as National Brand Advisor.



His family: He is from Noakhali, eastern part of Bangladesh and the eldest child to a family of ten children. He is married and blessed with two daughters both of them in the university. His family lives in the Children's Village and feels part of the community and finds a descent way of life in the village.

Leisure time: He likes to walk, loves sightseeing, travels passionately. Kabir much likes reading, listening to music and watching drama series. He enjoys children's sports in the afternoon in the village and chatting with kids.

With his professional knowledge he endeavours to contribute through different activities to the development of his society. His interests are in Child Rights, Child Protection, Education and other social development issues.

It's your home

A story by Muralindra Kumar Ponniah

This is a story about Divya⁹, a young girl child who started up in life with losses and how she afterwards succeeded journeying upwards to personal happiness. Divya was ten days old when her biological mother died and she came to our SOS CV in X. Nursed in love and care by her SOS mother Divya resumed life in a warming loving environment. At the age of five, her SOS mother died. Divya must have wondered what she has done wrong in life. No wonder then she responded aggressively and unwelcoming to her next SOS mother.

Fortunately there was Sukriti¹⁰. She was herself also an SOS child in the village but now married to the village director. Divya was always fond of Sukriti and Sukriti accepted Divya wholeheartedly and in constant collaboration with Divya's SOS mother, the three built up a very strong relationship. **With this accepting, warming and securing foundation, Divya was able to overcome her doubts in life, accepted her SOS mother and became friendly with her.**

The benefits out of the collaborating relationship did not wait for long. Divya became studious throughout her school period. In her grade five in the local school, she excelled very well in her scholarship examinations. With these successes in her hand, she moved into the world by gaining admission into a reputed school outside the city. She was determined to face challenges that would come on her way in her new environment.

After some time, she lost interest in studies as well as in her day to day activities. The school authority informed us at the CV about her indifferent behaviour and we immediately looked into the matter. The outcome was that we should take Divya back home and this we did. After a while, I met with the SOS mother on her behalf with the superior in the school and fortunately, she agreed to give Divya a little more time. With her going back to school, I

⁹ Name changed.

¹⁰ Name changed.

began to make regular visits to see her. **These visits reassured her of the steady warmth, love and security her SOS family always has ready for her. With that confidence of having a home that expects her at every time, Divya gradually regained trust, self-confidence and determination in life.**

Her successes speak for themselves. She was determined to make it in life. She attended extra coaching classes, used all opportunities available to her to improve especially her knowledge of English. She sat for the General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level) and passed with six distinctions and three credits. Divya has great desire to advance her studies. She has a special knack in computer studies. Her special areas of interest are mass media, business statistics and economics.

Divya was all round a promising student. She was a member of the school choir and was very well known in school. She performed very excellently in school, sports and social activities. She was an active member of the child club¹¹ of the village from which she was among those selected to represent our country in an international training event on "Child Participation and involving Children in their own protection". Moreover, Divya has showered us all in the village with pride as she was among the 88 children chosen out of twenty two districts to participate at the two National Children Conferences of the Child Rights Advocacy Network (CRAN) organised in collaboration with "Save the Children".

With her activities and participations in the child club, the knowledge, skills and awareness on child rights advocacy and child participation she has acquired, including her ability of fluently articulating in three languages, she has won herself a place of importance among the children and the organisers of the conference. Presently Divya is working at UN Office in the capital city of our country as a HR assistant and at the same time following a course in Human Resources to obtain an academic degree.

Divya brought fame to SOS both with her being selected to represent the children of this country at an International training program on child right and with her **sending an exceptionally important message to those who think only on ethnic lines in the region.** We, the SOS Children's family are proud of our child Divya and her role modelling calibre. We are proud of the standard and ability of our child club and child forum activities and of the training and guidance capacities of our dedicated co-workers in the village.

I believe this is a powerful story of a successful journey to happiness in life.

Muralindra **Kumar** Ponniah is from Sri Lanka and the **Village Director in SOS Children's Village in Nuwara Eliya.** He joined SOS CV in November **1992.** He has till date serviced SOS CV in various functional capacities: From voluntary in Accounts department, to Accounts Assistant, from Senior Co-Worker in the Village over coordinator Tsunami works in the Eastern Province to Assistant Director – Emergency Relief. In 2007 he became the Village Director. His devotion is directed towards educating and shaping the children and youth for a better future. "I love and enjoy my present position in SOS Children's Village", he says.

His family: Kumar was born the first child in a family of five and they live in Nuwara Eliya, in the Central Province. He is married and blessed with two children (twin girls). His wife grew up in SOS Children's Village in Nuwara Eliya and she is a professional Bharatha Dance teacher.

Leisure time: He loves to spend his free time with his twin daughters. He enjoys playing with the youths, meeting friends and talking about current news, activities of clubs, organising trips and so on.



¹¹ Child club is an avenue which provides space for children to ensure their right for association, develop their inherent skills. Children independently organise their clubs under the guidance of elders. Nuwara Eliya child club operates with the vision of creating quality leaders with a vision, dignity, and the capacity to reach the targets in life.

He is heartily dedicated to community development. He engages in various activities for youth development. Kumar is an active member of diverse social clubs like Lion's Club, Summer Hill Club and Nuwara Eliya Club and in different functions especially in Nuwara Eliya Football league under which, with others, they organised Global Peace Games with the partnership of FIFA. He is also a member of District Child Development Committee in Nuwara Eliya and Steering Committee of Child Rights of Advocacy in Sri Lanka.

Coming to a crossroad - Saving of twin babies

A story by Lengai Sakaya Mollel

It was Monday the day which always is very busy. I was in my office going through week schedules and arranging what activity should come first and which will follow. While immersed in my work, the door was knocked. Without lifting my face I responded 'Come in'! The door open and two men at their early forties entered accompanied by an old lady carrying two children. "There must be a problem" I said to myself.

After talking to them, I confirmed that there is a serious problem. The men actually were the delegates send by the community in another village to come to SOS with the aim of getting the children admitted to the village. Two days ago, the children who are twin sisters lost their mother and the only hope as the father abandoned their mother eight month ago accusing her that the pregnancy is not his. The lady who accompanies the men is supposed to be the grandma but she also rejected the children for the same accusation. The only hope for the children is SOS Children's Village. Both twins were already having diarrhea probably because of cow milk they were given as the replacement of breast feeding.

Looking back to the village, there was no way to admit these two children because the last free space was filled up with the admission of a child three months ago. On the other side judging from the appearance, these men do not know any other place they could try. In short the only place that saves the children they know was SOS Children's Village.

I was caught in the cross road. The easiest way is to tell them the reality that the village is full since three months ago and this could be also a reality. I have also many deadlines on my desk and I need to work them out. But if I choose that way the men will go back to their community with the children wait for them to die one by one as they have reached their limit.

I decided to put myself in their shoes. I grabed my phone and tried to call other institutions providing child care in the region. At the beginning it was frustrating as most of them responded that they do not have any vacancy. After several calls I got one which after long discussion, accepted the children. I even told them about the condition of the children and the urgent need of the pediatrician. After short time, I was on my way with the children and the men.

The center was almost half an hour drive from the SOS Children Village. When we reached there we found the whole team there waiting for us. Immediately the children were taken away and give them bath as I said they were having diarrhea. They dressed them with nice and warm clothes.

The doctor also attended the children and luckily enough he said nothing was serious except diarrhea maybe because of poor handling. I saw one man among the group shedding tears of happiness the way the children were accepted and treated

I was very grateful that I choose to put on with the children, to be the instrument of getting them to a safer place. These children are now doing fine and have a decent life ahead of them. **We sometimes give simple answers to tough questions and belief that we are right while actually we could make a difference just by allowing**

ourselves to be used by others. If I could not allow myself to be the instrument, then definitely the children could have died.

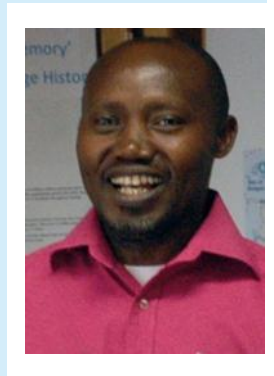
We sometimes comes to the crossroad in our life, but **we should be wise to choose which way add value rather than which way is simple.**

Lengai Sakaya Mollel born in Arusha in 1966 in a masai community joined SOS CV Arusha in March 2005 as the Village Administrator. His main responsibilities include supporting the village director with administrative matters so as to give him more time with the children. But often also Lengai carries out matters relating to children. This is the most enjoyable time to him. In 2006 Lengai's National Director selected him to join the regional youth development team for East Africa which was a great opportunity for Lengai to connect with co-workers from other countries. He also was appointed as village director from 2010 to 2012 which brought him close to children and youth. Although Lengai is currently administrator again he still works with children and young people and enjoys guiding them.

Lengai's father was a polygamist and had six wives. Lengai is the second born of six children his mother has. Out of 32 children Lengai's father had only three could get secondary school education and Lengai managed to get university education. Being father of a 16 and a 12 year old boy Lengai is married too. His family enjoys life and his boys are getting education.

In the community where Lengai lives only few children are able to attend school. Due to financial hardship they also hardly see a doctor when they get sick. This hardship is caused by many factors but among them are global warming leading to prolonged draught, unfair distribution of resources, big families compared to family resources and the effects of HIV/AIDS. Therefore it's his prayer that the door for children from our community will be open soon to allow them to go to school too.

Through family strengthening programme Lengai participates in counselling the community about importance of having a small family they can take care of. *"We also try to alleviate their burden by providing them with educational and health support and also give them training on income generating activities so they become self-supporting. I enjoy moments of sharing with the community, recruiting new programme participants or visiting them to evaluate the progress of the family".*



A footprint that continues

A story by Plamen Stoyanov

The life of each person is a book, a very personal book, but usually people write a book to share some thoughts, feelings insights from some special moments in their own lives and in their friends' lives. I would compare one's life with the weather – there are very sunny days with bright sun and very blue sky without any cloud or small white and soft like cotton clouds which give additional colors to the one already wonderful picture. In such days one feels so light and so happy and the heart rings like a bell of joy. In such days one is ready to climb the steepest and the highest peak in the world. And there are days – dark, with heavy rain and stormy clouds with thunders and lightening, with strong wind. In such days one feels small like a child, depressed or maybe frightened. What gives us strengths in such days – the hope or the belief that this can't last forever and that a better time will come again. Thinking about these pictures in nature, I recall very bright and cheerful days in my professional life, when I felt happy, full of energy and conviction that everything is possible if one just strongly desires it.

One such day was the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of our SOS Children's Village a year ago. "What happened on that day to make it so special," you may ask me. And really it was like a film. The most special moment was the meeting of grown up children, now strongly walking their way in life as young people. They told stories about the most special moments in their lives in the village. And one should be present at one such a moment to feel the happiness, the thankfulness not only in the way they were embracing us with a smile and sometimes with a tear of happiness in their eyes.

Naturally these emotions captured all participants and this special birthday – the SOS parents, the youth educators, the other colleagues that during the years were next to these now grown-up children, the sponsors and all our guests. I just recall the words of one of our SOS Ambassadors of good will. **"SOS is a 'factory' that makes love each day, gives hope and happiness to the children"**. This is the strongest appreciation that I ever heard about our work.

When we hear such words we can be proud of the results of one's continuous in the year's efforts . **This feeling becomes stronger, looking at the successful and self-confident young people that have grown up in the community of the SOS Children's Village.**

This gives not only happiness. It is a very unique inspiration to continue despite the hard days that one can have some times.

Plamen Stoyanov has more than 17 years of experience in child welfare. He entered SOS Children's Villages Bulgaria in 1997. At that time they had established two SOS Children's Villages. *"Looking back at that time I can say that I entered the SOS world by mere chance but I stayed all these 17 years not by chance"*. By education and previous professional experience Plamen is economist. He has a master degree in international business relations. Plamen started as National Director and so still he is. However, his tasks and responsibilities changed considerably.

What made Plamen apply at SOS Children's Bulgaria? It was the book of Herman Gmeiner about the history and philosophy of the SOS model. *"The book and the whole idea impressed me strongly. This led to my first step into the new unknown SOS world. Still it offers different stories every day"*.

Plamen lives in the capital city of Bulgaria Sofia. He is married and together with his wife brought up two beloved daughters. A year ago they became grandparents. Recently Plamen discovered that his grandson is the big inspiration in his personal and professional life now. A tremendous joy for him.



Plamen is concerned about the welfare of children and their families and about the general development of the Bulgaria in the new high tech world. This strong concern about the children is partly connected to his work. Furthermore it relates to Plamen's understanding that no child can choose where and when it is born, neither can it choose his or her parents. Therefore it is our responsibility to provide them with a memorable childhood and to stand up for their rights.



(c) Firoz Ahmad

ADVOCACY FOR CHILD RIGHTS

Changing the unchangeable – My life as a child's advocate

A story by Kenneth Kimurgor Koross

Our programme began in September 2008 some months after general elections. It was a time in our history as a country that we cannot forget, a period when the country experienced post-election violence. Among the areas affected was one of the target areas as a SOS CV programme.

We all know what violence involves; there was loss of life and destruction of property. It was at this period of time that the Family Strengthening Programme was initiated. Amongst the many issues we encountered were difficulties in penetrating to the communities, tribalism. One issue stood out in this community. Whereas certain issues could be shared in public, others remained in the private domain. One such case is sexual abuse of children or rather defilement.

I recall well going to this village which was a slum, of course with a village elder, and my colleagues to familiarise ourselves with the area and see the situation of children. What I saw was unbelievable to my eyes. I saw a village that was deep into alcoholism. People drinking local brew and every person I met was under influence of alcohol. Children were playing around these people and some young girls also were being used to serve the "guests" with the local brew commonly referred to as "changaa". A community member whispered that sexual abuse is common in that village and normally nothing is done to the perpetrators.

We, the Family Strengthening Programme Team, decided to train the community leaders on how to deal with sexual abuse and its reporting strategy. Already one hour after the end of the training, a community leader called me and what did I hear? A child has been defiled and we have rushed her to hospital. I remember telling them that we only need to get one case that serves as an example to the rest.

We now decided to take up the issue. I was not liked by some community members especially whose sons and husbands have been doing this. I was in a delicate balance, either to have the support of all the community members especially in these periods that the programme was new or I speak on behalf of the voiceless who were children. I decided to report the matter to the police station but this perpetrator had already gone into hiding.

One night I was called by the same community member. I was told that the man had been seen hiding in a certain house in the village. I had to call the police and that night they arrested him. He was charged in court for defilement under our sexual offences act. However a year after he was released. I decided to go to court to get an explanation of why he was a free man. I was given his file to read and I was told that information from the child and one witness was contradicting. To me it did not sound convincing. In order to prove that nothing was contradicting I had to approach one of our partners dealing with legal issues for the children. They took up the matter and the man was re-arrested. By these, **I felt satisfied in my heart that I will be counted among the change agents in the community.**

This changed the thoughts of the community from that day onwards; sexual abuse came to an end.

Kenneth Kimurgor Koross joined SOS Children's Villages Kenya in 2008 as **Community Development Worker**. He got an opportunity of starting a Family Strengthening Programme. Through this experience he participated in conducting several studies for the Kenyan Member Association. Kenneth was promoted to become a FS Coordinator in mid-2012 and that is the position he still holds. In addition, he participated in starting up a medical

centre. He also coordinates the activities there. This perfectly shows that Kenneth likes to work with new projects and to see them grow.

Before joining SOS CV, Kenneth worked with World Vision Kenya on an internship basis.

Kenneth is married to a loving wife and blessed with one daughter who is three years old. He is the last born from a family of 15 and from a polygamous family. Due to the nature of their work Kenneth lives 300km away from his family who is in the capital city Nairobi while he lives in Eldoret.

In Eldoret Kenneth supplies some farm products to community members whom he also encourages to adopt new farming methods. Furthermore, he encourages the local community to support orphans and vulnerable children through foster care, especially those who are in a position to do so within the society.



Breaking the chains of child slavery

A story by Chijioke Mark Nwakaudu

The story is about Simbi¹² who had the will and the courage to break the bonds of human slavery against all obstacles that were stacked high against her.

Simbi is a seventeen-year-old girl, but this story started when she was just fourteen, living in the southern part of Nigeria with her mother, four brothers and five sisters. The father who was the bread winner died a few years before that time. The death of the father like in most African families left the family in a dire situation, and it became difficult for the mother to provide and sustain the family. Therefore, Simbi found it difficult to continue with her education after her junior secondary school.

At about the same time a man approached Simbi's mother and offered to take Simbi to Europe so that she can work and help take care of the family, which the mother accepted without even the consultation or consent of Simbi. We cannot really at this point tell if the mother knew the true nature of work that Simbi was going to be doing when she got to Europe.

Before they left for the journey, Simbi and some other girls were taken to a shrine where a witch doctor made them swear an oath not to run away or report to the police and that they will pay back all the expenses it would cost their host to get them to Europe. They made the girls believe that the implication for breaking the oath was death.

The journey to Italy was a long one as they had to travel from Lagos to Senegal by road for nine days and the names and ages of the girls were changed in a new passport that was given to them. In her new passport Simbi was now a Senegalese with the name Fatum Silla. Simbi reported that during the journey to Senegal one of the older girls on the trip advised Simbi to go back but she was afraid because of the oath and so did not run away.

They travelled to France by air and when they got there the French police suspected the man travelling with them. Simbi was then taken to a community and while there she kept insisting that she wanted to be taken back to Nigeria, but after about two weeks one of the ladies who accompanied the group of girls came up with a fake birth certificate and claimed that she was Simbi's mother. So Simbi was released to the custody of that woman.

¹² Name changed.

On arriving Turin, Italy in November 2012, Simbi realized she had nowhere to go. Her traffickers told her that she was to pay back a debt of sixty thousand Euros (N12,000,000) as the cost for travelling to Italy and an additional nine hundred and fifty Euros (N190,000) monthly for rent, utility, feeding and the corner of the street where she would be working from at night. Unfortunately, in this condition that she found herself in with no one to help her she was helpless and had to work on the street as a commercial sex worker for six months from November 2012 to April 2013. During this period she was able to pay her traffickers seven thousand Euros.

On one faithful night in April 2013 Simbi got fed up of the whole situation and the lifestyle that she was constrained to live and so decided to end it all! She summoned enough courage to walk up to the police and explained everything to them. When the police heard the story they immediately took her to a community for the protection of minors.

The Italian immigration in Turin then contacted SOS CV Italy through an SOS CV Italy co-worker who happened to have worked for the Italian immigration before joining SOS CV. It was then that SOS CV Nigeria was contacted to find out how we could help to bring Simbi back to Nigeria and rehabilitate her, as she kept insisting that she wanted to go back to Nigeria. During this period she stayed there for nine months with the SOS CV Italy co-worker, a programme director (incidentally a Nigerian) who acted as her foster mother. Before Simbi was brought back to Nigeria a series of events took place:

- › Simbi while in custody of the police and handed over to the immigration in Italy absconded twice amidst tight security when she thought that she wouldn't be returned to Nigeria and also relayed to her foster mother how she got tormented in her dream by her "madam" to come back and continue working as a prostitute otherwise she would die.
- › Simbi threatened to commit suicide once after calling her mother in Nigeria who made clear to her that she never wants her back in Nigeria. This depressed her and she felt betrayed by her mother.
- › She agreed to stay with her foster mother based on the assurance that she would definitely be returned to Nigeria and that confidence she got. All efforts to convince her to stay back in Italy with adequate support from the relevant government authorities to help her live a fulfilled life proved abortive. Against all odds, Simbi was convinced that Nigeria is the best place to fulfil her dreams of completing her education and moving further in life.
- › While with the foster mother she learnt manicure and pedicures (basically fixing of nails) as vocational skills and obtained a certificate.
- › With the assistance of her foster mother Simbi also received psychological and spiritual support.

When we at SOS CV Nigeria were contacted, we immediately informed the National Agency for Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and other Related Matters (NAPTIP) - the agency responsible for this type of case. **SOS CV Nigeria thought it was wise to involve the relevant government agency as Simbi was a victim of child trafficking and would require some levels of rehabilitation and counselling before she could be supported to develop further like every child.** With the support of NAPTIP, the Nigeria Immigration Services did a clearance for Simbi and handed her over to NAPTIP on her arrival in company of her foster mother from Italy.

Simbi has undergone a series of counselling since her arrival in Nigeria and is presently in one of the youth facilities of SOS CV Nigeria. She is participating in a vocational training in dressmaking, pending on when the new school session will start in September so that she can go back to school to fulfil her dream of becoming a lawyer in future.

Simbi is full of life and very optimistic that she will one day fulfil her dream! Her courage from young remains strong and unbroken despite all the things that she went through in the hand of her traffickers for over six months while she worked on the street every night. **This courage and fire is one factor that has kept us, in SOS CV Nigeria, motivated and committed to make sure that we help Simbi to fulfil her dream.**

Chijioke **Mark** Nwakaudu is the **National Family Strengthening Programme (FSP) Coordinator** of SOS CV Nigeria. He came to SOS CV with an over ten years wealth of experience in the areas of social development acquired by working with diverse NGOs. During this period, he also had consultancy services with UNICEF, Research Triangle Intern, Actionaid etc.

He joined SOS CV in **2009** as FS Programme Coordinator in Gwagwalada, Abuja/Nigeria. In July 2010 he was moved to the national office as National Coordinator of the FSP.



Today, 2014, the FS programme in Nigeria has grown to 7 programmes and from 600 directly benefiting children before to well over 5,000 children. Many thousands have also been reached indirectly by the end of 2013. *“When I joined SOS there were just 3 FS co-workers but today we have over 26 FS co-workers on the programme. It is quite a challenging job but the smiling faces of the children is enough reward and keep us going everyday”.*

Mark is from the south-east of Nigeria and was born into a large family of 15 children. His father was a traditional chief married to 3 wives. Growing up in this constellation as a child was for him a wonderful experience. The house was always full. Mark got married two years ago and they have a lovely daughter.

Leisure time: He loves photography, music and listening to good music irrespective of the genre. He has a little preference for cool rock. He is a strong fan of the Nigerian National Football Team (Super Eagles) and FC Barcelona! At weekends, he enjoys spending time with his wife and daughter.

Society: He is concerned about constant challenges that Nigeria and most African countries face in the area of good leadership and asks “Why it is so difficult to get the right people in positions of authority”? One way to start solving this problem is to start building leaders at a very young age. This means that every child or young person is a potential leader if given the right preparations. To that end, therefore, he tries to see how he can influence every young person and leave them better a person than the one he met. He also advocates for giving more responsibilities to young people. This is a good step to start testing their ability and building on their experiences for future roles.

ON SUCCESSFUL TEAMWORK

A brilliant collaboration effort

A story by Erika Sunnemark

For me, it is a privilege to work for SOS Children's Villages. **It is a feeling of privilege arising from knowing that every effort we make has two strong purposes: namely, to give the most vulnerable children a loving home and to help as many vulnerable children as possible.** It is indeed a very motivating cause to work for, since it makes it quite easy for me to know why I am going to my work every day. This awareness alone arouses in me feelings of enjoyment. Still more stirring to rising up and jumping up and down in excitement is the capacity of realizing the diversity of segments of functions needed to be brought into action for every inch of success we make to be possible. It is a story about this that I am going to tell now.

It is a story about a successful fundraising campaign performed recently in my country, a large campaign with many co-workers from different departments being involved!

It was like this: As the marketing and communication teams were competently busy creating and producing appealing and relevant materials for the campaign, the service team was tireless in designing and keeping a high service level towards the donors as well as being able to respond to questions in an effective and relevant way. Also simultaneously in action was the database section. They passionately and meticulously see to it that all data "memories" are in order so that the desired donors can not only be easily contacted but also served with relevant information as well as keeping track of all donations.

Very important to the turning chain of action for the success of our project was the data analysis section. It is a section that is very open and tireless in testing new things and finding out what works better. It offers the big advantage of learning from doing, thereby being in the position to improve campaigns and their results. This section and its specializations function like a self-controlling mechanism, because in basing on earlier experiences and practices, decisions on how to proceed in upcoming activities become easier.

Different but equally important, each of the above-mentioned segments and tasks with the co-workers piloting them collaboratively contributed to the huge success of our fundraising campaign, and none of the parts could have been missing, otherwise the success would not have been what it is: To raise as much money as possible for us to be able to help more children in need!

Compare it to a beehive with each bee having its particular function and specialization. With each bee performing its assignment with passion and skill, their differing skills and competences collaboratively contribute to the general success and sustainability of the bee colony.

Erika Sunnemark is a sponsorship co-worker in the areas of fundraising and loyalty at SOS CV in Sweden. She joined SOS CV in the year **2000** initially as a volunteer during her student days. Since 2005 she has been in sponsorship services. SOS Sweden mainly works in **fundraising**.

Her family: Erika is originally from Karlstad and has been living in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, for about 20 years. She is the youngest in her family and has two older brothers. They both have three children each. Erika enjoys spending time with her family and with her close friends.



Traveling is one of the best things Erika knows. Last summer she was on safari in Kenya and it was fantastic! She also likes Sri Lanka and Italy very much and loves to return to these countries. Other interests of hers are: photography, skiing, going to theatre and movies.

She takes interest in environmental issues. Therefore, she rides to and from work by bike most parts of the year. She tries to buy eco-friendly food and buy clothes from companies with clear policies regarding conditions of employment and production as much as possible.

Enabling a worldwide rescue team

A story by Florian Staudt

On Thursday 7th November 2013, Typhoon "Haiyan" hit the Philippines bringing death and destruction to the people there. I was far away from the disaster area: in Munich, Germany in my online editing office at SOS-Kinderdörfer weltweit - Hermann Gmeiner Fonds Deutschland e.V.

On Friday 8th November, we received an e-mail from SOS CV International (KDI) with first information about the situation in our projects in Calbayog, where families from the neighbourhood took refuge in the SOS Children's Village. We did not know yet about the exact situation in the SOS Children's Village in Tacloban, which was the city hit first by the typhoon. But what we knew was enough for a news article. I edited and published a first posting on our website. During the whole weekend I saw pictures and reports on TV showing that people were in urgent need of help. Saturday and Sunday I frequently checked my e-mails waiting for more information about how our colleagues in the Philippines were able to handle the situation.

I read about what happened in Tacloban in the first round of mails from KDI. The Children's Village of Tacloban was located directly in the disaster area, the town was totally destroyed - but thank God children and co-workers were not injured. Our press officer sent out a first press release on the weekend. First information came in by SOS Children's Villages International that SOS was planning an emergency relief programme (EP). On Monday we had concrete information about the planned EP to support families in Tacloban. This was the go-ahead for a fundraising campaign to provide help.

In the case of emergency relief programmes, the online team takes the lead because we can respond the fastest. As an online editor I have to publish an internet page with information about the EP and produce a special-themed newsletter. I knew that we could really make an impact: The media echo in the news was big. In such cases a lot of people are willing to help and donate. I have been an online editor since 2005 and I have experienced this before, e.g. after the earthquake hit Haiti. I knew we had to respond fast, because the closer to the disaster we send out our newsletter, the more people will donate. **And I knew if we want to be fast we have to work together.**

So I was under pressure, but at the same time I was also calm. Since my team leader Sebastian and I have worked together for years **we both know we can rely on each other.** I started to prepare a report about our emergency programme project for the website. Together with my colleague Sebastian, we started to design the newsletter: I wrote the editorial, he produced the banner and links.

Around 11 a.m. we had a meeting with our colleagues in the marketing department to coordinate our mailings. We planned a newsletter for the same day; they prepared a letter that was to be sent out as soon as possible. Since the letter had to be printed, it was clear that it would be sent out a few days later. In the meeting I

presented the report I had prepared and we agreed on an emotional picture of a boy in the disaster area: The boy had a laceration. In the background you saw nothing else but debris.

After the meeting, Sebastian and I completed the newsletter and the page on our website – and then we pressed the button to send out the newsletter. Actually it was me who pressed the button. Right after we sent out the newsletter we could see on the web statistic and newsletter reports how people responded. We could see that a lot of people opened the newsletter and many started to donate. We didn't know how much it would exactly be, but one thing was clear: the campaign was very successful. This was a moving moment for me.

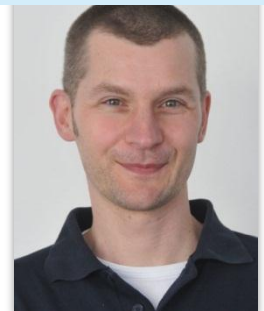
Later we received more information about our emergency relief programme including stories. The first story was about an SOS family in Tacloban describing their dramatic getaway to the top of the roof during the typhoon. It was very emotional. I edited the story and we sent it out as a press release. Also this one was very successful and especially websites published it. In the following days and weeks I published updates on our website and we sent out two more newsletters. **In the end it was a great fundraising success! SOS Children's Villages Philippines was able to support a lot of children and families in the disaster area. I was happy that I was able to contribute to help these children and families.**

Florian Staudt is **online editor** at SOS Kinderdörfer weltweit, Hermann Gmeiner Fonds Germany e.V. He joined SOS CV in August **2005**. As a co-worker in the communication department, he writes and edits news and stories for the website as well as press releases. He sends out newsletters, edits pictures, uploads and embeds movies and so on. He is involved in advancing HGFD's website (functionalities, design), but he is not a techie. He is a journalist: Florian started as a freelancer for a local section of the nationwide newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung. He completed a journalism trainee programme at a regional newspaper (Münchner Merkur) and worked as an editor for a tabloid in Munich (tz).

Florian has been married to wife Rumbidzai since 2008. Rumbidzai comes from Zimbabwe and they met when she did an internship with HGFD in Munich. They have a daughter named Maita who is 3 years old. Florian's parents and his two sisters and their families all live in the region of Munich, where he was born in 1971.

Watching movies, reading, listening to music, and meeting friends is how Florian Staudt passes his leisure time and he loves to spend time with Maita. Since she was born, she claims the biggest part of his leisure time.

Florian has lived in Munich, Germany all his life, but he realises that he lives in a privileged club. Being a journalist, he has the idealistic belief that information can contribute to make the world a little bit better step by step. He found his place as an online editor, writing news and stories about our work for children in need.



BEING PART OF A WORLDWIDE MOVEMENT

My decision is SOS Children's Villages

A story by Elifor Carvajal

This story takes place in one of the children's villages in my country.

My position as Deputy National Director makes me responsible for six SOS Children's Villages, grouped by geographical nearness. One of these villages started to have internal problems and management issues, which were related to its director. When I focused my attention on this particular village, I found work environment problems between the mothers, professionals and the director. Bad decisions had been taken, the director having imposed his particular management style, based on lies and deceptions.

Because of all these problems and as the person in charge for this programme, I took the decision to dismiss him from his position and from the organisation. This decision generated a polarization among co-workers and the mothers and aunts. There was a minority group supporting the dismissed director and a majority one against his administration.

The director, together with a group of SOS mother and aunts, started to spread all around the village a series of lies and malicious comments about my work and management as Deputy Director. To this end, a group of mothers supporting the former director manipulated some children from the village's families. Among the circulating rumours, a girl from the village commented at school that she and other girls from the village had been sexually abused by me. This defamation expanded like a snowball until it reached the National Office and the National Director's ears, who, complying with the protocol, decided to suspend me from my position and start an investigation conducted by external professionals in order to determine the veracity of the girl's story.

When I heard this accusation, my world fell apart. My family and I suffered so much, and personally, I questioned myself on the possibility of leaving the organisation, since an accusation like this in my country marks your life forever. The investigation lasted about a month, and during all this time I kept away from my position and duties. Concurrently, the situation in the village was getting worse and after the director's dismissal, five SOS mothers quit their positions in solidarity and support to the former director.

The result of the investigation showed my absolute innocence, since the girls acknowledged that they did it at the request of one of the SOS mothers.

This was one of the most difficult moments I have gone through, both in my professional and personal life, which is why I thought about leaving SOS Children's Villages. At this moment, my wife and daughter played a very important role, reminding me that my work was an important part of my life and my personal values, and unlike those mothers who decided to leave the organisation to support the former director, **my choice should be for the children, because I love my work and it makes me feel whole.**

After the investigation's results were announced, I was allowed to return to my position and duties. **I must acknowledge all the unwavering support I received from my colleagues and the organisation's co-workers.**

In order to face the problems in the village, we developed a crisis plan and I assumed, once again, the responsibility for the village. We developed shifts for taking care of the children, so as to cover for the mothers who had quit. Mothers from other villages came to support the work and additionally, co-workers from all around the country came to provide their assistance.

This story happened about four years ago. At present, I continue being the person in charge of this village, in addition to five more. I continue being responsible for this village because of my commitment and loyalty to the

SOS mothers, aunts and co-workers who decided to stay and whose **main interest are the children, above their personal concerns**. For all this, my decision is SOS Children's Villages.

Elifor Carvajal joined SOS CV in Chile in March **1996**. He is currently the **National Deputy Director** of SOS Children's Villages Chile.

He started as a co-worker in a Family Strengthening Project in the city of Antofagasta, in the north of Chile. Later on he became part of the education team at the national office from where he assumed his current position in 2006.

His tasks are: supporting the director in the development of programmes, conducting monitoring visits and onsite support.

Elifor's professional background: He is an education psychologist. He is certified in management for non-profit organisations and coaching. These contribute a lot to his own professional development and work performance.



His family: He is the second of four children. He is married to Jessica Pizarro, a teacher in physical education by profession. Their daughter Antonia is 13 years old and is currently in her eighth year of primary school. She also loves sports and dancing.

Leisure time: He enjoys spending time with his family, inviting friends over to barbeque and watching football. Among his favourite hobbies are Chilean and Latin American folklore.

His contributions to the development of humanity in society he describes as follows: *"I feel privileged to participate in the redefinition of the lives of each of the children who are part of the SOS family. Through my work, I have got the awareness that there is much to be done in Chile, especially in areas of child and adolescent protection"*.

Joining hands

A story by Markus Claus Egger

It is about courage, trust, a long-term perspective and most of all about joining hands for delivering our joint vision. It all started with the creation of the brand model and its official presentation during the General Assembly back in 2008.

Some years later, the federation decided to meet to do a review of our strategic plan. For me, in my role as brand advisor, it was the first time I recall people from all across the planet sitting together to jointly work towards making our global strategy even more efficient. Together with a colleague from the network, I had taken on the responsibility to facilitate the brand part of the review. Our key goal was clear: to change the perception of brand work from something additional towards something of everyone's daily business. The first line of action taken was to organise a very fruitful interaction with the groups working on our main objectives ONE child, ONE friend and ONE movement. Joint sessions with other relevant groups were highly inspiring and we identified several big topics within programme, fundraising and human resources work. No sooner had we started than we discovered the confirmation that brand has its place in all of them and that the brand perspective is really an added value.

So back to our little working group and following fierce discussions, the network and the representatives from national associations decided to take a bold step. A bold step which would make the future brand focus come

directly from the member associations and naturally integrated into their everyday work: we suggested to “visualize brand integration” by removing brand work as an international strategic objective from 2015 on and to **put full trust in our co-workers worldwide to steer the process**. By doing so, we set the stage for jointly working with functions to integrate actions intended to influence and harmonize stakeholder experiences with SOS Children’s Villages in their respective plans.

Hence, in order to enable countries to identify required brand actions and to bring them to the strategic plans, the global brand network is currently initiating an approach to actively shape stakeholder experiences that supports the planning process done by national associations. This is based on the understanding that no matter how we support the child at risk across the planet, **we as a global organisation have a lot in common and need to constantly build on our unifying strengths to be perceived as one global movement**.

Markus Claus Egger joined SOS CV **1998** with a journalism / interpreting background and a passion for foreign culture. After a couple of years as Team Leader of Language Services at the Hermann Gmeiner Academy, he moved to the umbrella organisation in 2009.

Now he mainly dedicates his work life to contributing to the implementation and further development of the **global branding** approach as **Brand Leadership Advisor** in the Office of the Chief Executive Officer. Focusing on the communication within the network, he has managed to broaden his horizon towards a global perspective and has been able to gather experience in managing networks, developing and steering projects, working with managers and training co-workers.



Markus was born in Innsbruck in 1972 and raised in a typical small-sized European family. He is married and has a daughter and a 4-year-old son. He has a very endearing person dream which he puts so: *“I dream of moving from our apartment to a small house one day, either in Tyrol or somewhere in France”*. And as a member of society, he dearly pledges to do his little part, which is to make the world (and SOS CV!) focus on what binds us together rather than what tears us apart. By the way: this is also what the SOS CV brand is about – despite the different solutions to the child at risk SOS Children’s Villages is offering across the planet, we have a lot in common and need to constantly build on these strengths in order to be perceived as one powerful global entity. We as co-workers play a major role in this process which aims to sharpen our one identity and foster our reputation. The way we interpret and live what the federation stands for is ultimately how SOS CV is perceived and judged by others.

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

The will to succeed: Team building

A story by Szabolcs Németh

It was 2004. I took over the leadership of the SOS Children's Village. It was a fortunate start since I had the luck to set up a whole new team. Our primary duty is to coordinate, help and support the SOS mothers. Like in every new team and every new start, the enthusiasm at the beginning was very high and performance very high too. Then, things began to get more difficult to operate. The result was that difficulties in operation lead to lots of conflict between colleagues. I was lucky however that some sparkles of the initial enthusiasm were still flickering and it was out of this energy that I got the will and the determination to improve the situation. I told my colleagues of the **need to re-charge our enthusiasm for our work** and launch a new start, and they were open for the changes.

The first step I took was to ask for the assistance of an external expert, who suggested that we should move together out of the office, spend a few days away from the village, and make a variety of activities, exercises relieve tension, bring people closer together.

The impulse was high and without hesitating, I developed a program; I had only to wait for the opportunity. It came when I secured the support of a foundation. It all became a reality. I took the office staff for a long weekend (Friday to Sunday), away from the children's village to a place where we knew only each other. We all put up in an apartment. We had joint excursions in nature, shared meals and dance evenings. And the days passed. Gradually we started coming closer to each other, knowing one another better. Each new day and each new coming together generated more situational practices. From the morning circles through series of conflict management practices over sharing, we lived together through several types of situations. We learned indeed more about the other.

Something has changed, we all observed. It was the last day, everyone realized how open we have become to each other, how completely reduced the number of conflicts has become and how close and effectively we were all collaborating with one another. We took up this energy and on getting back to work in the village, the results of the team building programme were visible and experienced. It all reflected on the SOS mothers, the children and on the whole village.

Most important to me is the ability to see the opportunity to make changes and make use of it **to do something for the team thereby raising the efficiency of work done with and for the children**. Undertaking the whole exercise and **building up a strong and healthy team at work reveals a very important aspect of the collaborating relationship between every co-worker and his/her work life**. It showed the team how important it is to the management to see them happy at their workplaces.

Szabolcs Németh is presently the **Area Director** in Battonya/Hungary. He joined SOS CV in **1996**.

After his studies, he started as a teacher in the local elementary school. Shortly thereafter, he began with SOS CV first as a pedagogical co-worker at SOS CV Battonya. Later on he became the Village Director and since September 2012, he is also the Area Director.

The values he aims at in his work he explains as follows: *"In the first SOS Children's Village behind the Iron Curtain, I always consider my most important goal to make children understand their position, to give them available aims and help them to achieve these".*

Szabolcs is a member of a social organisation called "Fantasy Sports and Culture Association". There they organise programmes for children and people living in Battonya



and its environs. They are primarily sport activities but yearly they organise cultural life-motivating activities for the whole community. It is the "Day of the City" programme with child folk dance performances to famous bands. It is always a big opportunity for children to show their talent in arts.

Szabolcs' favourite leisure activity is sports – he likes jogging, mountain climbing and skiing. He also really enjoys making special foods.

Family: He is so proud that his father was a founding member of SOS Children's Villages Hungary. Szabolcs has a brother and a sister who is 20 years younger than he is. His mother worked as a teacher too. She is retired. Szabolcs has two children: a 14-year-old son and a 6-year-old daughter.

Treasure the good relationship that would give more prosperity!

A story by Lamu Zhuoma together with Li Hue

Lamu is the Village Director of SOS Children's Village Lhasa. I first met her in 2002 when she was the Director of the Human Resource Department of Lhasa Civil Affairs Bureau. The first impression that she gave me at our first meeting was: she is a hospitable, friendly and kind lady.

Lamu became the Village Director of SOS Children's Village Lhasa in 2006 and I was very happy to see her when she came to the village because I like her personality. As we got on working together and getting closer more and more, she became not only my "leader" at work, but also in my life; she became my elder sister. By this union of professional demands and personal passion, **I respect and trust Lamu as both my directress and my sister**. This is a unique merge which has turned into a treasure.

For instance, when my directress Lamu first came to the village, I didn't have much work experience. It happened that I sometimes did not work very well. She didn't criticize me; rather, she encouraged me and taught me how to do it. By that measure, I developed more confidence at work. It is now eight years we have been working together in the village and I have improved a lot in my work.

My directress Lamu cares a lot for me in my life. I still remember this hard but happy incident. It was on March 25, 2008 as I was in the hospital on a labour bed expecting my first born child. Complications seemed to be arising and the doctor, my husband and I were debating on the best possible and life-saving option for my child and myself in response to the situation. In that heat of uncertainty, I thought of my directress. I called her and informed her about my situation and what the doctor who was attending to me was suggesting. According to him, he wanted to get my baby out by operation. After deep considerations, my director advised saying: "if there is a little hope, you should give your baby a natural birth yourself. I have the experience of it."

I accepted this suggestion of hers based on personal experience. Fortunately, I gave birth to my son very happily and this good news my husband and I shared first of all with my directress and we rejoiced all together. On the third day after the birth of my baby, my directress visited us in the hospital. She carried my baby in her hands and said: "cute baby, let me carry you. Your baby son looks like you", she said to me. I was moved to tears. Even till today whenever I say: many thanks to her for her goodness to me and my child, she joyfully reminds me that we are sisters. That also continues to contribute to my happiness as a human person. And as she daily extends the same care and support to my child who is now six years old, **she enriches both my private and professional work life**. My baby son affectionately calls her "mother director". I am very happy seeing a treasured relationship maturing into more and more prosperity.

Lamu Zhuoma is the **Village Director** of SOS Children's Village Lhasa, China.

In **2006**, she started to work in SOS Children's Village Lhasa. In these eight years, she has come to deeply love this loving cause. The SOS Children's Village is another home for her, because, without exaggerating, the child of the village is like her child, she says. In the village, the children fondly call her "mother director". This affectionate calling moves her to more responsibility for the children and the SOS Children's Village. Their words and actions affect her heart sincerely. Seeing them grow happily is her best wish.

Lamu is 38 years old. She is married and has a lovely daughter. The relationship between her daughter and herself is of a mixed nature. This time it is mother and daughter, another time it is teacher and student and some other time they are friends.

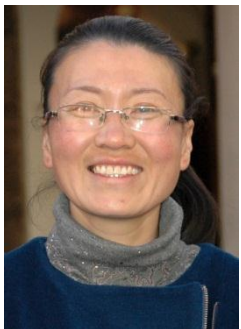
She gets on well with all her neighbours. They help each other, come together as friends. Moreover, they love and protect all the trees, flowers and public facilities in their collective environment. Together, they are making a cultural, harmonious and warm society, Lamu warmly says.

In her leisure time she likes reading books, accompanying her parents to go shopping, and taking her daughter to play. She devotedly finds time to go to each of the 17 SOS family houses in her village to talk with the mothers and children thereby getting to know what they need and solve their problems on time.



Li Hue is **Sponsorship Secretary and Translator** of SOS Children's Village Lhasa, China. She joined SOS CV in September **2000**.

She is 38 years old and she loves her work very much and this reflects on her love for the children of the village. Among the greatest joy she derives from her work is that it makes her mind more clear and active. Getting on with all the children, she has received more than happiness.



Her family: She is married to her Tibetan husband while she herself is Han. Li says she has a happy family. They have a lovely son and his name is Gerang Dazing. He likes singing, dancing and reciting poems of Tang Dynasty. Now, he is going to the SOS Kindergarten.

Li values her personal character which is friendliness and openness. These character traits she discovers in her desire to chat with people in the community and in her willingness to actively take part in all the activities of society. Li's approach to society is seeing society as a big family. Here, Li says she is sharing happiness with others.

In her leisure time, she likes taking her son to go for a walk, letting him approach nature, taking him to the children's palace to relax on the weekend etc. She meets with her friends and they talk about the happy things they experience.

Invitation to change - A leadership style

A story by Nikolay Slabzahn

SOS Children's Villages Russia has prepared the Sustainable Path Strategy to 2020 – a very ambitious strategy that is important for our development. The Sustainable Path aims at self-financing of some SOS CV member associations (MA) and this we think is very realistic. How we prepared the strategy and how we will implement it are very important questions worthy to be considered.

Some years ago, after analysing the development trends of our national association, the National Management Team (NMT) concluded that we need to change the approach in management of the MA. The prevailing approach by this time was that the National Director (ND) had a lot of responsibility and most parts of all issues were concentrated in his sole hands; there were no horizontal links between managers, stakeholders and strategic management colleagues. This was so because managers liked to discuss all issues and decisions only with the ND. Moreover, most meetings were possible only with the participation of the ND. The operational consequences were that final decisions took a long time to reach their destinations and results were not only slow in coming but low responsibility for results dominated. In a situation where the number of orphans in Russian was huge, coupled with expected ambitious goals, the NMT clearly grasped that we needed a new approach for improving management.

The following steps were therefore taken:

- › The HR department conducted research on motivation of co-workers. Results are very positive. Most of our co-workers work along the basic SOS values and find them also very important.
- › The NMT prepared a work plan of changes in the MA. Firstly, clear determination of responsibility zone on basic job and real work descriptions. Secondly, preparation of draft of document called “Matrix system of management” for clear understanding of responsibility and contribution of every manager. Thirdly, making the preparation of the draft a real team effort – more discussions, every manager was involved in this process, where every participant brings in his or her own contribution.

This form of understanding leadership as an invitation to teamwork created strong preconditions for trust and effective collaboration between different co-workers. Joint work, clear understanding of responsibility, open communication and streamlining hierarchy are good grounds for the development of trust. Trust is the base for effective work on and for the preparation of the Sustainable Path Strategy and its implementation. When we have trust between co-workers on basic common values we can work more efficiently, more collaboratively and have also more time for our beneficiaries.

Nikolay Slabzahn is the **National Director (ND)** of SOS Children's Villages Russia. He joined SOS CV in **2008**, starting as National Director. He knew his team before because he worked for partners of SOS CV Russia and met his future colleagues earlier. He worked for different organisations as Director, e.g. for private foundations for children such as UNV, United Nations Development Programme in Kazakhstan.

He has described his positive experience of work with volunteers and NGOs in two books on working with volunteers and in articles published in Russia and other countries. Nikolay Slabzahn holds diplomas in engineering and law. He graduated from university when new countries were created from the former USSR.

Family: He has a daughter and a wife. They have lived in Moscow and Novosibirsk and Kazakhstan before. It is very important for him that he is a godfather to his nephew. Their relatives live in different regions of Russia.

As a member of society he always has been active especially in the community where he lives. His life in society has connections with his public life. His colleagues and he came up with an idea about a spring volunteers' event – the week of kindness. More than 100,000 volunteers participated in the event in different Russian regions. They helped old people, orphans; they participated in different ecological actions. The goal of the week was volunteers' participation in improving life in places where they live.

Nikolay Slabzahn's private and public life are often mixed. He thinks that this is normal for most people who work in NGOs.



INNOVATIVE FUNDRAISING

Getting fundraising underway in Lesotho

A story by Mahlompho Jane Mashupa Mapalane

To keep the organisation alive from the financial point of view, there are many aspects to consider. Prominent among them all is the aspect of fundraising. So it happened that I once came up with an idea about how all co-workers can have fun together. Following this initiative, we organised what was called "fun walk". It was an hour's walk from the village to the next destination. Every co-worker made sure to participate. To make it successful, we contributed a little money to have lunch together afterwards.

The reaction to the success from all colleagues was so great that we planned to do it again the next year and that time linking it to the core issue: fundraising. No sooner did we announce this than the management picked up the idea. For the implementation, we requested that all stakeholders should be involved to get sponsors for caps, T-shirts, water etc. With this, we eyed raising some money for the association. I was so happy at the end of the day that also the patron of the SOS Children's Village participated and that we were able to realize a reasonable amount for the village. It proved to be another way of bringing people together e.g. staff, community, sponsors. By gatherings like this, **we are able to talk to people about "WHO WE ARE"**.

Little did I know that from this engagement, the organisation recognized my potential in leading activities and people! From then on, I was first chosen as a fundraising entertainment committee member and later made the fundraising leader at the village level. Currently, I am a fundraising member at the national level and we are doing very well. In 2013 we raised more than what was assigned us on the strategic plan.

How did all these come about? **The key of our success is that we made sure that all co-workers were involved.** And how did we involve everyone? We organised what we called a "talk show". It was something like a debate whereby we had a topic with two groups debating on it. The aim was to gain more ideas and more tips on how more and more people can take part in the fundraising activities. Great ideas which have been discussed on the debate "talk show" are now in our annual fundraising plan from the village level to the national level. They are:

- › Back to school – Children's Village level
- › Back to 60/80 – Children's Village level
- › Gala dinner – National level
- › Beauty pageant- Children's Village level
- › Mock marriage – Children's Village level
- › Fun walk – Both Children's Village level & National level
- › Golf day – National level

Today I am very proud of myself when I see what I have suggested is flourishing in SOS Children's Villages Lesotho. **It is an act of recognition of creativity and it motivates me highly.** It strengthens my commitment and passion towards my work at SOS Children's Villages. Generally it generates a strong courage in me that I envision SOS Lesotho to be among the countries which also generates funds locally in the near future.

Mahlompho Jane Mashupa Mapalane is the Financial Coordinator at the National Office in the Kingdom of Lesotho. She joined SOS CV in August 1996 as a secretary at the Hermann Gmeiner Primary School. Coming back to work in 2006 after further studies enabled her by SOS CV, she was assigned the position of Village Financial Administrator at village level. By 2009 she was leading the fundraising committee at village level. From October 2012 to date she is the National Financial Coordinator and still continues working in the fundraising committee at the national level also.

Her family: She lives with her husband and two children in Maseru, the capital city of Lesotho. She has a twin sister. Mahlompho Jane's daughter is studying at the National University of Lesotho and her son is doing his Form E, the last high school level.



Her role in society is initiating development. For instance, she is part of a group of women and men who together contribute and save a fraction of their small earnings. Out of these contributions, they assist one another with micro-credits at a very low interest rate. At the end of the year, they gather together and share their earnings amongst themselves. This measure really does help families out in times of need. It furthers individual family development. She has also helped and will continue helping her constituency to get funds for persons with HIV/AIDS to start small projects for their living. Her desire is to see people living with a smile.

She likes traveling and making friends with people from all over. To have been chosen to come to Innsbruck for Harvesting 2014 is a great source of joy for her.



THE ESSENCE FROM THE STORIES

In Harvesting workshops long-standing co-workers from different hierarchical levels and functions, from various geographical corners of the world and with differing professional and personal backgrounds come together to discover their treasures of rich working experiences.

On first hand sharing takes place within the group of approximately twenty people by telling stories face to face on the **individual level**. Following the Harvesting workshop process participants go further and share their new or newly discovered insights with a **wider group of people** that comprise e.g. colleagues from the International Office Innsbruck. This exchange for example takes place at the “World Café”¹³, during a session the Hermann Gmeiner Academy called “Open Books”¹⁴ or during the course of the “World Kitchen”¹⁵ event. Furthermore participants from past Harvesting workshops share stories about their working experience but also the story about the being part of Harvesting at home with their colleagues, supervisors, with the children in the programmes where they work etc. Last but not least the Hermann Gmeiner Academy’s education team publishes the Harvesting stories with this brochure, with a film and in personal talks.

The aim of Harvesting workshops is to share knowledge on the **organisational level of the worldwide federation**. Harvesting is all about spreading the fire of enthusiasm and the feeling of belonging.

On the following pages you find essential issues that came up in the stories. These are clustered under specific headlines with quotations from the stories as substantiating evidences.

¹³ See e.g. <http://www.theworldcafe.com/method.html>

¹⁴ Method developed by Education, Hermann Gmeiner Academy inspired by www.livingbooks.at

¹⁵ A “kitchen with world dishes” in Innsbruck. Harvesting participants, with the support of the Academy kitchen-team, cook dishes typical of their respective homes and invite co-workers with families to join the dinner.

EVIDENCES FROM THE STORIES REVEALING OUR CORE PURPOSE

- › Constantly recall the final purpose of SOS CV: stable qualitative family-like relationships.

"It is a feeling of privilege arising from the knowing that every effort we make has two strong purposes namely, to give the most vulnerable children a loving home and to help as many vulnerable children as possible."

- › Address holistic form of responsibility. Come out of silo thinking, look beyond our plate.

"Compare it to a bee hive with each bee having its particular function and specialization. With each bee performing its assignment with passion and skill, their differing skills and competences collaboratively contribute to the general success and sustainability of the bee colony."

- › Child-centred approach is essential

"My choice should be for the children, because I love my work and it makes me feel whole."

"I continue being responsible of this Village because of my commitment and loyalty to the SOS mothers, aunts and collaborators who decided to stay and whose main interest are the children, above their personal concerns."

"I told her 'Being HIV positive does not mean that you will die. ...' From this point of time I could see her face turning back to normal and she started listening attentively as we were getting closer to her house. ... I am happy that Maria is now confident and performing well in her studies with more than 70 years life ahead."

"With this accepting, warming and securing foundation, Divya was able to overcome her doubts in life, accepted her SOS mother and became friendly with her ... These visits reassured her of the steady warmth, love and security her SOS family always has ready for her. With that confidence of having a home that expects her at every time, Divya gradually regained trust, self-confidence and determination in life."

"With her activities and participations in the child club, the knowledge, skills and awareness on child rights advocacy and child participation she has acquired, including her ability of fluently articulating in three languages, she has won herself a place of importance among the children ..i."

"SOS is a 'factory' that makes love each day, gives hope and happiness to the children".

"This feeling becomes strong, looking at the successful and self-confident young people that have grown up in the community of the SOS Children's Village."

LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS

- › Positive feedback of former programme participants confirming that SOS' core business meets the interest of its addressees.

"He is now a role model for our children in the village."

"That fills my heart with gratefulness and the reasonable hope that also in the future children at risk and their families will find the helping hands and feeling hearts they need – as I myself have got."

- › Stand by long lasting relationships and develop strategies to handle consequences of these relationships in an individual way. Attachment should be lived in all relationships also beyond the period a child/young person lives in a programme.

"I learned to trust myself and others. I learned to love and to manage life crises. I found a way into a 'normal life', because of these beneficial experiences of reliable relationships and friendships."

- › Team building activities lead to much better mutual understanding amongst co-workers. It is an investment that creates an asset.

"... need for our re-charging of our enthusiasm for work..."

"...to do something for the team thereby raising the efficiency of work done with and for the children."

"... building up a strong and healthy team at work reveals a very important aspect of collaborating relationship between every co-worker and his /her work life"

- › Develop strategies how to deal with possible dependency phenomena between programme participants and care givers. Focus on and further develop leaving care process.

"SOS CV Nigeria thought it was wise to involve the relevant government agency as Simbi was a victim of child trafficking and would require some levels of rehabilitation and counselling before she could be supported to develop further like every child."

- › When trust in a co-worker is questioned follow given procedures. Gained time helps both: co-worker being questioned, leader who has to take a decision.

"This defamation expanded like a snowball until it reached ... the National Director's ears, who, complying with the protocol, decided to suspend me from my position and start an investigation conducted by external professionals in order to determine the veracity of the girl's story. ... The result of the investigation showed my absolute innocence ... I must acknowledge all the unwavering support I received from my colleagues and the organisation's collaborators. "

- › Networking within the federation is essential.

"... put full trust in our co-workers worldwide to steer the process"

- › Build up your team on time, so it can work efficiently when it is time.

"And I knew if we want to be fast we have to work together."

"We both know we can rely on each other."

CONSTANT LEARNING AND EFFICIENCY

- › Patient, holistic and positive view angle of leaders supports co-workers growth.
- › Foster flexibility. Allow rooms for co-worker initiatives and support them. Unorthodox experiments can sell at last.

"So it happened that I once came up with an idea about how all co-workers can have fun together. ... we organised what was called "fun walk". It is an act of recognition of creativity and it motivates me highly."

- › Involve former participants and former co-workers in knowledge generating activities and processes for organisational learning. (e.g. Harvesting)

"Never walk in anyone's shadow, take responsibility for your life."

"Now as an SOS co-worker, ... I am able to connect my job with my passion: History in general, the SOS history in particular, because it is part of my own life story."

CLARITY AND OPENESS

- › In order to improve efficiency stress on the importance of concerted efforts in all kinds of collaboration given clear definition of roles enabling co-workers to fulfil their own responsibilities.

"Joint work, clear understanding of responsibility, open communication and streamlining hierarchy are good grounds for the development of trust."

- › Children are most vulnerable after nature disasters => need immediate support.

"We sometimes give simple answers to tough questions and belief that we are right while actually we could make a difference just by allowing ourselves to be used by others. If I could not allow myself to be the instrument, then definitely the children could have died."

"We should be wise to choose which way add value rather than which way is simple."

- › Clearly differentiate and communicate to all stakeholder what one still can rely on in SOS CV and what - for good reasons - is very much under way.
- › Foster a collaborative leadership style with horizontal communication.

"I respect and trust Lamu [village director] as both my directress and my sister."

"She [village director] enriches both my private and professional work life"

"This form of understanding leadership as invitation to teamwork created strong preconditions for trust and effective collaboration between different co-workers. Joint work, clear understanding of responsibility, open communication and streamlining hierarchy are good grounds for development of trust. Trust is the base for effective work on and for the preparation of Sustainable Path Strategy and its implementation. When we have trust between co-workers on basic common values we can work more efficiently, more collaboratively and have also more time for our beneficiaries."

RECOGNITION AND MOTIVATION

- › Respect specific given circumstances and frameworks e.g. patterns lived within tribes;

"This is not always easy and a way to learn humility and respect."

- › Recognize that co-workers take high risks in their daily work.

"I felt satisfied in my heart that I will be counted among the change agents in the community."

"This courage and fire is one factor that has kept us, FSP [Family Strengthening Programme] co-workers of SOS CV Nigeria, motivated and committed to make sure that we help Simbi to fulfil her dream."

- › Education needs to be recognized as important for human development.

"This changed the thoughts of the community from that day onwards; sexual abuse came to an end."

"The trust in herself made her stay focused on her vision of going to university: Looking back, she considers the decision to get educated a great mile stone in her life. It has opened a new world of opportunity for her. It gave her a good employment opportunity, a good family, the chance to meet people from all over the world"

"... sending an exceptionally important message to those who think only on ethnic lines in the region"

- › Sharing of success stories and complex contexts motivates co-workers.

"In the end it was a great fundraising success! SOS Children's Villages Philippines were able to support a lot of children and families in the disaster area. I was happy that I was able to contribute to help these children and families."

"This gives not only happiness. It is a very unique inspiration to continue despite the hard days that one can have some times."

BELONGINGNESS

- › Face-to-face exchange in global work groups strengthens belongingness and cohesion.

"We are able to talk to people about "WHO WE ARE".

"We [SOS CV] as a global organisation have a lot in common and need to constantly build on our unifying strengths to be perceived as one global movement."

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RESOURCES

VIDEO

- Short film about Harvesting (April 2014)
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- What is Harvesting? (November 2012)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCRUX42FJTA>. © Joachim Puls

TEXT

- It is Harvesting Time!
<https://intranet.sos-kd.org/Aboutus/Organisation/HGA/Education/Pages/HarvestingAgain.aspx>
- The Story about the Harvesting 2012 workshop
<https://intranet.sos-kd.org/Aboutus/Organisation/HGA/Documents/130321-TheStoryAboutHarvesting2012-Report.pdf>
- Executive Summary Report to Harvesting 2012 Workshop
<https://intranet.sos-kd.org/Aboutus/Organisation/HGA/Documents/130321-Harvesting2012-ExecutiveSummary.pdf>
- Short Picture Book of Harvesting 2012 Stories

IMPRINT

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Who are these people?

18 co-workers from 14 countries who came together in March 2014 to harvest the fruits of their 237 years of working experience within SOS Children's Villages in Innsbruck, Austria at the Hermann Gmeiner Academy.

