40 Years of Impact



SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES

We are part of Somalia's national story

1985 – 2025





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FOREWORD



As we mark 40 years of SOS Children's Villages in Somalia, we reflect on a journey defined not simply by time, but by lasting impact in the lives of children, families, and communities. Since December 1985, our presence has evolved alongside Somalia's changing context, remaining steadfast through periods of uncertainty, crisis, and recovery.

This anniversary is a moment to recognize what has been achieved together. Over four decades, children and young people without parental care or at risk of losing it have found stability, support, and opportunities to shape their futures. Many have grown into independent adults, equipped with the confidence, skills, and determination to pursue their aspirations.

Over the years, SOS Children's Villages in Somalia has expanded its presence from Mogadishu to communities across four federal member states in Somalia. This growth reflects a deep commitment to stand alongside families, especially in times of hardship. Despite complex challenges, the resilience of Somalia's people continues to inspire hope and progress.

A defining milestone in our journey was the establishment of the first SOS Children's Village in Mogadishu in 1985, followed by the SOS Mother and Child Hospital in 1987, a youth facility in 1994, and the SOS College of Health Sciences University (formerly the SOS Community Nursing College), among others. The hospital has supported generations of mothers and children and remained operational during the civil war, when essential services were needed most. In recent years, the scale of our impact has grown significantly. In 2025 alone, we reached nearly 1.9 million of the 5.9 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, representing 32% of those targeted nationally.

Our impact is reflected through individual achievement, resilience and innovation. In 2025, Aisha Adan, from SOS Primary and Secondary School, topped the national high school exam with a remarkable 92%. SOS alumni actively contribute to rebuilding Somalia across various sectors, while initiatives such as hydroponic smart-farming systems help families establish sustainable livelihoods and enhance resilience.

For four decades, SOS Children's Villages has remained present during the most difficult periods in Somalia's history. Our staff have worked under extremely challenging conditions, and we have tragically lost many employees while carrying out their humanitarian duty. Their sacrifice will always remain part of the enduring legacy.

As we look ahead, SOS CV Somalia enters a new and important chapter. After operating as an International NGO for all these years, the organization is embarking on a transformative journey towards localization and the establishment of a Somali-governed, Somali-owned, independent Member Association by 2030. This transition reflects confidence in Somalia's future and in the ability of Somalis to lead and sustain a National Association that serves their own community.

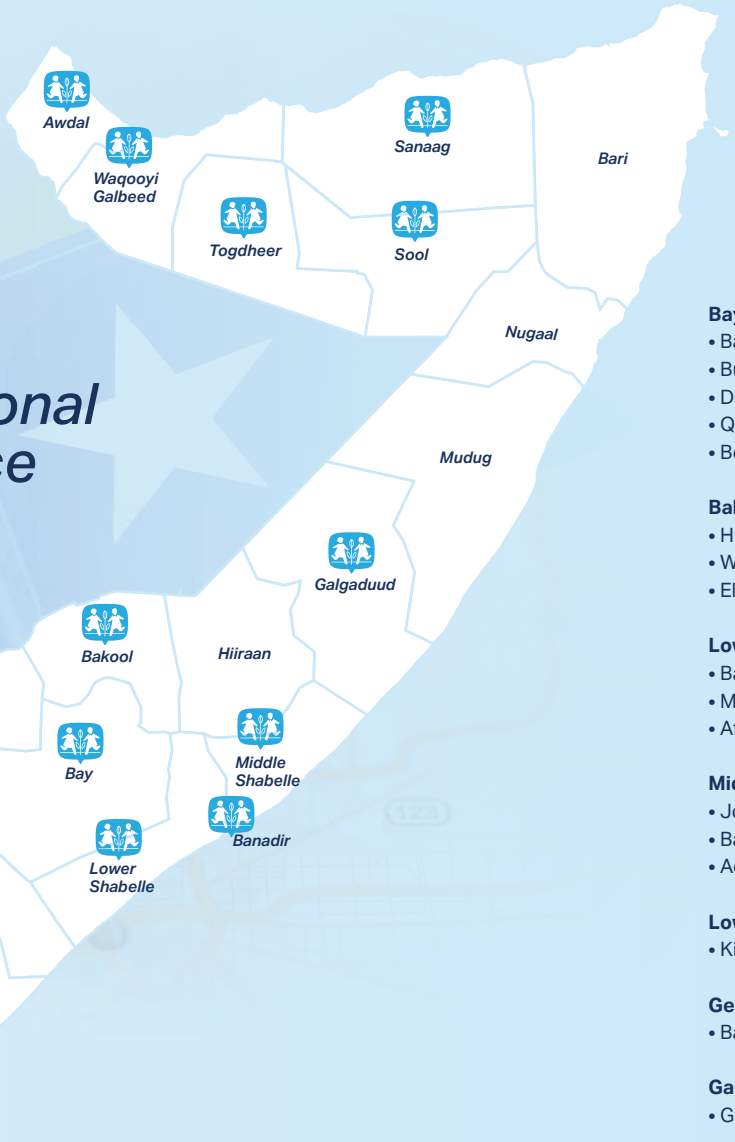
The time has come for Somalis, both within the country and across the diaspora, to step forward and take collective responsibility for the future of SOS Children's Villages in Somalia. After forty years of service and sacrifice, we call upon Somali professionals, intellectuals, philanthropists, women, young people, civil society organizations, and communities to actively contribute to shaping the next chapter of this organization and advancing locally led governance and accountability.

We extend our sincere appreciation to all partners, supporters, and communities who have been part of this journey. Together, we will continue building a future where every child can grow, belong, and thrive.

Abdikadir Dakane
National Director

OUR FOOTPRINT

Operational Presence



Bay Region
- Baidoa
- Burhakaba
- Dinsoor
- Qansahdhere
- Berdale

Bakool
- Hudur
- Wajid
- Elbarde

Lower Shabelle
- Barawe
- Marka
- Afgoye

Middle Shabelle
- Jowhar
- Balcad
- Adale

Lower Juba
- Kismayo

Gedo
- Bardhere

Galgaduud
- Guriel



A TIMELINE OF

SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES IN SOMALIA

1985 – 2025

MAJOR EVENTS: 1985-2025



1985–1990: Establishment of the national chapter, focused on institutional building, governance development, and board formation. The first SOS Children's Village in Mogadishu commenced construction and officially opened.



1991–1995: Critical lifesaving response in Somalia, including the transformation of a primary school into the only operational hospital providing emergency and trauma care, alongside water and food distribution services. During this period, we were operating the country's largest public health facility, serving patients from across the country and beyond.



1996–2000: Programme realignment from emergency response to sustainable development, including the transition from a full-service hospital to maternal and child health services, education and child care.



2000–2005: SOS expanded programmes into Somaliland, including Hargeisa and Sheikh, reinstating licensed GCSE education. Development initiatives included youth care programmes, sports activities, and the establishment of the SOS Community Nursing College. During this period, the organisation lost two British educators, Richard ("Dick") and Enid Eyeington, who were killed in October 2003 while leading restoration efforts at the SOS Sheikh Secondary School.



2005 – 2010: One of the most difficult periods for the organization, marked by insecurity, evacuations, and relocation of programmes, including children, staff and patients. During this period, SOS CV Somalia lost frontline staff and another international expert to violence, Sister Leonella Sgorbati, who was killed in Mogadishu in September 2006 while leading the SOS nursing school. We also developed our first strategic ambition, aligned with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).



2011–2015: Resumption of humanitarian emergency response programmes with renewed focus on core areas: women and children, and youth development. Expansion of operations into the Bay and Bakool regions in Southwest Somalia (SWS). This period also coincided with Somalia's political transition from the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) to the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the emergence of Federal Member States.



2016–2020: SOS Children's Villages expanded its presence to Hirshabelle, improving access to children and families in underserved areas. In 2017, we responded to a severe drought with emergency support, and later contributed to the COVID-19 response by helping establish and run treatment and isolation centres. These efforts combined immediate humanitarian action with longer-term support, reaching thousands of people.

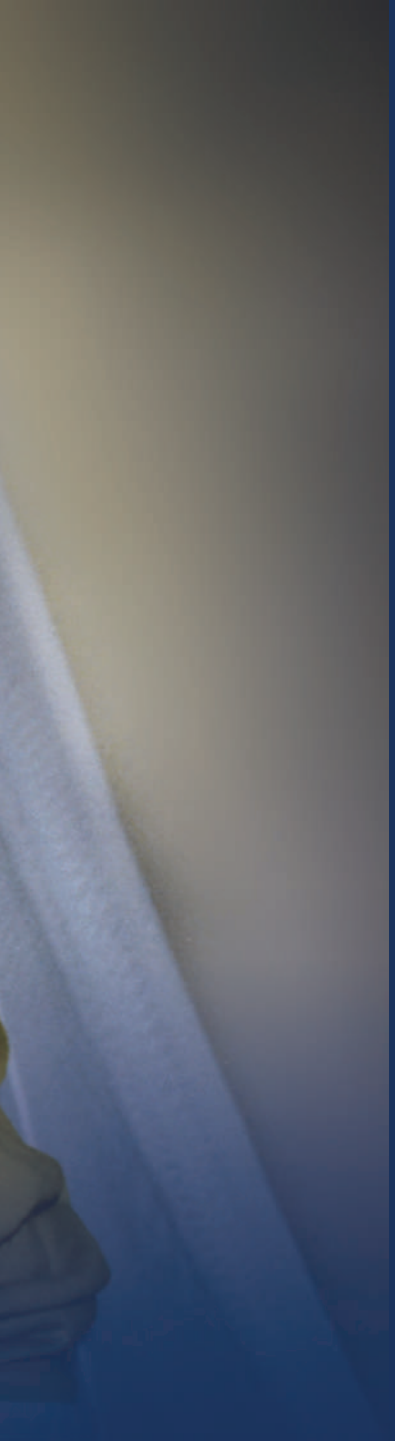


2021 - 2025: An ambitious strategic vision was developed, emphasizing long-term sustainability. This included implementing climate-smart agriculture through hydroponic systems and enhancing digitalization in hospital services for better efficiency and access. Additionally, funding diversification was strengthened via blended humanitarian and development financing models, improving financial resilience and enabling adaptive programming that addresses the evolving needs of communities.



Fadumo Adan Hared

First Mother at SOS Children's Villages in Somalia



How did it all start?

1983 - Agreement:

The official agreement was signed with the Somali government, allowing the organization to establish its presence in Mogadishu.

1984 - Endorsement:

The Somalia Council of Ministries officially endorsed the agreement on June 16, 1984.

1985 - Launch:

The first SOS Children's Village was officially established in Mogadishu to provide family-like care.

1986 - Official Recognition:

On February 18, 1986, the Ministry of Internal Affairs officially recognized the organization.

1989:

The SOS Mother and Child Hospital in Mogadishu began its operations.

2002:

The SOS Community Nursing College (now known as the SOS College of Health Sciences University) was established to address shortage of qualified healthcare workers during a time of crisis.



Navigating Civil War and Humanitarian Response



BEARING WITNESS



"Life and death felt ever-present, but it never stopped me from supporting my people."

Hinda Mohamed.

OPD/Emergency Section In-Charge

I joined SOS Children's Villages in Somalia on August 10, 1997, as a midwife because I wanted to help my community during very difficult times. Before joining SOS, I worked in Benadir Hospital in the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) program. I became a midwife after finishing my training in 1988, and I felt a strong urge to support mothers and children, especially as Somalia faced conflicts and drought.

When I started, many families were struggling due to instability, losing their homes and income. Even though our resources were limited, there was a huge need for care, especially for mothers and children. Every day, I prepared my tools and workspace for emergencies, treating cases like complicated deliveries and malnutrition among children.

The civil war was a frightening time for me. Life and death felt ever-present, but it never stopped me from supporting my people. I stayed behind even though I had the option to leave the country because I was committed to helping those in need. I met many families in distress, including one mother who had lost ten children before seeking help from us. Thanks to our support, her last child survived, showing how important our work was.

Throughout my time at SOS, I faced many challenges, including losing friends and dealing with violence. Our facilities were sometimes attacked and shelled, forcing us to move services to safer locations on the outskirts of the city. Despite these hard times, the strength of my colleagues and the community inspired me.

SOS Children's Villages has helped me grow professionally, allowing me to learn more about public health and mental health support. This journey has made me stronger and more compassionate. As we celebrate 40 years of SOS Children's Villages in Somalia, I look back at our story filled with courage, resilience, and a strong commitment to helping families rebuild hope.



"Our staff faced an impossible choice between their own lives and those of their patients, selflessly they chose their patients."

Dr. Mohamed Dakane.

Humanitarian Director

Since the Somali Civil War began in 1991, SOS Children's Villages has faced severe humanitarian risks, including direct attacks on its facilities and the deaths of staff members and their family members. Unlike most agencies that fled at the war's onset, SOS Children's Villages continued its operations, navigating constant threats from shifting front lines and urban combat.

I joined SOS Children's Villages in Somalia in June 2013 as the Hospital Director of the SOS Mother & Child Hospital in Mogadishu. Over the past 12 years, I have served in several roles—from Hospital Director for 8 years to Health & Nutrition Program Manager, and most recently as Humanitarian Director. Before this journey, I was a lecturer in clinical medicine at Kenya Medical Training College (KMTC).

When I began, our footprint was modest. We supported only two facilities: the main hospital in Mogadishu and a referral health centre in Baidoa. Yet even then, the need was immense. We served internally displaced families and vulnerable host communities facing conflict, drought, and deep poverty. Women and children were the most affected, struggling with malnutrition, disease outbreaks, and limited access to care.

Today, as SOS Children's Villages marks 40 years in Somalia, I have witnessed extraordinary growth. From two facilities, we have expanded to 50 health facilities and 31 community sites, reaching nearly 1.9 million people in 2025 alone. Our work now spans health, nutrition, protection, WASH, education, food security, and climate change across multiple regions, touching millions of lives.

This journey, however, has not been without sacrifice. Our facilities have faced repeated attacks. Colleagues and patients have lost their lives. I still remember when our hospital became a battleground, forcing us to relocate services to a small rented building in Gurgurta in Mogadishu. Equipment was looted, services disrupted, and fear spread among patients. Yet even in those darkest moments, our staff showed remarkable resilience.

One story that stays with me is of a mother brought from 90 kilometers away after a complicated twin delivery. She arrived bleeding heavily, with one baby already delivered and the second in critical distress. Our team acted swiftly, performing a lifesaving surgery. Days later, I saw her leave the hospital smiling, both babies safe in her arms.

Another memory is of a senior midwife who walked through active conflict to reach the hospital. Stopped at gunpoint along the way, she explained she was going to save lives. She was eventually allowed to pass. Today, she leads our emergency maternity services, still saving lives every day. These stories define our 40-year journey: courage, compassion, and commitment to those who need us most.



PROGRAMMES & IMPACT

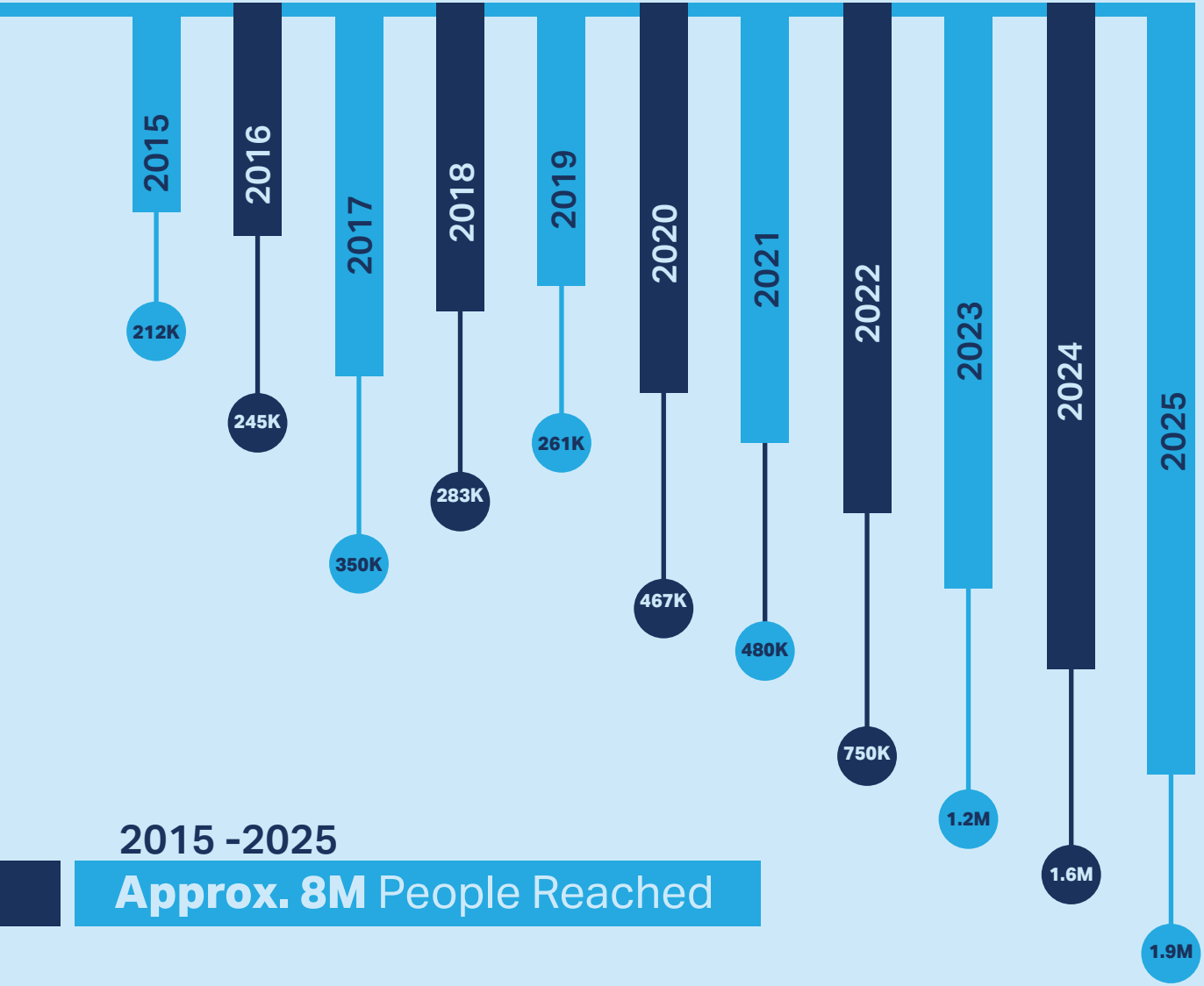
With a team of over 500 dedicated staff, we deliver our programmes through an integrated, complementary approach across child protection, education, health and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and climate change, and resilience-building livelihoods to meet the multidimensional needs of vulnerable communities.



- Alternative Care for CWPC
- Quality Education
- Protection and Social Inclusion
- Livelihoods and Food Security
- Health and Nutrition
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
- Climate Change and Environment
- **Youth Empowerment**

OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

Since we began our operations in Somalia in 1985, our reach has grown as the crisis deepened, and so have the needs. However, over the last 10 years, our reach has gradually expanded from hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries annually to nearly 1.9 million in 2025 alone.



2015 -2025

Approx. 8M People Reached

OUR IMPACT IN THE LIVES
OF CHILDREN & FAMILIES



A. A community where children grow stronger together

A family-based care where children live together as siblings with devoted SOS Mothers and Aunties, ensuring that children grow up in a safe and nurturing environment for their development. In family-like care, we work to provide consistent, high-quality care to children and build strong relationships with their families of origin.

Since 1985, our village in the Heliwa neighbourhood of Mogadishu has supported thousands of children and young people without parental care or at risk of losing it, helping them grow with the care, relationships, and support they need to become their strongest selves.

The expansion of alternative care, including foster care, kinship care, and community-based models, reflects strong progress, reaching 316 children in 2025 alone. This expansion reflected improved case identification and strengthened referral pathways across Mogadishu and beyond.

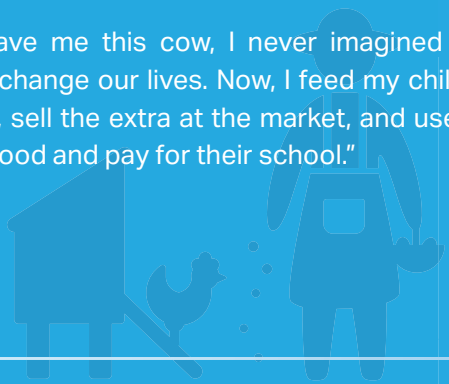
B. Strong family bond and a circle of support

We journey with families and communities to ensure that children and young people grow up with the care, relationships, and support they need. Through family-strengthening programmes such as livestock restocking, cash grants to smallholder businesses, enhanced climate-smart farming, employable skills, and community protection systems, we help prevent family separation and support children in situations of vulnerability to remain in or return to safe and supportive family environments.

These efforts also enable families to live with dignity and make a decent income by building on their strengths, knowledge, and resilience.

Muslimo Yarow, a beneficiary of dairy cow restocking in Baidoa, said:

"When SOS gave me this cow, I never imagined how much it would change our lives. Now, I feed my children with fresh milk, sell the extra at the market, and use the money to buy food and pay for their school."






Celebrating Our 40th Anniversary



C. Delivering life-saving health, nutrition and protection services

From the 1990s onward, during years of civil war, drought and widespread poverty, we expanded our work beyond family based care, education and youth empowerment programmes, to include comprehensive services that address children's and families' health, nutrition and protection needs.

We've adapted our health, nutrition and protection activities to meet evolving needs. Since 1989, we have run the SOS Mother and Child Hospital in Mogadishu, a 124-bed facility that was one of the few public hospitals operational during the civil war to date.

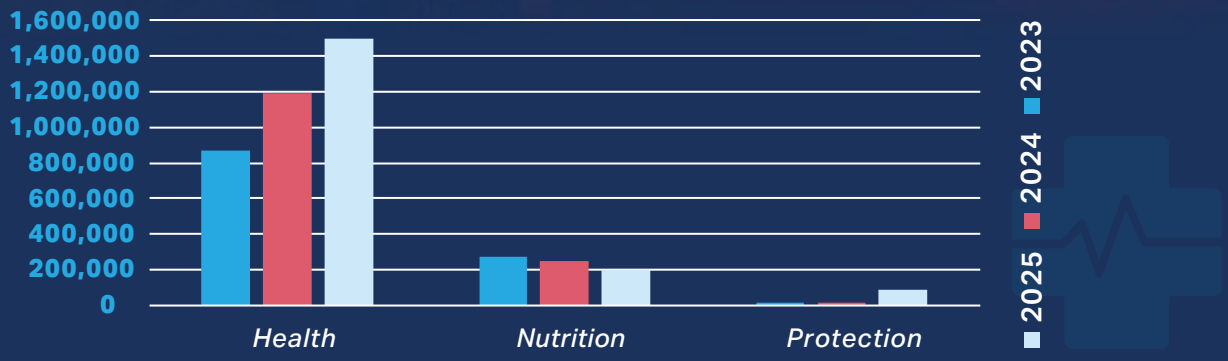
Additionally, we manage seven district-level hospitals, including Baidoa and Balcad district hospitals and over 50 health and nutrition centres and mobile teams across Banadir, Southwest State and Hirshabelle, offering free maternal and child health services, nutrition screening and treatment, counselling and referral of cases.

Thematic achievement: Response to humanitarian crises

In response to Somalia's deepening humanitarian crises, including drought, food insecurity and conflict, SOS Children's Villages has scaled up its emergency and resilience building efforts while maintaining core programmes.

Beyond clinical care, we operate mobile health and nutrition outreach, child-friendly spaces for psychosocial support, and collaborate with local communities and partners to strengthen family stability, reaching vulnerable populations across multiple locations in a timely manner.

Reach: 2023 - 2025



D. Nurturing emotional and social well-being

Nurturing the emotional and social well-being of children and families in SOS Children's Villages is at the heart of our mission. Children grow best when they feel safe, supported, and connected to caring adults.

Our efforts through Child Protection in Emergencies (CPiE), Gender-based Violence in Emergencies (GBVIMS), family tracing and reunification (FTR), community-based protection mechanisms, referrals, and coordination with authorities and platforms such as the Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CP AoR) have strengthened community networks and mutual support that enhance child safety and social cohesion.

By integrating professional care, community engagement, and safe environments, SOS Children's Villages ensures children not only survive but flourish emotionally, socially, and psychologically. Nurturing their well-being is central to empowering children to become resilient, confident, and capable individuals, ready to build meaningful lives and relationships.







E. Improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services

As a fundamental right for every human being, we strive to achieve this by providing essential water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and vulnerable host communities. These include installing and rehabilitating existing water facilities, establishing solar-powered water infrastructure and piping it to communities' doorsteps, and carrying out water treatment and trucking during emergencies.

To improve hygiene and sanitation, we support the construction of gender-segregated and disability-friendly community latrines, distribute hygiene kits, and encourage healthy practices such as handwashing to reduce the spread of diseases like cholera.

Our WASH interventions are integrated with health, nutrition, and child protection services to provide holistic support. This includes ensuring that facilities are inclusive and gender-sensitive, contributing to safer environments and reducing risks such as gender-based violence.

F. Building independence through education and skills

We work with families, communities and partners to ensure that children and young people have access to education and training that address individual needs and circumstances.

In Somalia, we offer comprehensive education in Mogadishu, including kindergarten, primary and secondary schooling, youth skills programmes, and higher education. Our SOS Primary and Secondary School currently has 1,300 students, nearly half of whom are girls, and attains top positions in national exams, including producing the top student (Aisha Adan) in the 2025 national high school examination.

Since 2002, our SOS College of Health Sciences University, a nationally celebrated institution for its top-notch graduates, has trained nearly 1,000 nurses and midwives to address Somalia's healthcare needs. We also manage the Baidoa Midwifery Training Institute (BMTI), the first of its kind in the region.

Our Education in Emergencies (EiE) program supports crisis-affected children, including displaced and vulnerable host communities, by providing safe learning environments and recreational activities such as art and drawing, and by building their critical-thinking skills, thereby unlocking their full potential.



G. Supporting families adapt and thrive in a changing climatic conditions

In Somalia, the climate crisis is not a distant threat; it is a present reality that is exacerbating poverty, food insecurity, and displacement. Families who rely on small-scale farming, pastoralism, fishing and agribusinesses are particularly vulnerable. Droughts, unpredictable rainfall, and desertification are wiping out crops and livestock, pushing communities to the brink.

To address these recurrent crises, we introduced a sustainable solution to strengthen families and equip young people with the tools to build a resilient future. We empower youth and women-led households through a hydroponic farming system—an innovative, soil-less, climate-resilient technique that uses up to 90% less water than traditional agriculture. The initiative helps families adapt to changing environmental conditions while building sustainable livelihoods, by selling fresh farm produce to local markets, thereby making a dignified living.

Additionally, livestock restocking and growing animal fodder is another layered approach to cushioning households that have lost their primary source of income, livestock, to the drought.

We supported these families by providing dairy goats, sheep and cows, along with veterinary care and training in sustainable animal husbandry. This initiative helps restore livelihoods, ensuring that families can provide food and education for their children.





Celebrating Our 40th Anniversary

OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

Our work contributes meaningfully to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-Being, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Clean Water and Sanitation, Decent Work and Economic Growth, and Reduced Inequalities. By providing a nurturing and protective environment for children who have lost parental care, SOS Children's Villages addresses immediate needs while equipping them with the tools to overcome poverty and vulnerability.



Through our family-strengthening approach and sustainable livelihoods, our efforts provide financial assistance, access to education, and vocational opportunities to families, enabling them to remain together and build stable futures. Our health, nutrition, protection and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services remain central, supporting the wellbeing of children and families and helping reduce mortality and prevent malnutrition.

Furthermore, investing in education and skills development has enabled children and young people to be better prepared for the transition into employment, achieve self-sustaining livelihoods, and build independent, stable futures.

All these efforts enhance income opportunities, strengthen community resilience, and promote inclusive growth, ensuring that every child and young person has the opportunity to reach their full potential.



HUMAN STORIES
VOICES FROM OUR BENEFICIARIES



I was a young, first-time mother too scared to give birth in a hospital. After two long days of labour, I realised my mistake and asked to be taken to the hospital.

I was in great pain, and I thought I was going to die. I had no family by my side, but the doctors at SOS Children's Villages did not turn me away. I was treated with respect and compassion.

Thanks be to God, I gave birth to a baby boy. But I had nothing—no clothes, no food, and nowhere to sleep. Yet you gave me all these unconditionally.

From the bottom of my heart, I wish to thank SOS Children's Villages and the donor for offering a helping hand when I was completely alone.

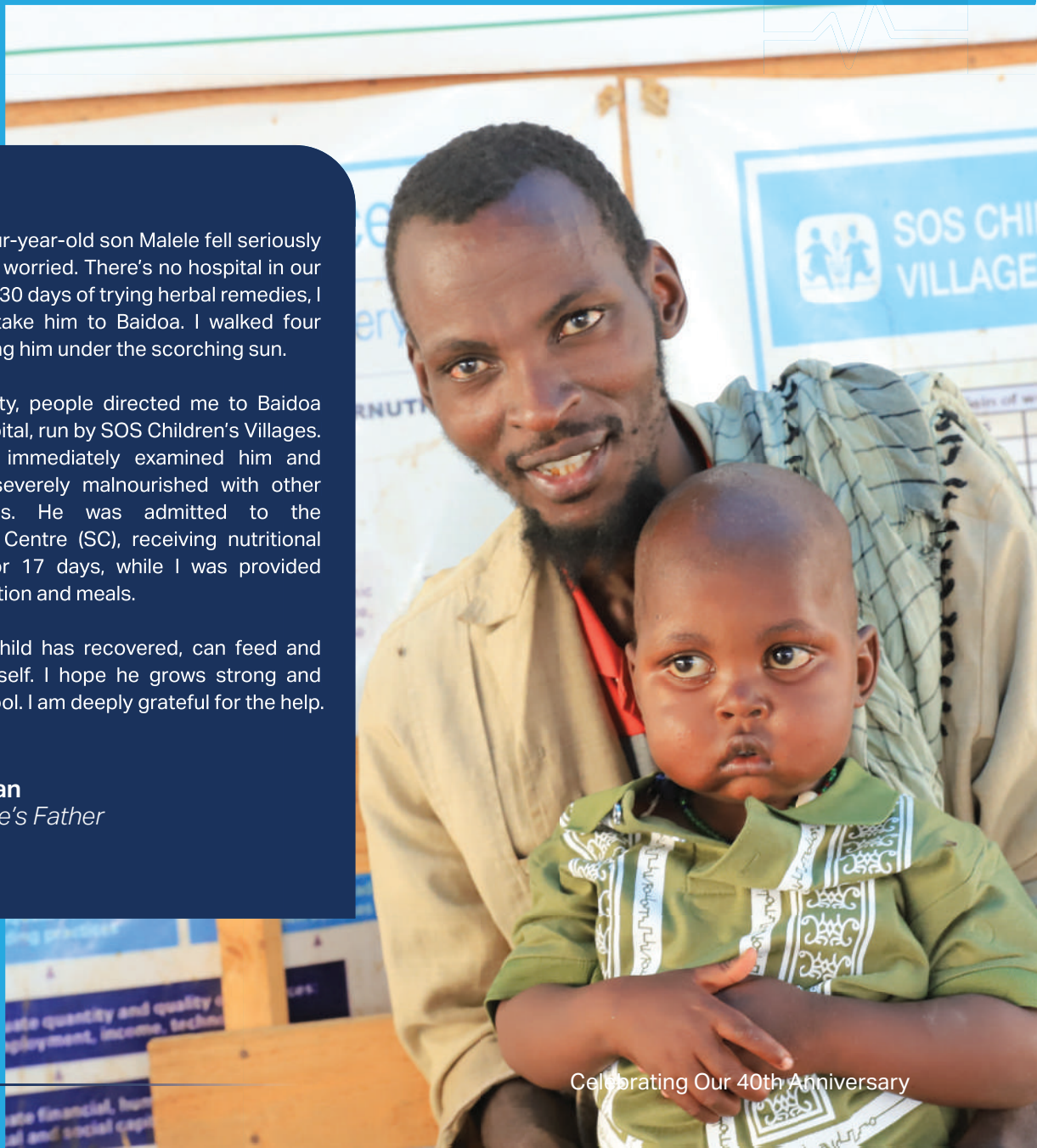
Samiro Osman
Mother at SOS Mother & Child Hospital
Heliwa, Mogadishu

When my four-year-old son Malele fell seriously ill, I was very worried. There's no hospital in our village. After 30 days of trying herbal remedies, I decided to take him to Baidoa. I walked four hours carrying him under the scorching sun.

In Baidoa City, people directed me to Baidoa District Hospital, run by SOS Children's Villages. The nurses immediately examined him and found him severely malnourished with other complications. He was admitted to the Stabilization Centre (SC), receiving nutritional treatment for 17 days, while I was provided accommodation and meals.

Finally, my child has recovered, can feed and walk by himself. I hope he grows strong and attends school. I am deeply grateful for the help.

Lakow Adan
Baby Malele's Father
Baidoa





Before this project, I felt there was no future for me. Our livestock was gone, and we depended on food aid. When I joined the solar training, I discovered I could use my hands and my mind to bring light to my community. I learned to install, repair, and maintain solar systems in a city where energy is scarce and expensive.

Now, I get called to install solar panels in homes, businesses, and institutions. What started as a short course has become a sustainable source of income and pride for my entire household.

My family no longer waits for handouts. I am proud to support them and to be part of a greener, more reliable energy future for Baidoa. Thank you, SOS Children's Villages and Heimstaden.

Abdifatah
Solar Energy Graduate
Baidoa



I lost everything when drought and conflict drove us from our home, livestock, income, and sense of stability. As a grandmother caring for my children and grandchildren, I became the head of the family, and every day was a fight to survive.

Receiving 10 goats has helped me rebuild my life. Today, I can provide milk for my grandchildren, improving their nutrition and restoring our strength.

I dream of growing my herd and one day returning home stronger and able to provide for my family again.

You have helped me rebuild what was lost and reconnect with a way of life I have known all my life. I am grateful for the support.

Dahiro Abdulle
Livestock Beneficiary
Afgoye

Developing Leadership

Skills in School



Our SOS Primary and Secondary School have established student-led administration, locally known as a 'cabinet of ministers', that oversees the day-to-day activities of the school. The cabinet plays a key role in organizing events, maintaining the school environment, as well as collecting and relaying feedback between students and school management.

The cabinet is composed of six key ministerial portfolios, including Environment and Climate Change, Religious Affairs and Endowments, Child Rights and Safeguarding, Sports, Treasury and Assembly, and Education. Each ministry is responsible for specific areas that contribute to the overall wellbeing and development of the school student community.

The cabinet meets once a month and is chaired by the school student president. During these meetings, the president leads discussions, reviews updates from each portfolio, and ensures that key points are compiled into actionable meeting minutes, which are then presented to the school management.



CELEBRATING OUR ALUMNI



"I am a proud graduate of the SOS College of Health Sciences University, class of 2022–2023. This institution shaped not only my knowledge but my confidence and resilience.

The lecturers challenge you, push you beyond your limits, and bring out the very best in you—even when it feels difficult, it is always for a greater purpose.

After graduation, I pursued multiple job opportunities and, despite limited hands-on experience, I succeeded in interviews because I was well-prepared through the university's rigorous training.

Today, I work as the head of pharmacy at Kaafi Hospital, one of the top hospitals in the country. SOS not only educated me but also positioned me to believe I can reach for the stars.

Jaabir Abdiaziz
Alumnus of SOS College of Health Sciences University



"I've known SOS Children's Villages since my childhood, starting my education at SOS Primary and Secondary School. Then you offered me a scholarship to study at SOS Community Nursing College, from which I graduated in 2007.

The rigorous training at the college prepared me well for this field and, more broadly, for my career. Today, I worked at Hodan Hospital in Mogadishu as a Maternity In-Charge.

In my neighbourhood, many girls look up to me, and I tell them you can even be better than me because I was studying when the conflict was at its peak in Somalia.

My success is not just mine; it's largely SOS. You have truly shaped my path, and without you, I wouldn't be where I am today. To everyone at SOS, I am deeply grateful.

Fowsia Mohamed

Alumna of SOS College of Health Sciences University

STAFF JOUNEY:
THROUGH THICK & THIN



There were days I questioned whether I would live to see another sunrise, because everywhere around me were signs that tomorrow might never come.

— Abdi Osman

Head of Safety, Security and Maintenance

My name is Abdi Osman, also known as Abdi Madobe. I joined SOS Children's Villages Somalia in 1984, at a time when the organization had just begun constructing its first village in the Heliwa neighborhood of Mogadishu.

I heard that a new organization was undertaking construction work, so I decided to try my luck. That simple decision marked the beginning of a journey that has now spanned four decades. Before joining SOS, I worked at the Mareerey Sugar Factory as a grader operator, leveling ground and clearing bushes. One morning around 10 a.m., I arrived at the construction site where a group of young men had gathered for casual labor opportunities, assisting the engineers leading the project. The experts were from Germany and China.

I was a young man in my early twenties, determined, hopeful, and ready to work. When asked about my skills, I explained through an interpreter that I was a grader operator. They brought a machine for me to demonstrate my ability. I operated it confidently, and they were impressed. I was hired on the spot.

At that time, the village grounds were sandy and overgrown with bushes. In those early days and weeks, my main responsibility was leveling the land and clearing vegetation using the grader. The German and Chinese engineers were welcoming, but also highly disciplined and professional. Working alongside them shaped my work ethic and strengthened my skills.

As the construction neared completion about a year later, I was not ready to leave, and neither were they ready to let me go. Over time, I took on new roles: carpenter, technician, electrician. Today, I serve as a Maintenance Supervisor. My willingness to learn and my deep commitment to the organization meant I was always ready to step into any role that would support children and families.

During the early years of Somalia's central government, working at SOS was a joyful experience. It was a peaceful, vibrant place. I had the opportunity to meet prominent figures, including former President Mohamed Siad Barre, who would visit not only for official events but also to spend time with the children and staff. Ministers and renowned musicians also visited frequently. The village itself was beautiful, with well-maintained gardens and social amenities that were rare in Somalia at the time. Those memories still live vividly within me.

Everything changed when the civil war broke out in 1991. In the beginning, the impact on us was limited, but as the years passed, especially from the 2000s onward, violence intensified and reached our doorstep. The SOS Children's Village and the SOS Mother and Child Hospital were no longer safe havens; they became exposed to the realities of conflict. Children, caregivers, and medical staff lived under constant threat.

Despite this, I do not recall a single day when our services completely stopped. Even in the most difficult moments, we adapted. We relocated children and medical services to safer areas on the outskirts of the city while continuing to provide care and support.

The years 2007, 2008, and 2011 were particularly challenging. Intense fighting turned our compounds into conflict zones. Street battles and mortar shelling struck our facilities, causing damage, injuries, and heartbreaking losses among staff. We were compelled to move children and salvage what we could, transporting them to safer locations.

There were days I questioned whether I would live to see another sunrise, because everywhere around me were signs that tomorrow might never come. Death, destruction, and displacement became part of daily life. Yet even in those darkest times, SOS Children's Villages remained resilient, adapting, rebuilding, and continuing to serve those who depended on us. After all these years, I know every corner of this village like the back of my hand. It has been more than a workplace; it has been my life.

As we commemorate 40 years of SOS Children's Villages in Somalia, I am deeply grateful to have dedicated my life to an organization with such a big heart for children. This journey has not only shaped who I am, but it has also given me a sense of purpose that continues to guide me every day.



CELEBRATING 40TH ANNIVERSARY IN SOMALIA

SOS Children's Villages in Somalia celebrated its 40th Anniversary on 17th December 2025 at the National Theatre of Somalia in Mogadishu, a significant milestone that drew over 500 participants in a spirit of gratitude and recognition.

The event was graced by the Minister of Health (MOH) of the Federal Republic of Somalia, Dr. Ali Haji Adam, and attended by senior representatives from key line ministries, humanitarian partners, civil society organizations, private sector leaders, youth and women's groups, religious and traditional leaders, SOS alumni, schoolchildren, and community members.



The colourful event featured children showcasing their talents through engaging skits, songs, and traditional dances, adding a vibrant cultural dimension to the celebration.

During the event, government officials, the private sector, civil society organisations, and community representatives praised SOS Children's Villages for its vital contributions, particularly during times of crisis, most notably, operating the only medical facility during the height of the civil war. The organisation was also recognised not only for training a new generation of career-oriented youth who now serve their communities, but also for providing loving homes for children.



Traditional dancers welcome guests with a Somali dance at the Somali National Theatre on 17 December 2025

At a glance: **Key Moments**





Event participants follow **a short stage skit by school children emphasizing the** *importance of education*



Schoolchildren perform a song **highlighting the journey and impact of SOS Children's Villages** *in Somalia*

Students from **SOS College of Health Sciences University** pose for a group photo during the celebration at the Somali National Theatre on **17 December 2025**

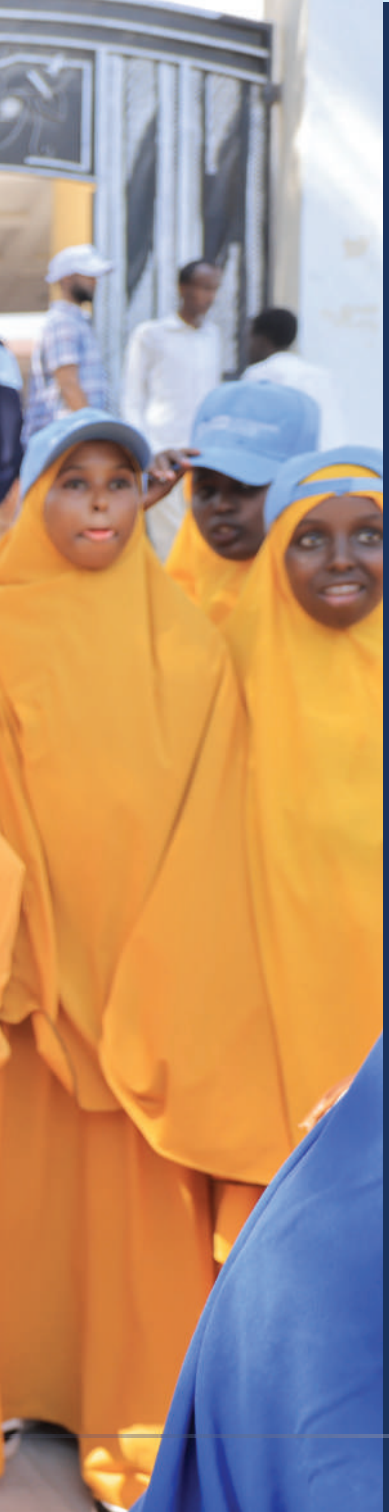




Celebrating Our 40th Anniversary



Celebrating Our 40th Anniversary



Students from ***SOS Primary and Secondary School celebrate the 40th anniversary,*** posing joyfully in blue and yellow attire at the Somali National Theatre on ***17 December 2025***

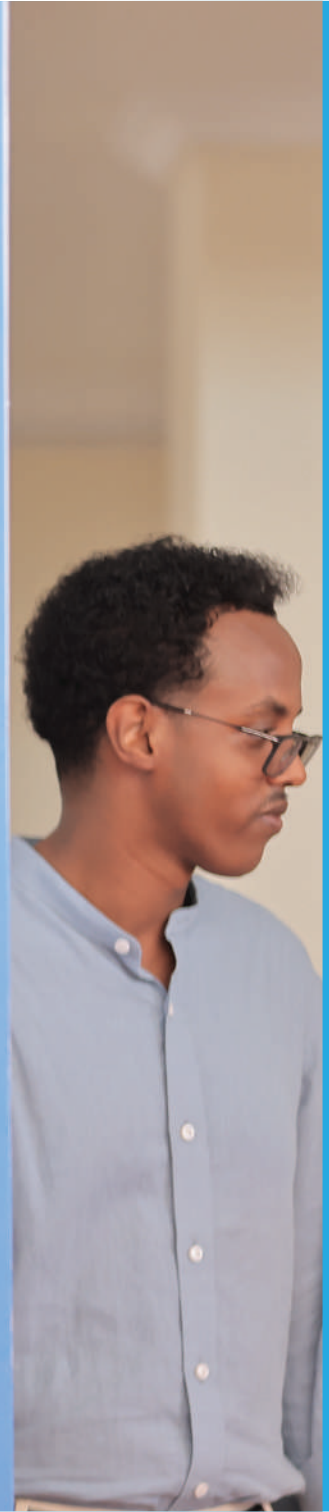


Senior officials, led by guest of honour ***Dr. Ali Haji Adam*** and SOS Children's Villages Somalia's national director ***Abdikadir Dakane***, pose for a group photo at the Somali National Theatre on ***17 December 2025***




SOS Children's Villages in Somalia





SOS Children's Villages staff pose for a photo during the celebration at the Somali National Theatre on **17 December 2025**

Thank you to our

Partners and Donors



Celebrating Our 40th Anniversary



Scan to Read Our 40-Year Journey

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