ANNUAL REPORT
2013

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SECTION ONE

ANNUAL REPORT
1.1 SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES OF SOS CHILDREN’S VILLAGE IN ANGOLA IN 2012

1.1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN THE COUNTRY

Over the past decade, Angola has undergone significant general changes, including in some social indicators for children. These changes have been supported by the strong economic growth and the development of child-friendly legal frameworks. As of 2013, the country continues to present alarming poverty levels, with growing inequality becoming a major concern. According to United Nations Development Program Human Development Index (UNDP, 2013), Angola ranked 148 out of 186 countries. Although the number of people in extreme poverty has fallen, from 68 percent in 2008 to 36% in 2013, poverty persists; we take note of the various efforts of the government to reduce poverty, including a massive increase in the budget on social security of 30% in 2013 (AFDB, OECD, UNDP and UNECA, 2012). While this is seen as positive, the very high rates of poverty and extreme poverty in the country remain a concern. Women and children, much more receptive to the consequences of poverty, suffer every day from the related problems. This high incidence of poverty manifests in poor access to health, education, land, nutrition, adequate housing, water and sanitation. Preventable and manageable diseases also continue to claim thousands of lives of both children and adults every year.

In terms of child’s rights realisation, Angola is making progress towards a consolidated and comprehensive Children’s Act. From the point of view of the legislation nature, various important instruments have been created, with stress to the “11 Commitment on Child” (2008) and recently the Law 25/12, of August 22, 2013 – Child Full Protection and Development. In fact, the latter corresponds to a new stage, more operative and of multispectral character that will permit the creation, implementation or reinforcement of mechanisms leading to the full realization of the child rights, as believed. Preliminary studies however suggest that the situation continues to be worrying, with the involvement of children in labour in construction, agriculture and cattle breeding, shoe-cleaning, car-washing or engaged in other informal labour, but some resorted to petty crime, begging, and prostitution. The main causes of child labour are believed to be associated with such factors as families' vulnerability and others of socio-cultural nature. The INAC, a government department for children’s affairs, is responsible for child protection, but it lacked the technical capacity to work without the assistance of international NGOs and donors.
1.1.2 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION’S RESPONSE TO THE CONDITIONS IN THE COUNTRY

Family Based Care

22 new children were added to the national family based care service, totaling 408 children, including 42 youths within the youth facility, assisted through 38 SOS families in 2013. Poverty, abuse and neglect are cited as the most commonly identified factors that contributed to parental care loss among the admitted children.

As part of the child’s rights situation analysis organised in 2013, a close look at child admissions into the programme, as illustrated below (see figure 1), indicates that the majority of children within our family based care lost their parents during the war. This is followed by maternal death during childbirth. HIV/AIDS is only just beginning to emerge as a cause of parental loss. What was also common in almost all the admitted children was the fact that the extended family, where available, was not willing to take in the orphans, primarily due to poverty, which resulted in children having nowhere to go.

Figure 1: main causes of parental loss within the SOS Family Based Care

In a country lacking adequate social protection for vulnerable children and their families, SOS families have once again proven to be the appropriate response to assist with the healing process of the children suffering from their loss of family and home. Having realized the enormous impact our services have in the well-being and development of our programme children, a regionally recognized 3-year childcare training programme was initiated this year in the Association. This specialist training carries a professional qualification and is set to develop our mother’s childcare skills further.
Ensuring that youth exit the programme with the skills they require to become independent adults continue to be one of the biggest challenges in the Association. Lack of youth cooperation, insufficient skills among core care coworkers and limited youth development opportunities in the country are cited as the main impediments for the youth to smoothly age out the programme before they turn 23. Nevertheless, the youth independent living programme impacted positively in 11 programme youths who successfully exited the programme in 2013. Adequate academic support coupled with the acquisition of relevant job skills and achieving a permanent connection to a stable adult outside the programme ensured the youth transition into society.

Child family reunification is a challenging initiative started in 2013. SOS Angola started proactively assessing circumstances among all our children to determine where family reunification would best serve the interest of the child. An analysis of each individual child’s needs along with socio economic profile of their family was conducted resulting in 17 children being considered to return to their biological family. Counselling of parents and children were part of a gradual reunification process that led to the successful return of the first 3 children to their families of origin.

**Family Strengthening (FS)**

1076 children beneficiaries were serviced through various family strengthening interventions nationally. The number includes a 51% growth in the Huambo programme where the funding commitment from our international partners enabled more children to be reached. In terms of vulnerable families within the programme, Figure 2 indicates single parents living in extreme poverty as the largest number of families. Fostering of vulnerable children by non-relatives is still very minimal in the current target communities, given the fact that no foster grants are available through the country’s welfare system. The data also shows a worrying trend of a growing number of child headed households as well as children living with grandparents who do not receive any form of government support.

![Figure 2: types of families within the family strengthening intervention](image)

Interactions with the community for the identification of children at risk for admission continue to unveil difficulties many vulnerable families often experience that reduce their capacity to function effectively. Reports refer to many families under tremendous financial pressures with the child’s survival and development needs not being met. Poverty, single parenting, unemployment, relationship problems and alcohol use are cited as the main factors leading to vulnerability.
Progress was made in moving programme families out of food aid handouts to get them develop a stable source of income. Our family strengthening in programme locations promoted access to livelihood-support opportunities that included: (i) support collective agriculture activities in the SOS Children’s Village existing agriculture land (ii) intensify non-formal SOS microfinance support initiative that offer loans free of any interest; (iii) use of formal and informal vocational and technical education for job related skills acquisition. Among these, the agriculture initiative stood out prominently. SOS Angola has built a strong partnership with farming families within the programme to fight against hunger and poverty. Community food gardens located within the SOS children’s villages plot were established in all programme locations with 68 family members benefitting from this agricultural initiative to enhance food security (35 in Lubango, 25 in Huambo and 8 in Benguela). Women represent 99% of participants and remain the key to improved household food production and security in their family.

On the other hand, series of workshops were organized in each programme location to offer families technical assistance to enhance business and entrepreneurial skills, as well as access to the programme interest-free loans. The later, together with agriculture initiative, enabled 82 family beneficiaries (46 in Lubango, 25 in Benguela and 11 in Huambo) to successfully leave the programme under our locally developed exiting criteria for self-reliance.

The monitoring of development plans as designed for individual families posed and enormous difficulty to the coordination team locally. Family strengthening services are continuously run by SOS and moving it to a more community driven is becoming particularly challenging in a highly dependent society lacking voluntarism spirit and commitment. Our assessment on the currently engaged community based organizations (CBO) place them in a merely figurative role struggling to even facilitate service delivery to families. Their ability to respond is generally limited by difficult local conditions as they lack the necessary commitment and skills to support their own community. Lack of a volunteerism culture is more than evident across all programmes in the Association as the formed CBOs cannot count on volunteers for support.

**Advocacy work**

Considering the lack of know-how on advocacy and the risks associated with this initiative in a country lacking freedom of expression, our advocacy component is not currently seeking to promoting policies but rather engage in low-key activities that influence resource allocation decisions within social systems that recognize the rights of our children. A Child’s Rights Situation Analysis conducted in 2013 revealed many rights violations against vulnerable children and those who have already lost parental care. The analysis of the findings looked at the situation of children regarding their right to protection and the four foundation principles in the CRC. It emerged that most rights violations identified by the participants were connected to children’s right to protection and the right to survival and development. Considering its impact and the potential for prevention, together with the above mentioned internal capacity and the current political challenges in the environment, our Association included the best interest of the child (art. 3), the right to education (art.28), health (art.24), and nationality (art.7) as our advocacy focus areas.

The table below presents an overview of child rights violation in the target group and the main achievements with our advocacy activities:
Focus areas | Main child rights violation | Risks & problems children are facing | Advocacy achievements
---|---|---|---
**Best Interest of the child (art. 3)** | The deinstitutionalization of children in residential care through family reunification or placement in foster families was criticised by some CSOs for not being in the best interest of children. | Children become permanently separated from their families and are subject to all sorts of neglect and abuse. | • The SOS Children Village is considered as the best childcare alternative. The departments of social welfare constantly refer children in need to our programme. • After positive references from UNICEF, a MoU is being analysed for SOS to assist the welfare department in alternative childcare initiatives.

**Health and health services (art. 24)** | Access to health care by children is very limited, especially those living in rural communities. | Children mortality is higher among the orphan and vulnerable children. They suffer from chronic malnutrition and are vulnerable to all sorts of diseases. | • A sustainable partnership was formed with the health department that lead to substantial support in nurses, medical items and equipment to our health intervention.

**Registration, name, nationality (Art. 7)** | Many vulnerable children have no birth registration for them to protect their right to a nationality. | Without birth certificates, evidently, it is possible that children can have difficulty accessing vital services such as health care and education in the community. | • Certificates of poverty were issued for our vulnerable families of origin to be exempted from taxes during child registrations. • Massive child registration events sponsored by the registry department were held in the Lubango and Huambo programme

**Education (art. 28)** | Very limited access to formal education and academic support. | Generally have lower rates of enrolment, attendance, and school performance. | • A sustainable partnership was formed with the education department that lead to substantial support in teachers, education material and equipment to our education intervention.

| Table 1: advocacy achievements within the SOS Children’s Villages Programme in Angola

**Education**

The national family based care attained 100% children enrolment in formal education. This was mainly influenced by the existence of an SOS run school in the proximity and for costs of the children attending other schools being covered fully or partly by SOS Kinderdorf International. The proportion of enrolled children from the Family Strengthening on the other hand, ranges from 85% in Lubango and Huambo to 100% in Benguela. There is no significant gender disparity in access to education within the programme with enrolment ratios for girls and boys at nearly equal levels.

In terms of academic achievements, our programme children enrolled in formal education achieved a national average roughly 78% pass rate, with 4 distinctions in school-leaving exams. Unfortunately, this academic achievement does not necessarily mean all our children are accessing quality education opportunities. Children in community schools run by the government still face lower quality education characterised by poor sanitation, shortage of trained teachers, large classes with mixed abilities, lack of basic school materials and teaching and learning tools, which significantly affect the quality of education.
Capacity to ineffective public schools accessed by our children continues to be part of our education programme. As an example, the Tchicassa School in Huambo benefitted from structural investments and school furniture to cater for our programme children living nearby. In addition, Tchicassa is now connected to the SOS \ Cambiote School, a fully resourced and child-friendly school in Huambo that seeks to continuously improve quality in teaching and teachers’ skills.

The SOS Children’s Villages in Angola still believes in education as crucial for development and one of the most powerful tools in breaking the cycle of poverty. Forming strong partnership with the local authorities and the private sector that share our commitment and belief helps ensuring sustainability, effectiveness and quality of educational for our programme children. Some of the most significant achievements of the public-private partnership can be seen in table 2 below with indicates the number of our programme children accessing quality and relevant education both inside and outside Angola.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of students</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Level/Course</th>
<th>Scholarship package</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>University (Civil engineering)</td>
<td>Full scholarships that include tuition, accommodations, food and travel.</td>
<td>FESA, dos Santos Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lubango</td>
<td>University (Education and Economics)</td>
<td>Full scholarships that include tuition, School material and food</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Luanda</td>
<td>Prestigious private Secondary education</td>
<td>Full scholarships that include tuition, accommodations, food and travel.</td>
<td>Individual sponsor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Benguela</td>
<td>Polytechnic (Economics and Design)</td>
<td>Annual tuition for 3 years</td>
<td>El-Oscar College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>University (International Relations)</td>
<td>Half scholarships that include tuition</td>
<td>Methodist University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Lubango</td>
<td>IT Skills and Internet access for academic support</td>
<td>Fully equipped computer lab donated to the Children’s Village in Lubango</td>
<td>Nossa Seguro, Insurance company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>University (Journalism and International Relations)</td>
<td>Full scholarship</td>
<td>SOS, temporarily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>University (Accounting)</td>
<td>Full scholarships that include tuition, accommodations, food and travel.</td>
<td>SOS, temporarily</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: education support from public-private partnership in Angola

It should also be noted that all Hermann Gmeiner SOS Primary Schools are currently being operating in close cooperation with the local government, after clear agreements were reached in terms of financial support, in-kind contribution, payment of teachers and other responsibilities that aim to continuously reduce the SOS Children’s Villages contribution to 0% by 2016.

As a not-for-profit organization, the SOS Children’s Villages in Angola continues to face a challenging environment with on-going uncertainty regarding funding and increased demands for services, in a country with a huge economic landscape but also with very low giving culture. The SOS Children’s Villages in Angola in general and the team involved in fundraising in particular also lack the ideal capacity to tap into the existing funding potential which and achieve the best possible long-term results.
To overcome difficulties with the inexistence of a specialist fundraising team exclusively dedicated in fund development and communication, fundraising subcommittees, formed by key employees and management team members, were established in all three programme locations. The teams focused exclusively in (i) raise the visibility of the organization in their programme location by extensively promoting the work of the SOS Children’s Villages in the local and national media, (ii) lobby with relevant government authorities in the education and health department for more staff to be paid by government and (ii) tap into the emerging corporate social responsibility in the country to get potential donor companies engaged as committed givers. Figure 3 shows the breakdown of fundraised income across the different subsectors, as compiled by the coordinating team at national level.

![Figure 3: proportion (in USD) of donations from three major FR market segments](image)

As part of the planned National Association development, the SOS Children’s Villages in Angola reached the number of 292 employed people, as at 31 December 2013. The employee growth poses an enormous challenges and opportunities to effective human resources management, as described under the headings below.

**Apprentice and internships programmes, Staff Training and development**

The SOS Medical Centre in Benguela and all SOS Kindergartens became open to apprentice and internships. 23 health students and 3 young kindergarten volunteers gained useful insights into our education and health interventions. Participants were given the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge in practice, thus gaining professional experience by getting them involved in the actual work that is carried out in our facilities. The young volunteers in the Kindergarten worked for 6 months with our experienced staff to learn relevant skills needed to get a job in the future.
The SOS Children’s Villages in Angola invested in series of training programmes for its junior and senior employees both in Angola and regionally. Employees benefitted from in-house training in form of specific departmental workshops in crucial programming areas, as part of the wide organizational change management, and on a wide range of skills needed in specific fields such as fund development, donor service and human resource management.

The Associations continues to support the growth and development of its key employees. In 2013, three staff members received challenging tasks and as additional work, including assign leadership roles in particular projects to enable them acquire crucial skills. Under the same initiative, two new employees were invited to participate in the strategic and annual planning sessions aiming to support our succession planning and also identify potential future leaders.

**Terminations and retention strategies**

Following are key reasons for employee departures in 2013 in percent

![Figure 5: Number of staff departures in 2013](image)

The recognition of our co-workers as the main assets and organisation’s source of development always compelled us into ensuring adequate working conditions and an environment that provides opportunities for personal and professional growth and development. Amid positive macro-economic indicators in Angola and the consequent rising of salaries in the public sector, competitiveness remained a key concern with recruiting and retaining qualified staff in managerial position being hampered by our inability to offer a competitive compensation package. As part of the capacity support from our Promoting and Supporting Associations, SOS Norway committed to a USD 150,000 annual surplus as a support to a first-phase salary increase in the National Association.
TIME SCHEDULE OF MAJOR EVENTS FOR 2014

JANUARY

FEBRUARY  National Coordinators’ meeting
             Beginning of new school year

MARCH  Performance appraisal of National Coordinators and Village Directors
       National Director Visit to Benguela and Huambo
       National Director’s self-appraisal and draft work plan to the RD
       National Director Visit to Benguela and Huambo

APRIL  Easter village celebrations
       2013 Audit Process
       Submission of N C’s and VD’s quarterly reports to the National Director
       1st Strategic Planning Review
       Orientation support in Angola for the newly recruited Mozambican ND
       National Coordinators’ meeting

MAY  Regional Director Visit to SOS Angola
     National Fundraising Workshop

JUNE  National Association Planning Process
       2nd Quarterly Report deadline

JULY  National management team meeting
       Management and Leadership Development programme
       National Coordinators’ meeting

SEPTEMBER  3rd Quarterly Report deadline
           Submission of N C’s and VD’s quarterly reports to the National Director
           NA Plans and Budgets to Regional Office

OCTOBER  National Director Visit to Benguela and Huambo
          Child &Youth Development Team workshop

NOVEMBER  Performance review sessions with the national leadership staff
           National Coordinators’ meeting

DECEMBER  End of year statistics to RO Deadline
           Submission of N C’s and VD’s quarterly reports to the National Director
           Sponsorship Facility Reports and Child Christmas Cards deadline
SECTION THREE

FACILITY REPORTS
121 children enjoyed their development within an SOS family. In 2013 the SOS Children’s Village marked eighteen years of existence in Angola. Over the past decade our committed staff has been supporting child development through a long-term family based care for children without parental in the country. The long serving and dedicated staff members in Lubango always strung together in individual moments of happiness and sadness. Challenges, frustrations, fun and triumphs created a strong village spirit and made it what it is today: a loving home for children in need. Countless blessings were received along the years but perhaps programme challenges and success can be better understood from the story of Camgombe, a 22 years old young man who grow and developed in the SOS Children’s Village. Camgombe’s story is particularly relevant because it highlights and brings together import aspects of the SOS children’s Village programme such as (i) the long lasting bonds that are created between our children with their SOS caregivers, (ii) persistence and hope in the midst of disappointments and frustrations  and the (iii) youth independence as the ultimate programme goal.

Camgombe had very difficult and painful histories with his first parents. Eventually they passed away living him at the care of his old grandmother who sought refuge from war in Lubango. His grandmother passed away when he was only 6 years of age living him dependent on temporary support from the nuns in the congregation attended by his grandmother. The parental loss experience was very traumatic for the little boy who in the beginning had difficulties to adapt to his new family environment in the SOS Children Village. Time, effort, patience, and love from the side of the SOS mother, made it possible to treat and repair the attachment difficulties. Despite all that he had endured, Camgombe was identified as an academically gifted child when he completed grade 4, and was consequently placed in special development programme for future international studies. Unfortunately, Camgombe started displaying behavioural concerns when he reached adolescence which made him to be in conflict with the law for several times. Psychological expertise assistant was sought, including spiritual counselling from leaders in the church he attend. He also had the full support from his SOS mother even after she moved out of SOS Children’s Village due to family reasons. Camgombe became completely rehabilitated and was invited by his SOS mother to live with her in the community. Both the mother and her husband continued to support him and with additional help from SOS he managed to finish high school, acquire relevant job related skills and start university. Cambombe managed to find employment in a prominent local supermarket and was granted a small piece of land in his SOS mother yard to build a small flat where he is now happily living with his wife and a child. He currently leads the youth department in his church and frequently comes to the SOS Village to conduct counselling sessions with the youth facing behavioural problems.

SOS YOUTH FACILITIES, LUBANGO

Despite the 11 years of experience in supporting programme youth development, the semi-independent living programme for SOS youth in transition to an adult and independent living in Lubango continues to be challenging for the programme staff. 46 youth were serviced in 2013, 43% of whom already living in temporary rented properties outside the Village (including 8 international students). The programme reports 100% of our youth involved in self-development activities with predominance for formal education enrolment. An assessment conducted by the Child and Youth Development team realized that (i) it is not being always possible to harmonize the individual youth’s needs with their strengths, preferences and interests, during the youth development planning. It has been also found that (ii) youth that turn 23 each year while still in care, have relatively acquired few job related skills and have limited access to integration supportive services. Therefore, in the beginning of the year a corrective measure was decided obliging aging out youths to prioritize short-term vocational training, followed by employment integration and independent living, with continuing adult education coming in a subsequent stage. As a result of the initiative, 4 youth completed a vocational training programme in the areas of civil construction and are among the 11 youth successfully reintegrated as independent adults in 2013.
Among the integrated group, we particularly emphasise achievements with Mariana Cafivela, our 24 years old youth lady who has been exemplary in all aspects of her life while in the programme. She was always very cooperative and highly committed to her personal growth. With programme support she managed to conclude her university degree on education and was admitted as teacher in the public sector after completing an intern programme in the SOS Herman Gmeiner Primary School. In November 22nd, 2013 the SOS Children’s Village in Lubango was once again delighted and overwhelmed to witness her wedding ceremony in the magnificent venue of the Lubango Cathedral.

**SOS KINDERGARTEN, LUBANGO**

135 children were serviced during the year with 35 newcomers. The stressful children’s first days in kindergarten unveiled the level of strong emotional dependence and the lack of a transitioning programme to kindergarten for children that particularly come from deprived background. Many of the children have never spent significant time away from home and from their community and cry a lot during the first days in the kindergarten. In 2013, teachers proved to be effective in their socializing approach. They implemented activities consisting of peer interaction, making friends as well as requesting parents to hang around for a few minutes before a quick goo-bye. In all cases collaboration between teachers and parents helped to solve the separation anxiety and reduced tension. As a result, all children become perfectly adapted after the first two weeks in the kindergarten.

On the other hand, the Kindergarten is striving to provide a good academic foundation for learning by developing its staff. Teacher training focussed in gaining the relevant skills needed to help children succeed. Teacher participated in a literacy-based program training designed to help children from low-income families. The training equipped teachers with skills to support children in acquiring early literacy skills without being too formal and too academic. As part of the programme, investments were also made to provide a literacy-rich learning environment and children were engaged in interactive reading activities.

**SOS HERMANN GMEINER PRIMARY SCHOOL, LUBANGO**

The sixteenth school anniversary in 2013 is marked with positive achievements in adequately preparing children with the capabilities they need to participate actively in their society. Students, who have enrolled school when operations started, gained a strong foundation for lifelong learning and many have now become very successful in completing their tertiary education and secure prominent jobs. The School reputation is very well known in the community to the extent that many parents continue to face adverse road conditions and distance to everyday drive their children to school. The school is regarded as a semi-private institution, with 47% government participation towards the school running costs, mainly on teachers’ salary contribution. There is however recent education quality concerns over the partnership with the government. The school is reported to be losing some control over quality of its recruited teachers. Under the current practice, young graduate teachers are automatically transferred by the education department to the school when a vacancy is communicated. In many cases, admission refusals from the school management always result in tension with the education department. To mitigate this, an in-service coaching and training programme was implemented to increase teaching quality among unexperienced teachers. In addition, an effective and convincing performance management system is in place to professionally address performance issues among teachers in general.
The context above did not stop the school for fulfil its mandate. 842 students were serviced in 2013, including 32 beneficiaries as fulltime students in the existing sewing and welding skills training classes. 49% of students are beneficiaries from the SOS Children’s Village programme which include 247 students from the surrounding low-income families. The academic passing rate reached 83% this year. Results from the vocational training component in the school indicate positive job integration achievements. In particular, the school refers to a success story involving one beneficiary, Joaquim João, who acquired the necessary skills to set up a small informal business in his community, in partnership with another youth. With regard to the sewing course, a business-like component was attached to the skills training. Through this initiative all parents from the Herman Gmeiner School and the Kindergarten are now purchasing their school uniform directly from the school sewing programme. The idea is for the course to attain self-sufficiency by 2014 and start exploring ways in which it can be transformed into a cooperative run by caregivers from the SOS family strengthening intervention.

**SOS CLINIC, LUBANGO**

4801 health consultations and treatment services were provided during the year. 393 of the cases were from the SOS children’s Village beneficiaries, 542 coming from the SOS family strengthening intervention and the remaining 3866 being members from the deprived surrounding community. As typical, the most common illnesses were malaria, respiratory tract infections, acute diarrhoea paediatrics, high blood pressure and dog bite.

There was a worrying measles outbreak in communities surrounding the SOS Children’s Village prompting the clinic to implement an epidemiological surveillance and disseminate specific knowledge about the disease to all SOS families and community members’ service beneficiaries for better epidemiology understanding including risk groups information. The SOS clinic staff facilitated the process for measles immunization and always informed community members about the importance of seeking early treatment. One measles case was reported among children in the SOS Children’s Village but with no serious consequences given the child immunization status and the immediate assistant received from the clinic.

The clinic enjoys good partnership with the local health authorities. It continues to work with local health departments to provide disease intervention and consultation services. As previously informed, our senior long serving SOS nurse is being supported by a part-timer government physician and a fulltime junior nurse practitioner whose salary is paid by the government. In addition, despite the chronic shortage of essential medicines and supplies, the health department provides sporadic donation of essential medicine items to the clinic therefore reducing the engagement of SOS in procurement of essential drug kits outside Angola.

**FAMILY STRENGTHENING PROGRAMME, LUBANGO**

The external economic and social condition that reduce many households’ capacity to take care of children together with our internal programme capacity to get family reach satisfactory self-sufficiency levels, are affecting both inflows and outflows of beneficiaries into the programme. In 2013 we saw an increase in the beneficiary exit with 46 families attaining satisfactory self-sufficiency levels. 497 children beneficiaries from 113 families were service during the year. Lobbying to secure children’s rights to education paid off in 2013 with 50 children attending a basic literacy programme and 17 children attending an academic acceleration programme in the SOS Herman Gmeiner primary School. The former initiative is part of an informal education programme providing basic reading, writing and numeracy skills to children that have missed the school enrolment age that consequently left them outside the official education system. The second initiative caters for children already enrolled in formal education but with a worrying academic gap. Children attending the acceleration classes attended grade 4 and 5 simultaneously and qualified to start grade 6 in the mainstream curriculum next year.
Child’s rights are better fulfilled within a family environment. Programme activities therefore aim to strengthen the family capacity to secure children’s rights. From the story below we learn how programme input in supporting families out of extreme poverty also ensure that children’s survival and development needs are adequately met.

Albina is a programme beneficiary teenager. She comes from a family of 2 brothers. Her mother was widowed when she was living in Jamba, a remote community of the Huila province. Her late husband was attacked and killed by a wild animal when he was trying to find a living for his family in the jungle. She and her 3 children had to come to Lubango town in 2002 to also seek protection from the war that was still going on in Jamba. The family was caught in the rural poverty trap with Mrs Maria Balbina working in other people’s agriculture plots as a casual worker, as a mean to survive. Albina only enrolled school when she was 10 years after the intervention of the SOS Family Strengthening Programme in securing her rights to a birth certificate and education. She has proven to be an intelligent girl as she never failed a single grade ever since she was admitted in the SOS Hermann Gmeiner Primary School. Unfortunately she has now a huge academic age gap which the programme will help to close when she enrols an acceleration programme next year. Albina continues to look positively towards her future. “I want to enrol a college of education and become a teacher one day”, she said. In the meantime, she did not hesitate to register for the Sewing training course provided in the School as part of the extra-curricular programme. “She is very motivated and learns fast” were her teacher’s remarks on her performance.

As part of her family development, her mother has chosen to work on the agriculture plot provided by the programme in the farm land within the SOS Children’s Village in Lubango. The family’s agriculture activity is still mainly for self-consumption but as Albina said “there are occasions when we sell some vegetables that enable my mother pay for my school material”. The Maria Balbina’s family is candidate for service exit in 2014. There is an agreement however that she will continue working on the allocated agriculture land with her children also being supported from a government scholarship scheme in our School. The lady is fully aware of the challenges ahead but did not forget to express a word of gratitude in her vernacular language by recognizing that “you [the organization] have done a lot to my family. I did not have a proper shelter and my children were not studying…”

**SOS CHILDREN’S VILLAGE, BENGUELA**

125 children continue to enjoy their childhood in the SOS Children’s Village. After eight years of existence it is gratifying to see the children reaching adolescence and become more responsible to their own development. All school going children are enrolled in formal education with a number of 10 children enrolled in high school. More than half of the adolescents in the Village have already experienced relevant skills training and are looking forward to expand them further into engineering careers in the future. As part of the children preparation to adulthood, an internal hands-on cookery classes was organized for adolescents to impact on their family nutrition and help with how to feed themselves away from home. Adolescents were very excited about cooking and healthy food. As reported, participants developed good eating habits and a sense of independence. In addition, they were able to practice their maths and science through cooking! Adolescence also comes with a challenge to the family. Teenagers experience bad moods and exhibit challenging behaviour. Mothers’ and co-worker’s duties in the Village have become stressful during these days. In most of the behavioural problems faced during the year, the SOS family was able to resolve the conflicts and get on with their normal family routine. In two cases however, legal assistance and correctional service was required for two adolescents who found themselves in conflict with the law. Rehabilitation process has been accomplished and the youth returned to the SOS family for support towards their fully reintegration when they reach maturity.
Over the past 3 years, the leadership turnover in the Village has been relatively high for the Village Director and Kindergarten Principal positions. This was sometimes initiated by the employee, mainly motivated by salary competitiveness in similar positions outside SOS or for performance related reasons, as initiated by the employer. Despite the apparent instability, no significant effects were registered on the quality of care although many key programme and staff development processes have been impacted.

On December 24th, all the children and their SOS mothers were gathered in the Village for a joyful Christmas celebration with the SOS friends. Upon request, about 10 corporate sponsors donated various Christmas present for the children and sponsored a big lunch for all the participants. There was a great Christmas atmosphere in the Village! Children and mothers sang Christmas carols wishing all friends abundant blessings. It was tremendous to see the wonder on children’s faces when receiving their Christmas presents. All sponsors and friends stayed long in the Village during the day and spent every moment enjoying laughing and playing with the children.

**SOS KINDERGARTEN, BENGUELA**

During the year 2013 the Kindergarten rendered services to 19 programme children beneficiaries (9 coming from the family strengthening programme) out of a total population of 106 children (52 boys and 54 girls). As the pre-school landscape continues to evolve, the Kindergarten is challenged to ensure that all our children, especially those from lower-income families, are able to access good quality pre-school education and have a good foundation for learning before they attend primary school.

As reported last year, the Kindergarten in Benguela was using an inappropriate and inadequate steel jungle gym that did not effectively support children’s mental and physical growth. It was also reported the intention to resort to the existing expertise in another SOS location (Huambo) which managed to build a more convenient one, using local capacity and resources. With the required support, the SOS Kindergarten in Benguela finally managed to replace the existing structure with a much more efficient wooden gym with immediate effects on the levels of physical activities among children. Teachers organized a discussion session to understand factors that influence young children's exercising bodies, brains, and imaginations and stopped the unstructured free play that used to occur for during long periods of each day in the Kindergarten. Fun activities were introduced which also helped children socializing.

**SOS HERMANN GMEINER PRIMARY SCHOOL, BENGUELA**

Statistics shows that 811 students enrolled the School in 2013 from which 171 were direct SOS programme beneficiaries. Statistics also show no significant gender disparity in the school with nearly equal number of girls and boys. In terms of consistent attendance, the drop off rate was situated below 3%. The School passing rate increased from 82.5% in 2012 to 86% in 2013. In terms quality of education, the average 40 students in the class continue to pose challenges for the intended child-centred education. The mitigating factor is the tutorial sessions offered to the so-called slow learners as an education additional support. This, together with the non-repetition policy in the foundation phase (grades 1, 3 and 5), partially explains the registered academic success among students. In addition, the School continues to motivate parents and students to be more responsible to the student’s academic success. A merit scholarship was therefore introduced as motivating factor academic achievements.

In the face of the current funding uncertainty, the School continues to nurture cultured
partnerships with the government to guarantee sustainability. Lobbies with the government led to 31 teachers, out of the existing 36, being paid by the government.

As part of the extra-curricular activities students were engagement in series of sports, arts and career orientation visits. As witnessed, student’s sense of belonging at school continues to grow. Students were also offered the opportunity to develop specific interests, social skills, and talents. The career orientation visits in the local beverage industries was particularly relevant as it tied in with the class’s chemistry and physics curriculum, where they learn about processes, machinery and the technical world around them. Students also enjoyed moving out of their normal academic routine. In terms of sports, girl’s football has become a sensation in the province. An inter-school football tournament for girls was organized by the department of education for extra-curricular activities. Girls from 10 Schools took part in the junior tournament. Girls from the Herman Gmeiner School football team played very well and received a trophy for their qualification for the semi-finals.

**MEDICAL CENTRE, BENGUELA**

The Medical Centre in Benguela continues to develop an easy access to health care services and educate patients to improve their overall well-being. The number of services provided has grown from 10,000 in 2012 to nearly 12,000 service visits in 2013.

With malaria being a major health problem in Angola and very endemic in Benguela, the Centre launched an outreach effort to help reducing maternal and child mortality in the area. Education campaigns to encourage pregnant women to visit the Centre were organized within the surrounding community, involving visit to neighbouring schools and churches. We believe more has still to be done in terms of community mobilization. However, the immediate gains from the persuasion campaign were visible from the number of 273 pregnant women aged 16 – 45, serviced with critically important malaria prevention services and prenatal care. More than 50% of the women are very young mothers and more than 20% are those who already past their prime childbearing years. In both cases, babies from these mothers’ categories have increased risk of dying before their first birthday. Therefore, apart from the normal prenatal care, women also receive family planning counselling and access to contraceptive methods for birth control. In what reducing child mortality is concerned, 1531 children suffering from various paediatric diseases were serviced at the Centre. Half of the paediatric cases were malaria related, second by acute diarrhoea and respiratory tract infections. For infant mortality prevention, the public health component in the Centre vaccinated 365 children as immunization against infectious diseases.

The SOS Medical Centre in Benguela became open to apprentice and internships. 23 health students and gained useful insights into our health interventions. Participants were given the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge in practice and therefore gaining professional experience by getting them involved in the actual work.

**FAMILY STRENGTHENING PROGRAMME, BENGUELA**

Poverty related factors are currently regarded as the main cause of parental loss and risk factor for many children to lose parental care. Malaria continues to be the killing disease in Benguela. Despite the reduction from 773,000 cases in 2008 to 76,000 in 2013, malaria continues to be meso-endemic in province. Poverty has been reducing many households capacity to take care of children.

279 beneficiaries at risk of losing parental care were supported through our family strengthening
activities. In terms of securing the child’s rights, the survival and development needs are particularly challenging due to the limited levels of family development. The almost non-existent community support and insufficient funds for welfare within our budget are also activating adversely. 41% of families (25 of the 60) are still receiving food parcel as a mean to alleviate hunger and 216 children are educationally supported through scholarships within our educational facilities and public schools. Although most of the families are engaged in some forms of self-development activities (55 out of the 60), its providence towards family needs is very limited. Agriculture activities carried out in the SOS Herman Gmeiner School plot and in the domestic food gardens are mainly for self-consumption as a complement to what the programme can provide in terms of nutritional needs. Selling of consumable items in the informal market, under the microcredit initiative, is also mainly confined to subsistence. Knowledge, expertise and human capacity among the coordination team is required for the implementation of robust and sustainable family developmental programmes. In this context, a much bigger challenge lies within the capacity of the Community Based Organization. The Family Strengthening continues to be an SOS-run programme and moving it to be a more community driven is particularly challenging in a highly dependent society lacking voluntarism spirit and commitment.

SOS CHILDREN’S VILLAGE, HUAMBO

20 new children found a permanent home within our SOS families in the Village, enabling the programme to reach its maximum predefined capacity of 120 children. A quick review of the children’s conditions show most of them losing parental care for reasons related to the death of parents (the main reason) associated by poverty, domestic violence and stigma. There is a relatively good gender balance of children in the Village at the moment (61 boys and 59 girls) which shows no particular discrimination tendencies towards boys neither any especial “protection” to the vulnerable girl child by community members. The admitted children range from 2 to 11 years old. A common feature among most of children in the Village is their subjection to social and cultural stigmatization and the often denial of access to education, social services and proper healthcare. Many of the children were also subject to various forms of abuse and neglect. The Village reported 8 cases of severe trauma that needs special attention. Children displayed problems with controlling anger and aggression impulses. They also become disengaged and have attention and connection difficulties which affect their relation with the family, their peers and influenced negatively with their academic performance. The immediate gain in helping overcoming trauma is the presence of the caring SOS mother in the child’s life. Some of the children have already built resilience and maintain hope because of adequate care and attention they get within their new SOS family. Conditions within the SOS Village are generally safe which in a way contributes to the rapid recovery. Mothers participated in an in-service training programme where they thoroughly discussed how to create a safe environment for children, besides the normal existing physical conditions. The disseminated child protection knowledge and the established protection mechanisms also ensure that neglect and abuse no longer happen in the children’s life. Mothers were trained and are continuously strive to conquer children’s trust. In addition cultural activities and recreation that has already become a norm in the Village were highly supported during the year as they also form an important part of children recovery.

In terms of meeting the child’s rights to a nationality, it has been previously reported of admitted children not being registered at birth. Reports accounted for 64 children without birth certificates in the Village. Knowing about the importance of registration as one of the most basic ways of protecting children from deprivation, and in the face of the cumbersome and inconsistent procedures for obtaining birth certificates for orphans when the legal guardian is an organization, the Huambo programme facilitated cooperation protocols between the different ministries and sectors that have a stake in birth registration. This led to their presence in the SOS Village for a massive register of all the outstanding birth registrations among children. This was regarded as a major victory in advocacy!
101 children attended school during the year with a relatively good balance between boys (54) and girls (47). Most of the children are concentrated in the foundation phase (grades 1 to 3) with the most advanced students attending grade 7, as illustrated in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Grades</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Failed Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7ª</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6ª</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5ª</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4ª</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3ª</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2ª</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1ª</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>54</strong></td>
<td><strong>47</strong></td>
<td><strong>101</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of academic achievements, the programme reports 88% passing rate among children in the Village. It should be noted that grades 0, 1, 3 and 5 are groups of automatic transition under the current education reform in Angola. Complementary academic reports indicate good progress in grasping basic literacy and numeracy among children. Achievements in this regard are attributed to the extra tutorial sessions particular children received from a specialised contract teacher in the Village.

**SOS KINDERGARTEN, HUAMBO**

The Kindergarten ended the year with 20% excess on its maximum capacity due to the growing demand for preschool quality education and the programme flexibility to accommodate more children in need. 122 fulltime preschool children were serviced. 30 children on average are currently distributed to the existing 4 playrooms where 67 boys and 57 girls are currently enjoying the benefits of a 3-year center-based setting of an early education programme. 34 children from low-income families were serviced in the kindergarten (28 from the SOS family strengthening intervention and 6 from the deprived surrounding community). The incidences of adverse developmental conditions they suffer prompted specific educational interventions from the teachers. Besides the academic skills, this particular group of children required extra support to develop their abilities to succeed socially. Role play was implemented and became an important part of their education. Children were given the opportunity to develop their imagination by getting involved in playing out observed or experienced events in real life. Fortunately, the kindergarten is equipped with spaces and scenarios that support children in exploring their real life or imaginary worlds. There is corner as home for role play which includes all the tools needed for social activities to take place. As a result, as noticed during the first six months after their enrolment, the 34 children improved significantly their social skills and their creativity. Children gained experience playing with age-mates and started feeling more confident in keeping up with the capabilities of their classmates from higher income families.

Once again the Kindergarten organized a “graduation ceremony” with group of 30 finalists who successfully completed the school readiness program. Among them there were 8 children beneficiaries from the SOS Family Strengthening initiative, 2 from the SOS Village and 2 children from the deprived surrounding community.

**THE SOS-CAMBIOTE SCHOOL, HUAMBO**

The School closed the academic year with the number of 940 students distributed along the
existing 25 classrooms from grade 0 – 9. This represents an average 37.6 students per classroom, very close to the ideal ratio of 35. Within the student’s category, 85% of students come from the most deprived community (including 100 children from the SOS Family Strengthening intervention) as illustrated in table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low-income community</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children from the SOS Village</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children from the SOS Family Strengthening</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle class community</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>483</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>940</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

39 school dropouts were reported during the academic year. Dysfunctional families, changing of residence and early pregnancy are cited as the main causes. The first is mainly concerned with families from the community where alcoholism, violence and neglect abound. The latter is particularly worrying as children continue to make wrong decisions despite the knowledge they acquired from the sexual education that is already part of the mainstream curriculum. There is however a realization that the School needs to introduce a more flexible programme to cater for pregnant girl child. A good example is perhaps what has been started in Huambo where pregnant girls are given a second chance in Tchicassa School. Also in Huambo, meetings with the parent’s committee is being used to sensitize the community to reflect on the household responsibilities placed upon girls that is opening up a gulf in literacy rates between the two sexes.

In terms of academic performance, the overall 70.5% passing rate achieved in 2013 is comparatively higher than the 65.4% rate of the previous year. There are concerns however of the overall performance in grade 9, the primary school transition grade to secondary school. Reports indicated that among the 68 enrolled students, only 45.5% successfully completed this last primary education level and proceeded to other secondary schools. Adaptation problems on the side of the young adolescents, who enrolled the class during the year coupled with the pressure they felt from subjects of much higher level of complexity, are cited as the main reasons for student’s failure.

The implemented skills training extracurricular programme continue to contribute for Cambiote to be a child friendly school. 381 students who have developed a good level of post literacy (grade 5) enrolled the computer literacy course and acquired basic principles of word processing. In addition, the course aims to enhance the development of analytical and critical thinking on learners. Most students attending the course became more familiar with the computer and are able to use keyboard to write basic texts. The basic sewing classes on the other hand, involved 140 students aged 14-18, (43% of whom were boys). The male presence in the programme marks the beginning of the impact the school is seeking to make on socio-cultural bias in favour of males that affects adversely the girl child development, who normally bears heavier domestic and subsistence duties than boys. Ironing and washing are also part of the skills developed.

**FAMILY STRENGTHENING PROGRAMME, HUAMBO**

As part of its normal growth, the program has reached the number of 300 beneficiaries as planned for 2013. The new admission focused exclusively on the most vulnerable families with children at risk of following into abandonment in which single women headed households
continue to represent a vast majority. The child admissions into the programme continue to unveil difficulties many vulnerable families often experience that reduce their capacity to function effectively. Reports refer to many families under tremendous financial pressures with the child’s survival and development needs not being met. Poverty, single parenting, unemployment, relationship problems, alcohol use are cited as the main factors leading to vulnerability.

33 families are still on a welfare support and continue to receive food parcels to enable them cater for the children’s immediate food needs. In addition, programme interventions were necessary to assist 31 families whose habitation conditions posed a risk for the children. In this regard, community mobilization was necessary for labour with programme support confined to the provision of building material.

In the absence of a functional partner that could assist with family development planning and service monitoring for children, the programme implemented a child’s needs identification strategy by involving teachers in the education facilities attended by our programme children. As a result, 171 children reported of being at alarming shoes and clothing needs, had their needs met by a prompt programme intervention.

In what family self-sufficiency is concerned, series of workshops were organized to offer families technical assistance to enhance business and entrepreneurial skills. 17 family beneficiaries benefited from interest-free loans. The later initiative, together with agriculture and the free education children receive enabled 11 family beneficiaries to successfully leave the programme under our locally developed exiting criteria for self-reliance.

In terms of academic performance, 199 children were enrolled in formal education in various educational facilities in Huambo with only 2 children attending high school, as illustrated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1ª</th>
<th>2ª</th>
<th>3ª</th>
<th>4ª</th>
<th>5ª</th>
<th>6ª</th>
<th>7ª</th>
<th>8ª</th>
<th>9ª</th>
<th>10ª</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The programme reports 68% passing rate among programme students. Poor performance was more prevalent in children attending community schools run by the government. These schools still face big education challenges characterized by poor sanitation, shortage of trained teachers, large classes with mixed abilities, lack of basic school materials and teaching and learning tools, which significantly affect the quality of education. This explains the SOS Children’s village’s involvement in capacity building for the Tchicassa School. The support is part of the SOS education outreach programme to secure formal education for children from the family strengthening programme that live nearby thus alleviating them from walking a long distance to the SOS run Cambiote School. In addition, there is growing demand for education within the surrounding community which is encouraging parents to seek the enrolment of their children in the SOS Cambiote School forcing it to operate beyond its recommended capacity levels. A partnership with the education authorities in Huambo led to meaningful interventions in terms of teachers’ salary payment, repair of the infrastructure, teacher training and donation of essential education material to the Tchicassa School.