



SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES

THE SOS NEWSLETTER

July 2023 | Vol #10



Child Safeguarding is
Everybody's Business

Shehan Rangana - The
Voice Sri Lanka Finalist

SOS Humanitarian
Assistance Program

A Message of Love

Child Led Advocacy



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Message from National Director

We are happy to keep you informed that throughout the year, all our village operations have been under control while successfully carrying out our ancillary projects has been greatly praised, and been appreciated much by many. Especially for the continued efforts we take to improve the life conditions of communities' all around us.

In light of the recent economic crisis that grappled all Sri Lankans alike, in October 2022 we commenced the Humanitarian Assistance Program (HAP), initially piloting the project with the surrounding villages where our operations are already in place. Currently, we have completed the 3rd quarter of the project, by the end of which, we have successfully piloted HAP in all 22 districts of Sri Lanka.

In the middle pages of this Newsletter you can read more in detail about the HAP. We work closely with all the Divisional Secretariats, along with the support of NGOs and partner organizations such as Sri Lanka College of Paediatricians, Lanka Prison Fellowship, Indira Cancer Trust to name a few, so as to identify the most deserving low-income families.

In these difficult times we have also decided to support our care leavers. Post-covid and the economic crisis that followed, many have lost their jobs. As such, we are doing the most we can, to give them a helping hand by way of reskilling them, while continuing to provide through HAP.

I'd really like to take this opportunity to thank you, with

I'm happy to give this testimonial on behalf of SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka, as a long-standing donor. I have first-handly seen the care and experiences children have received in these villages and homes.

I came across SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka as a result my aspirations to give back to the community and the next generation of Sri Lankans. Subsequently I contacted the team behind SOS and learnt in detail about the work they do. One of the things that I was most curious about was understanding how they ran systems in HQ in relation to finances plus the adhered benefits for the children and more importantly the transparency in handling funds received. Being a banker, I was happy with the assurance I got through their records. SOS indeed had it in their DNA to be transparent with their donations, through regular updates via email and consistent communication prior to my donations about where funds are sent and how it is spent on children.

One thing you will certainly notice at SOS is that children here, who are otherwise known as abandoned, get a

emphasis on these difficult times. On one hand, I want to thank you for rallying around us, and being our biggest supporters. On the other hand for being our generous and committed donors. Not only monetary donations, but each of you who donate through different ways, and each of you, who are making a difference.

For we understand that just as much as we do this, with no expectation in return, so do you. And for all that you do, and continue to do, thank you. As you may be already aware, we'll always be committed to be transparent with the donations we receive from you, and the mediums through which we disperse the same.

Thank you once again for being with us through another successful year of serving the children and advocating for the welfare, rights and their safety. We look forward to continue our work, with love, and indeed with the support we are certain you'll extend towards the cause that is - children.

In a society where a child wins, we are all collective winners. It's this driving ethos, which fuels our need to do what we do. This newsletter is for you to keep you up to date on our events and how your donations have touched lives throughout the year.

Divakar Ratnadurai
National Director
SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka



second chance at a fulfilling and happy life. The SOS team have truly created a safe space for children to not only live, but also to thrive within their unique skill set.

I truly believe it to be our collective responsibility to support all of humankind, with emphasis on children, in any way we can. Let's set an example for the younger generations, investing in these underprivileged children as if they were your own. Who better to support than the upcoming generation of Sri Lanka, who are the future of our country, and our only real asset.

Ganesh Mylvaganam
Former Cricketer, Banker, Sri Lankan



Donor Appreciation

A loving home for every child

Child Safeguarding is Everybody's Business

We at SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka don't expect Child Safeguarding to be just a pretty phrase – instead, a way of life that all adults should follow, even if for nothing else, to be morally upright, as we each should aspire to be. We take extra precautionary methods to mitigate the risks of child abuse and all co-workers are constantly given training and are reminded in different mediums, of the Organization's child safeguarding policies, as well as international regulations that are in place for the same. We understand that we need to be vigilant at all times. Efforts are also in place, to eliminate any external influence, as it's only evident by now, that adequate measures need to be taken to safeguard children at all levels, from home units, communities, organizations, to national levels, as, for some reason, the perpetrators who prey on our little flowers like children are on the rise, and it's our duty to keep them away.

So, should you as parents, caretakers or guardians of children in your vicinity, be vigilant yourself? The answer would be an undeniable yes. You should be equipped with knowledge and authority to take strong action against perpetrators of child abuse. And in this regard, learning that there are well established reporting mechanisms could help. At SOS Children's Villages, to be on top of the issue, we even have introduced a declaration form that needs to be signed by each visitor who comes to the villages. A rule that is never taken for granted. Which some of you may even have experienced as a donor who has visited our villages. This is also a definite discussion that the BOD of the organization never misses to have, at all board meetings.

In numbers, in Sri Lanka, did you know that 33% of pending court cases - are against child abuse? In a country where children are considered a minority with only 23.1% according to 2021 statistics.

We are sad to report that we're living in a society where a 10-year-old girl is no longer safe to go out by herself to the closest grocery shop to her house, with a mere Hundred rupees in her hand, not being certain of her safe return. Worse yet, she even gets attacked by a 64-year-old man, and not even left alone after the money is taken off her – rather put a knife to her throat and left to even die. And this is one of the least graphical news you may have heard recently regarding child abuse cases in Sri Lanka.

If these are not real numbers that should scare us already about the kind of society we actually live in, we don't know what will. We have now started slowly becoming a nation that reads these daily on the newspapers and see on media, and choose not to do anything about it. Perhaps because we only read, and not feel - that every child, is just like our own. And that our shared responsibility to take care of them and raise them the right way while through it all prioritizing their safety.

At SOS Children's Villages with all our efforts with everything we do and in the result areas we have set ourselves to achieve, child safeguarding is what is right

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at the core of our mission.

Our advocacy efforts and our mission is to progressively make a better living condition for children by way of empowering them include, but are not limited to:

- Importance of education in child safeguarding - SOS's role in playing a crucial role in children's educational development and providing them with the necessary knowledge and tools to think independently and empower themselves at critical times.
- Involving children in participatory decision making in issues related to them - As a right of the child.
- Respecting and providing children, the freedom and opportunity to practice any faith they wish to - and the minimal role an adult should play in trying to change or influence their belief system.

To put a stop to all things violence and abuse first starts with accepting that we have a problem, not being in denial. So that finding a solution is all that is left to do. Living in denial until we are personally affected may not be the best way forward with the numbers reported about child abuse cases. Everyday. We need to take action. We need to act now.

We believe the first step, is to create dialogues and conversation, around this. To make it such a commonplace discussion, that the perpetrators, and any such human with values so low - feels scared and threatened. Thereby take the first steps of eradicating what has now become nothing short of social menace – that only put us behind many human civilizations and makes us a regressive society, especially at a time progressiveness is so widely spoken about. Words we use here may be harsh, but having to tune into the news to hear about child report cases are even worse, don't you think?

On this topic, we even have curated a series of videos, do scan the QR code below and take a look at the video, share it as much as possible, and help us reach every nook and corner of our society. We will continue to bring you content across all three local languages, and ensure questions you ask yourself most, are answered. Engage with us, and let's take the first step, of creating a dialogue, against child abuse.

Join the conversation, #ThinkAMinuteWithSOS



Kirthi K. Hettiarachchi
Deputy National Director
Child Safeguarding National Focal Point
SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka

“
Protect children today for them to have a better future. Child Safeguarding is everybody's business.”



1st Child of **Shehan Rangana** SOS Children's Village Anuradhapura

*Bell Rings. Pin drop silence. Curtains open.
Goosebumps.*

Of the plethora of candidates who had applied, of the many who were selected for blind auditions, of the few who went in to the battle rounds – he emerged as one of the 5 finalists of what has come to be known as the most anticipated and the best global franchise of any singing reality show - The Voice Sri Lanka 2023.

From being applauded for his musical journey, to being commended on the hard notes he hits, and being said that he's proof that we have musicians that meet international standards - he was a fan favourite, no less, was he, a favourite to all music lovers alike.

The name is Shehan Rangana Dasanayake. He is the first child SOS Children's Village Anuradhapura had. As well, as the first child SOS Mother Nayana Nandani had. Shehan was one month old when he came to SOS Children's Village Anuradhapura. Henceforth SOS Children's Village Anuradhapura became Shehan's home.

Since childhood, Shehan has been winning hearts by singing songs. When Shehan was only 7 years old, he sang a song at Sinhala Literally Association without no nervousness. This marked the very first time Shehan performed on stage.

In the year, 2007 Shehan won first place for vocal and participated in the All Island Music and Drama competition. The same year Shehan won all Island first place for playing the Violin. He also participated in many Music programs such as "Shanidha Ayubowan" "Gee Mini Muthu" "Sooriya Naayoo" 'Erabadu Mal" telecasted on Jaathika Rupawahini, in addition to many more shows that aired on Radio too.

Shehan faced Bhatkande Examination on playing the Violin and got First class honor for it. In 2010 Shehan got admission to Belwood Aesthetic Residence Kandy for his higher education in performing arts.

Giving meaning to his life in a whole different dimension Shehan's life irrevocably changed to the better - when he got admission for higher studies at the coveted University of Lucknow, India. In 2017, he won all island 1st place Vocal at Youth Awards, National Youth Service Council.

He got First class honors for the Bachelor of Arts in Music.

- 1. Lalitha Kalawedi Diploma - Bellwood Aesthetic Center, Kandy (2010 - 2013)**
- 2. BPA Degree - Bhatkande Music Deemed University - Lucknow, India**
- 3. MA Degree - Indira Kala Sangeeth Vishwavidyalaya - India (2017 - 2019)**
- 4. Visharad (Mastery) Exam - Bathkande, Lucknow, India**
- 5. Sangeeth Nipun Exam - Bathkande, Lucknow, India**
- 6. London Grade 5 Exam - Trinity College London**
- 7. Sangeetha Praramba Madhyama (Intermediate Level) and Awasana (Final Level) Exam**

“With the kind of circumstances children without parental care experience, it's often times easy - for them to go astray - especially with no guidance and much mental health negativity. Shehan has this to say - when asked about the success he has achieved.

Having a purpose is the key to enabling anyone in the world to do anything they aspire to do. It gives anyone the power to work harder, strive further, and have meaning in whatever they do, and having purpose is the sole meaning behind living life, whether it is living for someone, something, or even ourselves. One of the main purposes of life is to live for the people who helped shape us into the person that we're today.”

Shehan found music, and through music, it's safe to say, he found life, and certainly stands today – as a person who found success in life, through sheer hard work and commitment to his craft. An inspiration to many children, and all adults, too.

Today, a successful singer, showmen, performer, and a musician - Shehan continues his musical journey from where he started; comforting himself - to only have now opened up to comfort his fans too. To make them forget their worries for the few minutes his listeners chooses to listen to him. Leaving them, you, and I, with a piece of musical melody, that one can only imagine that, that may be what - the hymns of paradise may sound like.

Check out more about his musical journey.
Scan the QR code.



GCE Ordinary Level

	2019	2020	2021
Candidates	169	185	207
Pass	115	123	148
SFC & FSC	68.05%	66.49%	71.5%
English Pass	44.97%	57.61%	71.5%

Undergraduates in Universities

Year	Count
1st Year	6
2nd Year	1
3rd Year	1
4th Year	2

GCE Advanced Level

	2019	2020	2021
Candidates	78	88	78
Pass	57	69	59
Percentage %	73%	78%	76%

Aquinas English Diploma Course

Level	Completed	Pending
Level 3	10	-
Level 4	09	01
Level 5 - Diploma	01*	04

*Kannadasan Nirosha



CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENT

Winners of International Round SuRaLa IDMC 2022

Category	Place
100 Box Calculation Senior Category	1 st
Math Test -Category 1	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd & 4 th
Math Test -Category 2	1 st , 2 nd & 5 th
Math Test -Category 4	1 st

'Outstanding Student'

Outstanding Student	Location
Vishmi Bhagya	Piliyandala
G. Kaushalya	Nuwara Eliya
Nimali Hatharasinghe	Galle
Sandaraj Vijayakumara	Anuradhapura
Nuleka Lakmini	Monaragala
M. Ajantha	Jaffna



Team SOS at The National Independence Cup
Taekwondo Championship 2023
Girls from SOS Children's Village Anuradhapura

Sparring events

- P.Dilhara Prasadini – National Gold medal, weight class under 51 Kg, Category - Cadet.
- B.M.K.D.D Jayakodi – National Gold medal, weight class under 41 Kg, Category - Junior.
- H.A. A Maduwanthi – National Bronze medal, weight class under 44 Kg, Category - Senior.

Team event

- P.Dilhara Prasadini - 3rd place
- Chandima Madhubhashini Fernando - 3rd place
- T.K Sithara Madhusa - 3rd place

SOS Children's Villages HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (HAP) to provide relief to food insecure households across Sri Lanka

With the current economic crisis in Sri Lanka, many reports have confirmed that children of Sri Lanka are facing malnutrition, educational discontinuance, and other issues due to food insecurity.

As a result, children are being separated from their family.

Having understood the ground situation as a child welfare organization working for children's rights, SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka (SOSCV SL) has initiated their own Humanitarian Assistance Program to focus on providing the basic needs of the individual child - food, education, health, and protection.

As part of the Humanitarian Assistance Program, SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka works closely with the Divisional Secretariats, having covered all 22 districts across

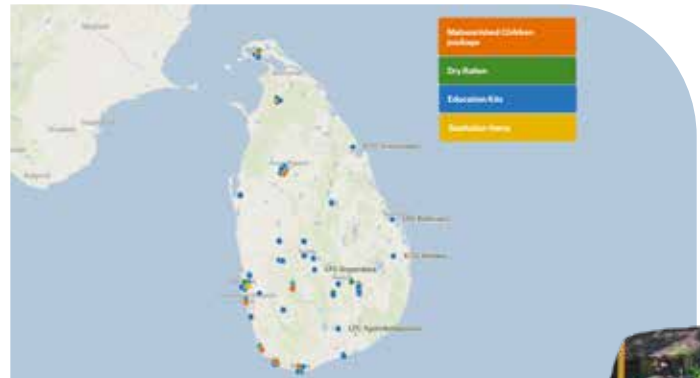
Sri Lanka, along with the support of NGOs and partner organizations to identify low-income families with children in critical need and offer assistance as required.

Additionally, SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka has decided to direct all international donations towards the Humanitarian Assistance Program, which will benefit over 20,000 children and 5,000 families across the country.

Below are some of the projects that SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka has kickstarted in efforts to reduce the increasing number of food insecure households and to help stop children from dropping out of school:

- Providing dry ration packs to identified malnourished children under the age of 5 through an initiative by the Sri Lanka College of Pediatricians under 'Feed a Child' programme and the Family Health Bureau

- A partnership with Lanka Prison Fellowship has enabled SOSCV SL to provide educational items needed for an entire school year for 1500 children of long-term prisoners located island wide



TOTAL
BENEFICIARIES

5,000
Families
20,000
Children

PROGRAM
UPDATE UPTO 3rd
QUARTER

Dry Rations
16,940
Educational Kits
8,001

- Distribution of educational kits to 135 children whose parents are kidney patients identified by Samastha Lanka Kidney Patient's Association

- Indira Cancer Trust's 'Sponsor A Child' program was donated 319 educational kits to help children continue their education

- Since the commencement of the project period, we have extended our efforts by signing MOUs with 13 more institutions.

Furthermore, SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka plans providing training to primary care takers of families to help them acquire recognized vocational skills to seek employment or become self-employed to better provide for their family and mitigate the food security crisis in Sri Lanka.

A helpless mother and a father walk in through the gates of SOS Children's Villages, with nothing but hope, inquires us, if the application process for the Humanitarian Relief Assistance has closed. An always welcoming heads and coordinators of the dedicated Humanitarian Assistance Program, talks to them kindly, and understand their requirement. Even if the application process for the current lot has ended, they strive to do their best to include them to provide them relief assistance in the same lot.

Even if not for this time, they are assured that they will be included in the next lot. The hardships they face, in everyday life, may fail to put a smile on their faces, even with the best of news. The only reassurance we have - is the long sigh followed with the look of relief in their faces.

To assure them, in these difficult times, that they are not alone, and that we, a nongovernmental entity, located in their neighbourhoods, providing the much needed care for the children, are going to do everything in our control to have ensured that the living conditions of our beloved parents and countrymen are improved, and that they see progress on a daily basis. As they so truly deserve.



HAP Gallery





A story carved in stone A Message of Love ❤️



Hema Abeykoon

Age : 77

Children : 25

Family Members : 100+



I had lost the love, affection and care of Papa, when I had turned just 20 years old. I had 4 sisters. I took on the responsibility of getting them married and seeing through to it that they're settled down in life. By the time I was done with getting them settled down, I strongly felt like my time had gone. This is when I came across an advert on the paper, which eventually lead me to choose a way of life - that would forever change my life.

My older brother at home didn't like that I was considering coming here. But with all that I was told in the interview about the service we'll be doing for the greater good of society, I strongly felt I had a calling here. I was taking care of children of my sisters at home. When I was told that I could do the same here too, I thought it would be a worthy cause.

I came in December of 1983. And I was given the 16th house. I was trained in Nuwara Eliya. Initial training was done for 6 months. As with all Mother trainings, we are trained around the entire village premise. Mostly in homes. Also, in the kitchen and preschool. On completion of my training I was asked if I wanted to become a mother or an aunty - then I told I want to become a mother. The difference being, a mother is designated a house and allocated children, while an aunty helps around the house and assists the mother

In August 1984, after the house warming ceremony, I was ceremonially given a home with 3 children at first. Soon I was given 2 more children. The youngest was only 6 months. I also got 2 older daughters of age 7 and 8. Before I had completed one year - I was given 10 children. Of course, being a mom is no easy job - even for one child, let alone few many. Ever since the children were little, they've had many illnesses, to name one, the youngest had the wheeze for 7 years. But taking care of them, was what I did passionately. I did all that with love.

By the time I retired at the age of 57 in December 2002, I've had 25 children. All my children come to see me every now and then. Quite frequently. In return, I'm still the only one who's there to inquire after them and ensure of their wellbeing. I was here for 40 years. The entire time I was happy about being here.

To reminisce some of the older times I've had with my children, each year for every holiday I take all my children, go to Badulla, my hometown. It's a time of celebration for everyone back in Badiulla those days. All of my children come together to spend time with my biological relatives and spend all day playing with my nieces and

nephews. I feel overjoyed when my relatives love my children like their own. Each time I make sure to take them around for sightseeing too, we book a van and take them around to places like Dunhinda, Mahiyanganya, etc. In a personal capacity I gave them the best I can give them. And it's still the same. They too reciprocate the same feelings - by taking care of me like their own.

After retirement, SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka, a place I have come to call my own, even gives us a pension. That's not all, security is not something we have to worry about, financial or otherwise. We have all the facilities inside the village premises itself for retired mothers. We are given a home, with beautiful green surroundings. Heaters, cookers, kitchen, good places to stay and our own rooms. Free medical clinic if we have any ailments and we are taken to the doctor in house itself.

I always encourage new mothers to come here, because it's very safe and secure here. No matter the age - all ladies feel the need to be safe and secure. Especially at the place they work. And here's a place that has never been reported any abuses, as the culture here celebrates the title of mother in ways one can't even comprehend at times.

I'm sure you understand that when you don't get married you have no one to look after you, or it's mostly at the cost of becoming a burden to others. But here when I am sick, children take me to their homes and take care of me like their own mother. For me, that love alone is enough for one to choose to come here.

Today, after 40 years of being here, with all my grandchildren accounted for, it gives me a slight sense of pride and satisfaction to think that I have more than 100 members in my family. All of my children are independent and are responsible adults, who are not a burden to the society. I'm happy about how I raised them, as none of them had chosen to have been involved in any vices. Only saying this, as one would consider the negativities children entrusted to us, may have faced all their lives.

I'd always encourage any lady to come. Experience here. You are going to be the difference that you may have read about when you were young. Most importantly, you are going to be a mother - the greatest title one could ever have. And you will always be treated with love.

For further inquiries on becoming an SOS Mother, you may contact Rajini Perumal on 077 236 6105 or Sudharma Ahangama 076 138 8815



695
Reintegrated to
society



362
Families
supported



16
Family Houses

First-ever SOS Children's Village in Sri Lanka

True to the above numbers - SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka, started off with 1 block of house, 9 children and, 5 mothers. Today, to date, counts, 73 households, 769 children and young adults, 84 SOS mothers, in addition to more than 2,658 careleavers from our 6 villages, who've been reintegrated to society as responsible adults, giving you the donor, and us who play the role of caretakers, the satisfaction to know that in the 42 year journey of SOS Children's Villages in Sri Lanka - you, and us, together, have been a part of this all.

It all started right here, in Piliyandala, on a barren land of 8 acres. Which today acts as a landmark and an iconic architecture, with best of class infrastructure, with all facilities right inside the premises; that lives up to the name; a Children's Village.

In May 1980, SOS Kinderdorf International entered into an agreement to establish SOS Children's Villages and its ancillary projects in Sri Lanka.

The first ever SOS Children's Village in Sri Lanka was established with 16 Family Houses. The first group of SOS Mothers, having being trained at Sarvodaya (Local NGO), moved into their New HOMES with children in December 1981. The Village has been home for three generations of children and the present children in the SOS families at Piliyandala are the fourth generation.

A total of 695 young adults have been successfully integrated into society during the past 42 years. The first group of SOS Mothers are now retired and many of them continue to live in the Mothers' Retirement Home which is also situated in the same campus.

The Medical Centre affiliated with the Ministry of Health, and the Hermann Gmeiner School are very popular among the neighbourhood and are catering to the needs of the children and adults of the area. Government Dental Clinics for children and adults too are housed in the SOS Medical Centre. We have made available our Medical Centre for the use of the Medical Officer of Health for the area, to conduct immunization and

antenatal clinics for mothers and babies.

SOS Youth Facility for Boys at Piliyandala provides ten scholarships every year. The scholarship is called - Hermann Gmeiner Scholarship - and these are awarded for boys who are qualified to pursue their studies in General Certificate of Education (GCE) - Advanced Level- having been successful at the GCE - Ordinary Level examination, but who does not have financial means to continue. These scholarship holders come from all parts of the country. They receive a two year full scholarship and attend Advance Level classes at Hermann Gmeiner School Piliyandala. This scholarship works two ways. It helps the scholars to achieve their educational goals as well as motivates SOS youth to optimally utilize the educational facilities made available to them.



Hermann Gmeiner School

SOS Family Strengthening Programme was piloted here at Piliyandala in 2003 prior to it being accepted as an SOS Children's Villages Programme Intervention.

SOS Youth Facility for girls is situated at Katubedda, which is 7.5 km from SOS Children's Village Piliyandala. At present there are 12 girls who are either attending vocational training or employment training and live with an Educator with minimum supervision.

As our valued donor, if you are in the neighborhood, drop by. Let us know what you think, and hopefully, you'd fall in love with the eco system, we've built for children. Children, we all, call our own.



National Office

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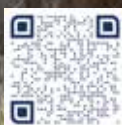


SOS Medical Centre

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The Heart of Sri Lanka



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FOR ONE TIME DONATION

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Creating a reason to smile
Make a difference
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“You have made them
smile again.”

The SOS Newsletter



A loving home for every child



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