CREATING SAFE HAVENS FOR KIDS
SOS CHILDREN’S VILLAGES SWITZERLAND
AN NGO STORY

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When Christian Hosmann journeyed to Angola in 2009, he was shocked by what he saw.

Hosmann, the CEO of SOS Children’s Villages Switzerland says, “I’d never seen so many luxury cars in my life...driving by children dying in the street.”

Angola is a place of extremes. More than 1 million children are orphaned, 10% of whom have lost one or both parents to AIDS.*

The number of at-risk children increases when you factor in kids whose parents are too sick, injured or financially unstable to raise them because of disease or civil unrest.


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SOS Children’s Villages aims to give at-risk children in Angola and around the world a safe haven and a second chance at being raised in a loving environment.

The organization offers two kinds of programs in 130 countries around the world. Most famously it builds ‘Children’s Villages’ with multiple homes each with 10 to 15 children and a devoted surrogate ‘mother’. The villages typically feature schools and recreation facilities.

More recently, it has begun offering ‘Family Strengthening Programs’, which help parents in need retain custody of their kids. The programs provide literacy training, micro-finance loans, food and clothing.

"We work with Western Union to ensure our currency exchanges are dealt with in a fair way without corruption."

Christian Hosmann, CEO
SOS Children’s Villages Switzerland
Helping At-Risk Children Thrive

Hosmann explains that in Switzerland, the organization raises 20 million Swiss Francs annually.

It sends $5 million USD to bank accounts around the world through NGO GlobalPay.

“Our people in the field have few resources so they are dependent on receiving funds quickly,” Hosmann said.

Prior to using Western Union, the organization faced great challenges delivering its hard-earned funds.

Working with Western Union, Hosmann and his team are able to ensure children and their caregivers quickly receive the funds they need to thrive.
The Hard Reality of Transparency

“Some cultures have very different interpretations of corruption than we do,” Hosmann says. “I was surprised at the lengths we had to go to avoid exchanging money on the black market.”

But exchanging money legitimately through local banks also came with a serious toll.

“High exchange rates meant that instead of helping, say, 100 children, we might only be able to help ten,” stated Hosmann.

“This is why we need to work with Western Union – to ensure our currency exchanges are dealt with in a fair way without corruption.”

Responding Quickly to Crisis

When crisis hits – like a natural disaster or violent conflict, the organization’s needs ratchet up several notches. The cost of basic necessities skyrocket at the Children’s Villages, and additional funds must arrive with top urgency.

Hosmann says, “When you have a desperate situation – like our Children’s Village in Aleppo, Syria is currently facing – it’s vital that you have a secure flow of money.”

“Even when everything around you is destroyed, you still need cash. And you don’t need the extra stress of figuring out how to receive emergency funds.”

TODAY,

SOS CHILDREN’S VILLAGES SWITZERLAND IS:

- Efficiently sending money to support at-risk kids around the world
- Quickly getting emergency funds into the hands of caregivers
- Reporting on global financial transactions with transparency
- Helping kids have healthier, happier lives

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