Program Update: SOS Children’s Village Hawassa, Ethiopia

The SOS Children’s Village in Hawassa in southern Ethiopia can provide a loving home for up to 150 children. This SOS community is composed of 15 family homes, an SOS aunt’s house (SOS mothers in training who assist current SOS mothers), an administrative and service area, multi-purpose staff flats, an out-patient’s clinic, a workshop and a large kindergarten which supports children from the surrounding area. These are not the only services that SOS provides for the children and families of Hawassa, Ethiopia.

When they are about 16 years old, the youth of SOS Children’s Village Hawassa move into one of the two SOS Youth Facilities provided, awarding them a higher degree of responsibility as they are under the supervision of only one youth leader. Here, Hawassa offers fully-funded college training at Vocational Training College with an aim to create competent and self-reliant youth. Participants now pursued their training in Auto Mechanic, Aesthetics, Automotive, Auto Electricity and Electronics. Before graduation, almost all have managed to acquire full-time work as well.

960 SOS children and local pupils are taught in the SOS Primary and SOS Secondary School beside the Hawassa Village. It consists of classrooms, a computer lab, a library, two workshops, a multi-purpose hall, administrative units, and recreational fields. The students also receive support from tutorial classes and peer study groups.

SOS Day Care is another service offered, primarily for single mothers in the community. Currently the day care centre is running at full capacity with 199 children in attendance. The day care provides supervision for children while allowing a mother the time to earn an income and provide for her family. It is not just a day care however, it also offers full meals, pre-school education and medical care.

When young people from the children’s village reach an age where they feel ready to move out of the family home, the SOS Youth Program makes shared accommodation available to them while they complete their education or vocational training. With the support of qualified counsellors, the young people learn to take responsibility, plan for their future and prepare for independent adult life.
The SOS Vocational Training Centre here in Hawassa offers young people, including those with special needs, from all around Ethiopia the chance to complete training in dairy, poultry and livestock farming and fruit and vegetable cultivation.

**SOS Spotlight – Seid’s Story**

Seid Nurye has survived famine, drug addiction and life on the streets. Today Seid Nurye, 38, is a successful tailor and business owner after he turned his life around with the help of SOS Children’s Villages Hawassa.

Growing up, Seid made the wrong friends which led to him to drop out of school and become addicted to drugs. He soon found himself on the streets of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia where he resorted to pickpocketing.

Seid turned to SOS Children’s Villages Hawassa for help when he decided he wanted to change. He was sent to a training centre where he learned how to tailor clothing. After completing the course, he was given a small sewing machine, some materials and enough money to cover his rent for six months. Now, Seid owns two tailor shops and employs four young adults.

“If these young people get the opportunity, they change not only their lives, but also those of their families and the community,” said Seid.