SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES

WORLD HUMANITARIAN DAY - 19 August 2024

'In Gaza, you don't choose to be a humanitarian worker, you have to'

On World Humanitarian Day, we honour the work of humanitarians such as Reem Alreqeb, the Programme Director of SOS Children's Villages in the Gaza Strip. In this interview, Reem, who joined SOS Children's Villages in 2022, talks about what keeps her

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What inspired you to become a humanitarian?

We in Palestine, especially in Gaza, have gone through several wars, so Gazans are always in need of humanitarian interventions. You constantly feel that you have to provide help to people in need as a human being. I grew up with a father who used his time after work to volunteer in one of the community-based organizations, which provided help for vulnerable families. I think that in Gaza, you don't choose to be a humanitarian worker. You have to, as the crises we go through are not easy to overcome.

Can you describe your typical day at work?

Before the war, I used to wake up excited for work. I would start a normal day, meet people who needed help, refer them to where they could receive it, prepare reports, update plans. Nowadays, I wake up way too early because of the heat in the tent we live in, I go to the office located inside the caravan camp and start working on my tasks. These include being confronted with endless obstacles and needs we need to work hard to respond to, despite the circumstances. I follow the war news and security updates, check up on our camps in Khan Younis and Deir Al Balah, send some e-mails when the internet connection is stable.

What are some of the biggest challenges you face in your role?

Providing everything the children need during the critical situation Gaza is in. Thinking about what would happen if we had to relocate again: Where would we go? What would we do?

Can you share a memorable moment or story from your humanitarian work?

I'm sorry for not sharing a happy one, but the most memorable moment I've had since 7 October is when we decided to leave the SOS Children's Village in Rafah due to security risks. I had to take the decision and it was a very hard one. I remember what children asked for when we were packing to move to the camp. One asked me to bring his bicycle, another to bring the toy he couldn't sleep without. We tried to bring everything they asked for, but it wasn't easy, we were working under fire. I will not forget leaving the village with the rest of

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What keeps you motivated and hopeful, despite the challenges you encounter in your work in Gaza?

I understand that we provide services to many people in need, especially unaccompanied and separated children, and we reunify them with their families. When we succeed to reunify a child with their relatives, when we provide assistance to a vulnerable family, this keeps us motivated and recharges our energy.

In your opinion, what more can be done globally to support humanitarian efforts in Gaza?

I always feel that people outside of Gaza still don't understand the situation we are in. We need more campaigns for people to see what is going on with their own eyes. The war must end and addressing the humanitarian needs of the people in Gaza must start soon.

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'In Gaza, you don't choose to be a humanitarian worker, you have to'

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YOUTHCAN!

Partnerships key to reaching global goals on improving youth employment

August 13 2024 - New York - At a side event during the United Nations' recent High-Level Political Forum, young people urged decision-makers to ensure support for youth in acquiring technical and entrepreneurial skills, which are essential for securing employment or starting their own businesses.

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YOUTH POWER

Youth-led initiatives tackle pressing global problems

August 12 2024 - Young people across the globe are emerging as driving forces in addressing our most urgent challenges. Among these inspiring individuals are participants from SOS Children's Villages who are actively creating solutions through youth-led initiatives that advance the Sustainable Development Goals worldwide.

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MIDDLE EAST

Children and staff may be relocated as attacks escalate

August 5 2024 - The recent attacks in the Middle East underscore the escalation of tensions in the region. While it is unclear if this marks the start of broader hostilities, the impact on communities, particularly on the mental and emotional well-being of children and families, cannot be overstated.

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PUBLICATIONS

International Annual Report 2023 just published

July 23 2024 - The report gives an overview of our activities and financial information for 2023. Also included is a child message on ending violence against children, a summary from our 75 Years of Impact anniversary publication, and a list of our international partners.

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CHILD PARTICIPATION

Let Our Voices Be Heard! Children's right to participate in public decision-making

July 16 2024 - As part of the EU co-funded project, "Together: Working in partnership with children and youth to enhance their rights in responses to crisis situations such as Covid-19 and other emergencies," SOS Children's Villages has worked with children and young people in Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, and Spain to develop four short videos on children and young people's right to participate in public decision-making on all topics that affect them.

MORE NEWS

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What keeps you motivated and hopeful, despite the challenges you encounter in your work in Gaza?

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