

Opening windows on the world for African children.



It's a little known fact that many people in Africa pay ten times as much of their salary for broadband as most of those living in the rest of the world¹. But BT has teamed up with SOS Children's villages to help disadvantaged communities overcome that barrier.

The charity's International Director for West and Central Africa Region, Benoît Piot, firmly believes vulnerable children in its communities are benefiting from the impact of BT's Connecting Africa project. It uses BT satellite services to bring free broadband to remote villages in thirteen African countries, helping protect children from social isolation. Along with the fun and chat kids elsewhere take for granted, the project has opened new vistas including improved education and better healthcare.

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This partnership is a real success because BT goes beyond material support. They bring us essential expertise that allows us to connect to 30 villages in thirteen countries and, in effect, give them access to the world.

Benoît Piot

International Director, West and Central Africa Region
SOS Children's Villages

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¹ Source: <http://geography.oii.ox.ac.uk/?page=home>

BT satellite broadband internet access brings online education and clinical apps to growing numbers of African communities.

Creating caring families for vulnerable children.

Caring for children deprived of the warmth of family life is as vital a task now as it was when SOS Children's Villages was founded more than sixty five years ago.

The charity is giving youngsters worldwide the chance of a brighter future. It works in 134 countries to compensate for the fragility or absence of familial support. Villages for children having lost or at risk of losing parental care with family houses, each overseen by a house-mother, create a stable setting in which they can flourish.

Mrs. Claude-Alvine Mbappe Tankoua, National Director for SOS Children's Villages in Cameroon, explains: "In each of our village houses we provide a substitute family for the children we embrace and welcome. Education, protection, health – their essential needs are met as in any natural family."

Self-sustaining satellite broadband for remote African villages.

BT's Connecting Africa project offers free broadband connectivity over VSAT² satellite technology, alongside repurposed computer equipment given a new lease of life, to provide internet access.

The scheme was launched in 2013 and is set to become self-sustaining. After three years of UK-based network support, SOS Children's Villages teams have been trained to maintain and operate the equipment themselves.

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Dr Mouaha Joelle Aurelie
SOS Medical Centre, Mbalmayo Cameroon

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Broadband opens up education while empowering house-mothers.

Free broadband is a huge hit in the village schools. At Mbalmayo in Cameroon, teacher Biloa Celestin says: "ICT is an integral part in the education of our children. They feel proud about having access to internet technology."

The school starts pupils on simple computer use at primary and kindergarten stage. They move on to online lessons and are joined by other children from outside the village, extending the pool of local users. The aim is to train the wider community, reinforcing the bond between villages and the locales in which they're embedded.

Those benefits are spreading to adults living nearby too. "We have a computer corner that's not only for the school's use but also for the surrounding community," adds Celestin. "In other words, people can come here and educate themselves."

Another important group to have seen BT broadband benefits are the house-mothers themselves. They make up the emotional backbone of the SOS villages, offering warmth and home comfort to the children living with them.

Maman Jeannette Ongbassiongloki says: "Formerly we always had to go to town when we needed to send messages and we had to pay. But now I never need to leave the children. When I have a message to send, I send it from home."

Improving clinical care with effective online tools.

Good healthcare is high on the list of SOS Children's Villages priorities. Again, the net spreads wider than the villages alone. Cameroon has two SOS medical centres, with pharmacies, serving both the children and the communities.

² A very small aperture terminal (VSAT) is a two-way satellite ground station with a dish antenna that typically ranges from 75cm to 1.2m. Portability and low-power consumption make VSAT technology ideal for emergency situations and deployment in less-developed countries.

Case Study – SOS Children's Villages.



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Mrs. Claude-Alvine Mbappa Tankoua
National Director
SOS Children's Villages Cameroon



Internet access alongside a BT-supplied bespoke medical system has simplified clinical processes to streamline services. For example, invoicing has been computerised, prescriptions can now be created electronically and the pharmacy benefits from improved stock control. This has substantially cut down paperwork, giving doctors more time with patients. It also means faster patient reception and improved tracking, a prelude to the use of efficient electronic patient records.

Dr. Mouaha Joelle Aurelie, who works in the Mbalmayo clinic, explains: "In a click we have all the information needed and can easily write a prescription. I have more time to provide patient counselling, especially to mothers who come with children."

It's all part of making the world a better place.

BT's Connecting Africa project is part of BT's commitment to use the power of communications to make a better world. As part of that corporate vision, BT aspires to social inclusion for all through digital connectivity worldwide. Liz Walker, General Counsel at BT, adds: "Connecting Africa is a great example of how BT puts its purpose at the heart of its work, showing how every part of our company has a role to play in creating greater value for society and the environment."

Mrs. Claude-Alvine Mbappe Tankoua, sums up the BT contribution: "We share information quicker and can quickly establish best practice as in other countries. I think the world will be a better place. It makes a big, big difference."

Core services.

- BT Connect Satellite Services: custom VSAT technology

Offices worldwide

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