

An SOS Children's Village

Building a Village Instructions

In the area around Lubango, Angola, there are many children without anyone to look after them. The reason for this is because there was a civil war in Angola for 27 years. This meant a lot of people died and many lost their jobs. There are now around 130 children with nobody to look after them, and you and your group members are representatives from SOS Children's Village, in the country to try to help these children.

1. First, you need to find a plot of land. There are two plots of land available for you to choose from:

- a) A small plot of land near the city centre. It is not a very nice area, and there are some bad people living nearby.
- b) A large plot of land in the country side, still close to the city centre. It is very green with lots of space for children to run about, and in a safe area.

2. Now that you have chosen your land, you need to decide what sort of building you will need for the children to live in. You have two choices:

- a) A very large, concrete building that can house all the children in large dormitories.
- b) You can build lots of smaller family houses instead, where the children can stay in a room sharing with one or two others. In each house, there'll be space for about seven children and one adult.

3. Now you need to decide who should look after the children – some of them are babies so you can't leave them on their own, even at night! It is also important that they grow up just like you – feeling loved and looked after and part of a family! You have two options on who can look after the children:

- a) You can recruit women who have no children of their own to move in to the houses and be the children's SOS mothers. They can live there with the children all the time, so that the children know that they always have the same SOS mother to look after them.
- b) You can recruit a team of ten child minders who will work in shifts (days and nights).

4. Many of the children now looked after in the children's village are unwell or often sick, because they haven't been looked after very well previously. There are also many children and adults in the countryside around the children's village who are unwell. Unfortunately, there is no good hospital nearby. What do you do?

- a) You find out that the closest good hospital is a five-hour drive away on bad roads, so you buy an old ambulance and think that you can drive anyone who's sick to the hospital.
- b) You build a small medical centre, and employ a local doctor and nurse. They can see patients, diagnose and treat most illnesses, and also vaccinate children against disease. You make sure the medical centre is open to both children in the children's village, and children and adults who live outside the children's village.

5. You have now realised that there is also no good school in the area big enough to take in all the children in the children's village. There are also lots of children in the area surrounding the children's village who don't go to school. What to you do?

- a) You build an SOS School near the village, and recruit local teachers. The school is open to both the children in the children's village, and those in the surrounding community.
- b) You ask the SOS mothers to teach the children they care for at home. This means they will be quite tired since they are already looking after children all the time, and now have to teach as well!

6. You also see that a lot of adults and children who live outside the children's village have a difficult time. Adults find it hard to find jobs, often because they haven't been to school themselves and have no skills. What do you do?

- a) You think it's not really your problem, and continue to focus on the children living in the children's village and those attending the school and medical centre.
- b) You start a Family Strengthening Programme, where adults can go to learn skills (like reading, writing, farming and how to run small businesses) so that they can find a job easier.