



Cramo and SOS Children's Villages in Ukraine (September 2012)

Ukraine is one of the poorest countries in Europe. 35 percent of the population live below the definition of extreme poverty and social insecurity is widespread. Abuse of alcohol and drugs, HIV spread - Ukraine is the country in Europe where the HIV epidemic is spreading most rapidly - and poor health are factors that contribute to many parents not being able to take care of their children. When parents abandon them their children are left to either grow up on the street or in poor conditions in institutions.

SOS Children's Villages works since 2003 with family strengthening activities in Kiev. Two years later operations were extended to Brovary. The goal is to support the poor and vulnerable families so they can stay together and take care of their children. In July 2010, the first SOS Children's Village in Ukraine opened in Brovary, about two mil outside Kiev's city center. Here, children who do not have someone who can take care of them grow up in a family.

The contribution of Cramo helps to provide more disadvantaged children in the Ukraine a safe upbringing. The money comes very useful and it makes it possible for SOS Children's Villages to finance the operation of the Children's Village in Brovary which consists of 13 family houses. Today there are 41 children in the houses, with a whole new life. They get breakfast, lunch and dinner every day, the opportunity to go to school, and last but not least the love and care of a mother and a family. Much emphasis is also placed on the children who attend the school, which offers extra support and help with their homework and learning. One example of the importance of these efforts is the story of Lara who came to the SOS Children's Village in 2009 as a 11-year-old.

Lara struggled with learning difficulties, and because of this, her family placed her in an institution for the mentally handicapped, where she was to spend five years of his life before she got help from SOS Children's Villages. Lara had not been going to preschool or elementary school. Despite this, she showed enormous courage and commitment, and with extra support and tuition assistance she managed to catch up with her classmates, and complete both primary and secondary school with good grades. Today, Lara has a bright future, and plans to continue her studies and go on to university.

My father left me, my siblings and my mother when I was a baby. My mother could not take care of us. We are six children and no one wanted to adopt us. Only my sister could move to grandma. My other siblings had to move to an orphanage. I was too small and had not had so much to eat so I ended up in hospital. I was also sick from the things I had been eating. The first time I met my village mom I lay all alone in a big bed in a large room at the hospital. I was moved to the SOS Children's Village and later my siblings too could move in. Now we are a family again and have a village mother who takes care of us. I love to curl up in her lap and tell her what happened in kindergarten during the day. And now I can eat almost any food."



Danylo, 5 years
Ukraine

Photos: Maja Brand