



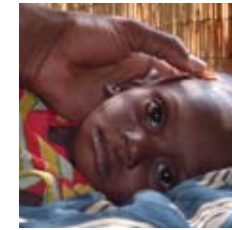
# Caring for children

Islamic Relief's orphan welfare programme

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*Front cover image: Six-year-old Halimatou lives in Niamey, Niger with her mother and 11 siblings. Her youngest brother Ibrahim is sponsored by an Islamic Relief donor.*





Childhood should be a time to grow, to learn, to play and make friends. But for many children growing up in the world's poorest countries it is simply a struggle to survive. Amongst the most vulnerable children are those who have been orphaned, those who suffer from a disability and those whose lives have been turned upside down by a disaster.

# Caring for vulnerable children

## Lost childhoods

Every year millions of children die because they do not have enough food, the water they drink is contaminated and they have no access to basic health care. An estimated 134 million children have also never been to school due to the effects of HIV/AIDS, natural disasters, conflicts and crippling poverty. They are missing out on a childhood and without support, they face a bleak future.

We believe we can make a real difference to the lives of orphans and other vulnerable children. Whilst we work to alleviate poverty and suffering in many of the communities these children belong to, we believe that children need special care. Our child welfare programmes are designed to ensure that children from the poorest communities do not miss out on a childhood and are given the best possible chance in life.

## One sponsor, one child

Children who have lost one or both their parents are particularly vulnerable to the effects of poverty. We believe these children should continue to be cared for within their own communities. Our projects make this possible by supporting the child's carer to ensure the child's basic needs are being met.

Our One-to-one Orphan Sponsorship programme puts an individual Islamic Relief donor in touch with a child that

he or she agrees to sponsor. This regular support ensures the child has adequate food, water and shelter, is able to go to school and has access to medical care. The child's family or guardians also benefit as the support means the whole family has enough to eat and other children are able to attend school. The monthly donation made by the sponsor brings a degree of stability to the child's life and gives the guardian peace of mind that the child will be provided for.

## Working with the community

As well as sponsoring individual children we also work to bring wider benefit to children and the communities they belong to. From building schools to running child health centres, our projects aim to improve children's access to essential facilities that will contribute to their wellbeing and development. Our staff around the world work in partnership with local communities to identify areas of need and design projects that will improve the quality of children's lives. To help support these projects we have a special children's fund dedicated to caring for some of the world's most vulnerable children.

**In the following pages we share the real life stories of some of the children who have benefited from our work, with the kind support of our donors.**

*Main photo: Young boy waits outside Health Clinic in Paghman, Afghanistan*





**Edin**  
Bosnia-Herzegovina

## 13-year-old Edin was born with Down's syndrome.

His father was killed in the war and he lives with his mother in a small apartment in Sarajevo, Bosnia. Edin wants to go to school but the local schools will not admit him. Like other young boys he loves football but for Edin even this is denied to him.

# Helping children overcome disability

## Supporting children with disabilities

Edin is a very affectionate boy who means the world to his mother. He was born at the start of the war, six months after his father was killed. His mother, Adila, was injured in a grenade attack when she was pregnant with Edin. While she was in labour she could hear shooting all around her.

Edin has had a number of health complications since birth. As well as Down's syndrome he has a heart murmur that affects his ability to play normally and also has water in his lungs. After a few minutes of activity he breaks into a sweat and begins to hyperventilate. Doctors have warned Adila to keep her son calm at all times. This is extremely frustrating for Edin who loves football and wants to play like other children.

## Poverty and disability

Around one in ten children live with some form of disability. The vast majority of these children live in the world's poorest countries where disability and poverty often go hand in hand. A lack of nutritious food, bad sanitation and poor health care increases the risk of a child being born with or developing a disability. Children who have a disability and are living in poverty may also find it difficult to get the medical care they need. However as many as 50 per cent of all disabilities could be treated or prevented with appropriate health care and medicine.



Adila knows more than most how costly medical care can be. She struggles to take care of Edin on her small widow's pension and most of her income is spent on repaying the loan on their small apartment. But in 2003 Edin joined Islamic Relief's Orphan Sponsorship programme which has eased the burden on Adila. She uses the money to pay for household expenses as well as Edin's medical fees. Just one trip to the hospital costs over ten euros, and Edin has to be admitted regularly for treatment.

*Main photo and above: 13-year-old Edin  
from Bosnia-Herzegovina*



## No way to go to school

However, there is still one thing that Adila would like to be able to do for her son. She would love for him to go to school. Adila has tried everything she can to get Edin into school but most schools are unwilling to accept him. “They say his heart is weak and they cannot take responsibility if something happens to him,” she explained. The few schools that are able to provide specialist care are too far away and demand monthly fees that she cannot afford.

Only around 5 per cent of the world’s children who are disabled are in education and this problem is even more acute for those living in the poorest countries. As well as being denied a basic right, a lack of schooling prevents them from escaping the cycle of poverty. Educating a child who is disabled is sometimes not seen as a priority for poor families; for others it is important but simply unaffordable.



***“I’m all alone with my son.  
He is all my joy and my happiness and  
he makes my life brighter.”***

## Providing specialist care

Looking after a child with a disability can put a huge financial strain on poor families; something we take into account when selecting children who qualify for our One-to-one sponsorship programme. Once sponsored, we ensure that children with physical or mental disabilities have adequate food, clothing and suitable housing and that all their medical needs are taken care of. We also run several specialist programmes to help families caring for disabled children. These programmes provide children with medical care, psychological support and aids such as wheelchairs, hearing aids and prosthetic limbs, all of which help them lead full and happy lives.

For Adila, her son means the whole world. A mother of five children, she now only has Edin for company. One of her children died very young and another is living abroad. Her two other sons went missing in 1995 at the time of the Srebrenica massacre. “I seem to spend my days visiting doctors and getting treatment for Edin and myself,” she said. “I cannot sleep at night. I just sit silently wondering why all this has happened. I’ve lost my husband, I long for my children and I’m all alone with my son. I thank God who has helped me raise him, and my prayers are with those who are thinking of me and my son. The only conversations I have are with this child. He is all my joy and happiness and he makes my life brighter.”

*Left: Edin and his mother Adila*

## Sami’s story

Like other boys his age, nine-year-old Sami loves to play cricket with his friends. However his playground is no more than an expanse of dirt strewn with rubbish and debris. Sami lives in a slum in near Bangalore, India. The village is a vast cluster of ramshackle one-room huts that have no running water or sanitation facilities. Some are made from concrete with metal roofs but many are constructed of plastic and tin sheets.

## Serious accident

For Sami, life poses even more challenges than it does for his friends. When he was just nine months old he was involved in a serious accident that meant he had to have his left leg amputated. Whilst Sami’s health problems have not stopped him leading an independent life his mother has always wanted to be able to buy him a prosthetic leg so that he can play like all his friends.

But Sami’s mother, Haseena, has struggled to provide for her family since her husband died eight years ago. She rolls incense sticks for a living and the tiny amount she earns is barely enough to support Sami and his three



sisters. His older sisters, aged nine and ten, have already dropped out of school to work as domestic helpers and bring in some much-needed extra income for the family.

## New-found confidence

Since Sami has been sponsored by an Islamic Relief donor, his mother no longer has to struggle to provide for him. Sami is able to continue attending primary school where he studies Urdu, English and Kannada as well as maths and science. The regular support he receives also means that his mother can afford to buy him the artificial limbs that will give him confidence and allow him to play like the other children.

*Left and above: Nine-year-old Sami from India*



# Shilpa

Karnataka, India



## Six-year-old Shilpa lives in one of India's many slums.

But that doesn't stop her dreaming about living in a beautiful house with a garden. Shilpa has not had the best start in life. Her father died when she was a baby and her mother struggles to earn a living by rolling incense sticks. Life isn't easy but since Shilpa joined Islamic Relief's sponsorship scheme she has reason to hope for a better future. Her mother is committed to giving her a good education and no longer has to worry about the cost of sending her to school.

# Ensuring an education for all

Education offers children a way out of poverty by raising awareness about important issues like health and hygiene and providing them with the knowledge and skills they will need to earn a living. However, for the world's poorest children it is something they simply cannot afford and instead many have to work to support their families. Around 134 million children worldwide have never been to school, the majority of them are girls. In the least developed countries one in four girls do not complete primary school which leads to higher rates of child and maternal mortality, higher rates of HIV and increased poverty.

## Millennium Development Goals

The importance of education for all children is one of the key Millennium Development Goals. The aim is to ensure that all children, boys and girls alike, are enrolled in primary education by 2015. Islamic Relief gives as many children as possible the opportunity to finish their schooling and have a better chance in life. Our orphan sponsorship programme supports children who may not otherwise be able to go to school. The regular financial support they receive means they no longer have to work and it also covers the cost of school materials, uniforms and books. In addition we have many projects around the world that support the provision of education for vulnerable children, from building and equipping schools to training teachers and providing children with free school meals.

## Teaching Erjola

In Albania, one of Europe's most impoverished countries, only around 50 per cent of children attend school. Poverty and a lack of schools and teachers means children are missing out on an education. This will have serious implications for their futures, especially in a country where unemployment and youth crime are widespread.



Main photo: Six-year-old Shilpa outside her home in India  
Above: 12-year-old Erjola from Albania



***“I can see the conditions of our house so I do not ask my mother to buy me anything,” said Erjola. “But I want to be educated so I can earn money and help my family.”***

Islamic Relief has been sponsoring children in Albania since 1993. As well as providing them with food, clothes and access to health care we have also established Community Training Centres (CTCs) in Shkodra and Tirana which offer additional schooling. One of the children to benefit from the training centre in Shkodra is 12-year-old Erjola. She and her sister Gezime (bottom right) lost their father in 2000 when he was killed in a land dispute - an all too common occurrence in Albania. The sisters are now being sponsored by Islamic Relief donors.

## Providing stability

The sponsorship has been a great relief for the girls' mother who had been struggling to care for them on her own. Half of the population in Shkodra are unemployed and the support they receive from the state is usually not enough to cover basic living costs. For Erjola and Gezime the sponsorship means the family now has sufficient money for food, clothes, school bags and medicine. This is especially critical for Gezime who suffers from mental health problems that mean she is reserved and withdrawn. Gezime rarely spoke for the first four years of her life but now she has started to play with other children. Although she is still dependent on expensive medicine the sponsorship has brought some much-needed stability to her life.

## Top of the class

At Islamic Relief's training centre, Erjola receives free lessons in English, IT and Arabic. Erjola dreams of one day becoming a doctor and the classes at the centre are helping her to excel at her regular school. Her mother can see the effect the centre is having on her daughter. “In school, English is marked out of ten and she always gets nine because of the CTC. Not everyone has computers in Albania, but because of the CTC she is better than the other pupils in computing.” For Erjola the CTC has given her reason to hope for a better future. “I can see the conditions of our house so I do not ask my mother to buy me anything,” she said. “But I want to be educated so I can earn money and help my family.”

*Below: Erjola's mother and younger sister, Gezime*



## Providing education in Bangladesh

Poverty is the greatest threat to education in Bangladesh. Although most children will enrol in primary school, many will never complete it. Children from the poorest families often drop out of school because they cannot afford the fees or because they have to work to support their family. Only around 43 per cent of the population is literate which makes it difficult for them to find decent employment.

To help increase the number of children who finish school in Bangladesh, Islamic Relief works with parents to raise awareness about the importance of education. In addition, sponsored children are provided with school uniforms, books, stationery and the cost of school fees are covered. We also provide vocational training for older children who have dropped out of school and want to increase their chances of finding employment.



***Across Bangladesh there are more than three million children who are not in school. Our sponsorship programme helps children access an education and gives them better opportunities for the future.***

## Working hard

Nine-year-old Salam (bottom left) lives in Rajbari, Bangladesh, in a one-room house made of tin sheets. He lives with his mother and his younger brother and sister. His father used to pull rickshaws in Dhaka but was killed in a road accident in 2001. Since his death Salam's mother has been working as a domestic helper in people's homes to try and provide for her children.

Salam was sponsored by Islamic Relief in 2006. Before his sponsorship began the family often had to eat vegetables they found at the side of the road or hope that their mother could bring some food home from her work. Now they are able to have three meals a day, much to Salam's delight.

As the eldest child, Salam feels a great responsibility towards his family. He works really hard at school as he wants to be an engineer one day and build a big, grand house for his family. Despite the fact that the family does not have much money, Salam's mother has always made sure that all her children have an education. The Islamic Relief sponsorship has made this much easier for her. She can now afford to send Salam to school, pay for his school uniform, books and stationery as well as kerosene that enables him to study at home in the evenings. Salam is aware of the importance of education and wants to ensure that his younger brother and sister also go to school.

*Left: Nine-year-old Salam from Bangladesh*





## Nansi

southern Lebanon

### Seven-year-old Nansi lives in a Palestinian refugee camp in south Lebanon.

She lives with her mother Samira, her two elder sisters and four elder brothers. Nansi's refugee camp was at the centre of the conflict during the war in Lebanon in 2006. It was the first time Nansi had witnessed war. As the rockets fell the family huddled together and hoped for safety.

# Helping children affected by war

Lebanon is home to many thousands of Palestinian refugees who live in sprawling camps in the south of the country. Although these refugees have been in Lebanon for generations, their children who were born in the country are unable to go to Lebanese schools and rely on schooling provided by aid agencies.

Nansi is one of many children living in the refugee camps who has lost a parent. Her father died of a heart attack almost two years ago and Nansi still feels the loss. She often cries when something reminds her of him, even something small like his signature on a piece of paper. When her father died Nansi's eldest brother Ali had to give up school to help support the family. Now, like his father before him, he works as a labourer.

### Waiting to go home

Nansi lives in Ein el-Hilweh, a semi-permanent refugee camp for Palestinians near Sidon. It is the biggest refugee camp in Lebanon and is home to over 45,000 people. Nearly half of its residents are children under the age of 15. There are no parks in the camp and it is not safe for Nansi to play outside. Her mother grew up in the same refugee camp and Nansi is part of the fourth generation of Palestinians living there and waiting to go home.

### Nansi's first war

The situation for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon deteriorated further in 2006 when war broke out between Lebanon and Israel. Much of the fighting took place in the south near the refugee camps and many camps came under attack, killing and injuring many children and leaving others orphaned.



*Main photo and right: Seven-year-old Nansi lives in a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon*



During a war it is very often those on the sidelines, women, children and the elderly who suffer the most. Even after war is over children can suffer from long-term trauma and mental health problems as well as exposure to potentially fatal hazards such as landmines.

During the Lebanon war, Nansi's camp accommodated thousands more people who had fled the violence further south. As the camp grew in size Samira worried that it would become a target for attack. Samira had escaped from fighting in the past but this time nowhere seemed safe, so she decided to stay in the camp. As the rockets fell the whole family huddled together in the one room. Although Nansi told us she was very brave the war did make her afraid. "She would run to my arms when she heard the flights overhead," her mother said.

## Daily needs

Life has always been difficult for Nansi and her family, even when her father was alive. He worked as a foreman on building sites and the work was infrequent. What he earned barely covered the family's daily needs. Things got worse after his death and Samira had to rely on her extended family for help. But now that Nansi is sponsored the quality of life for the whole family has improved. The sponsorship money pays for food, clothing, school books and other basic needs. Samira hopes that her children will do well at school, remain healthy and have everything they need to live happily.

***In the last decade more than two million children have been killed during a war, six million have been injured and more than one million have been orphaned or separated from their families.***



## Fatima's story

12-year-old Fatima was born during the Bosnian war and the first few years of her life were shaped by conflict and instability. Fatima lives in a small village with her mother, brother and four sisters. Their village was attacked with grenades many times during the war. One day when Fatima was on the family's land a grenade fell and exploded close to her. Luckily she was not injured but she went into deep shock and was unable to speak for a long time.

*Above and right: Fatima and her mother, Bosnia-Herzegovina*

## Forced to beg

After the war had ended Fatima's family began the process of rebuilding their house as it had been completely destroyed. However work had to stop when not long after the end of the war Fatima's father was killed in a car accident. With no money the family's neighbours grouped together to collect all the building materials they needed and helped them finish the house.

Life has been especially tough for Fatima. Since her father's death her family have only been able to make money by occasionally working on their neighbour's land. They were so poor that she and her younger brother were forced to beg on the streets. This extreme poverty and the brutality of the war she lived through have deeply affected Fatima. She finds school difficult because she cannot concentrate on her work and she also suffers from a speech impediment that makes her feel isolated and ashamed.

***Group workshops have helped increase Fatima's confidence and allowed her to work through her trauma with qualified and sympathetic professionals.***

## Great strength

Fatima was one of the children who benefited from the psycho-social project run by Islamic Relief in Tuzla. At first she found the group sessions very difficult as other children teased her about the way she spoke. However she showed great strength and continued to attend the workshops and with help from the group therapists, soon began to feel more accepted. The group workshops have helped increase Fatima's confidence and enabled her to work through her traumatic experiences with qualified and sympathetic

professionals. Through the sessions she discovered that drawing helped her to relax and talk about her feelings more easily. She asked to take some paper and pens home so she could continue to draw and it is helping her not only come to terms with what she has experienced but discover what she would like to do in the future.







**Takreem**  
Balakot, Pakistan

## **Takreem's father was killed in the devastating earthquake in south Asia in October 2005.**

Her sister was also found dead in the rubble of the family's home. With their home destroyed, Takreem's mother and sister were forced to live in a tent. With over 70,000 people killed that day, many children were left orphaned and homeless. Islamic Relief helped thousands of people through the emergency phase and started sponsorship programmes for hundreds of orphans.

## **Restoring hope after a disaster**

Natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods and landslides can leave children at risk of injury but also vulnerable to serious disease and malnutrition. Disasters can destroy the whole fabric of a child's life, reducing schools to rubble, killing friends and family and destroying homes. In an instant all that is familiar in a child's life can disappear.

Islamic Relief has been responding to some of the most devastating natural disasters such as the tsunami in south-east Asia and the earthquake in Pakistan. We have provided emergency health care, clean water, shelter and food to survivors and worked with communities to help them rebuild their lives. But for children there are many factors that can prevent them from returning to a normal life including trauma, emotional suffering and the financial pressures on their families or guardians. However for their own wellbeing it is essential that children who are orphaned in a disaster are, wherever possible, cared for within their own community. Our sponsorship programme allows this to happen by supporting the child's family or guardian and alleviating some of the financial pressure of raising the child.

## **Iram's story**

Six-year-old Iram was orphaned in the south Asia earthquake. On the morning of 8th October 2005 she had breakfast and got ready for school as usual. The

earthquake struck on her way to school. Terrified, she ran back home but all that was left standing of her house was rubble and dust. Her father had been in the house at the time and was crushed as it collapsed. Luckily her mother was outside on the veranda and survived the tragedy.



*Right: Six-year-old Iram from Balakot, Pakistan*



## Hard to smile

Before the earthquake Iram was a cheerful, lively young girl but since witnessing the disaster she has become introverted, fearful and rarely smiles. It is these mental scars that will take much longer than the physical ones to heal. With nowhere to live Iram's family was forced to move into a tent camp. Her school was also destroyed so classes were held in tents instead of classrooms. This made studying very difficult for her as she found it hard to concentrate. Despite this, Iram has persevered with her studies and teachers say she is an excellent student.

## Young survivors

Rashid (bottom) is a student at the Government High School in Bagh in Pakistan-administered Kashmir. He was at school when the earthquake happened. "The school building collapsed in seconds. 24 students died right there under the rubble. It was the scariest day of my life. My house was also destroyed but luckily my family survived and no-one was hurt," he said.



## Back to school

"We had nowhere to study, but Islamic Relief gave us tents and school bags. This helped us continue our studies. Though it is not the same I am happy that we can go back to school. After I finish school I would like to be a teacher so I can teach other children."

Islamic Relief helped 1,000 children in Muzaffarabad, Bagh and Neelum Valley go back to school by providing large tents to hold lessons, furniture, school bags and educational tools. The number of sponsored children in the area rose from under 200 to over 700 after the earthquake, although there are still many children in need of support.

*Left: Rashid at school in Bagh, Pakistan administered Kashmir  
Above: Children in class at a tent school*

## Surviving the tsunami

Seven-year-old Fernandi (bottom right) lives in Banda Aceh, Indonesia with his mother, sister and two brothers. He lost his father in the tsunami that hit the Indonesian island of Aceh in December 2004. The family also lost their home and had to live in a refugee camp for almost two years. Conditions in the camp were very difficult as there was no gas or electricity, little access to clean water and kitchen facilities were shared with two other families. Fortunately they are now living in a comfortable house that has running water, electricity and a yard where the children can play safely.

## New school

Fernandi and his sister were sponsored by Islamic Relief in 2005. While the family were living in the refugee camp Fernandi was not able to go to school because his mother could not afford it. Sponsorship means that she can pay for his school fees and equipment. All of her children are now in full-time education and Fernandi is doing particularly well at maths, his favourite subject.

***The Asian tsunami killed around 250,000 people including thousands of children. Many more lost their parents, friends, homes and schools throwing their lives into turmoil. Even now people are still struggling to come to terms with their loss and rebuild their lives.***

## Land for the future

Since losing her husband, Fernandi's mother has had no regular source of income. However she now uses the sponsorship money to buy her children good nutritious food, suitable clothing and pay for their medical costs. She has also used some of the money to buy nuts and corn which she has planted on her land. The yield provides food for her family and she also has enough left over to sell.

Fernandi told Islamic Relief, "I would like to say thank very much to our donor who is sponsoring me and my little sister, and how lucky we are to have people who are concerned about us and are taking care of us."







## Every day over 28,000 children under five die as a result of malnutrition and preventable diseases.

Over 425 million children around the world have no choice but to drink water so dirty that it can make them seriously ill. Millions of lives could be saved if children in poor countries had access to medical care and clean, safe water. Islamic Relief is working to prevent these deaths by providing essential health care facilities to some of the world's most vulnerable children.

# Providing children with health care

In every country we work in, we ensure that children who are sponsored have regular medical checks and have access to health care facilities whenever they need them. We also run health clinics for children in poor communities, especially during emergencies such as droughts and food crises when the risk of malnutrition is exceptionally high.

In Bangladesh we are working to reduce infant and maternal mortality rates by providing thousands of mothers and children with ante-natal and post-natal care, immunisations and health awareness training. In Egypt we run specialist health centres for children with disabilities and provide them and their families with medical care and support. We also provide health screening programmes and dental and eye checks in many parts of the world where health facilities are scarce.

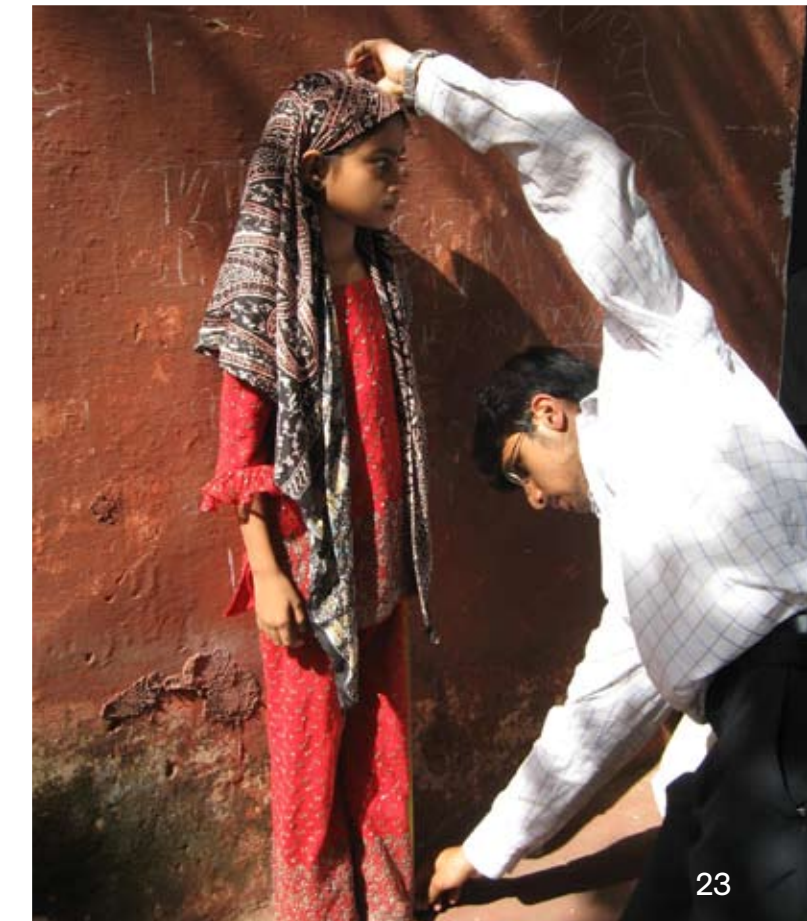
## A problem of epic proportions

In South Africa there are over 240,000 children who are HIV positive and more than 1.2 million who have lost their parents to the disease. Fighting HIV/AIDS in this country is a problem of epic proportions. With the second highest number of HIV patients in the world, one in five of the country's population is infected.

Our orphan sponsorship programme in South Africa focuses exclusively on children who are HIV positive or

who have been affected by the disease, especially those who have lost both parents and have to care for their younger siblings. We provide children with a monthly food parcel so that they do not have to work or beg for

*Main photo: Child in therapeutic feeding centre, Niger  
Below: A child undergoes a health check in India*







*Above: Three-year-old Lily from South Africa*

food, we supply school-age children with school bags, stationery, and uniforms and ensure that no child we support misses out on an education because of the cost of school fees. We also give children regular checks at the local hospital to monitor their health and prevent any serious illnesses.

## Staying together

Three-year-old Lily (above) lives with her mother Veerna in a one-room house on the outskirts of south Johannesburg, South Africa. The small tin-shack has no running water or electricity and as the sun beats down outside it is stifling inside. However Lily would much rather be inside with her mother than playing with her friends. Veerna is HIV positive and very weak so she spends most of her time in bed. Lily is also HIV positive and has to take care of her mother, fetching her water, food and medicine.

Lily's father was also HIV positive and died of an AIDS related illness. Lily and Veerna now only have each other. Because of this they are very close and Veerna does not

like being separated from her daughter. However, this means that she has not been getting the treatment she needs as she always leaves hospital early to be with Lily.

## Practical support

Since 2006, Lily has been sponsored by an Islamic Relief donor. In households like Lily's, where the mother or the child is HIV positive, we provide hygiene kits, medicine and antiretroviral drugs. Lily and Veerna are both receiving antiretrovirals as well as medication for tuberculosis. Since receiving this treatment Lily has had far fewer illnesses and is much stronger. Islamic Relief ensures that mother and daughter both get the medication they need and also gives Veerna a great deal of practical support.

"Islamic Relief has been there to help me by giving us transport to the hospital and helping us with our medical files," Veerna said. "Lettie [an Islamic Relief field worker] also comes to bathe and nurse me when I am not able to help myself."

Lily often becomes distressed and agitated when her mother falls ill and our social workers help put her at ease. With Islamic Relief's support Veerna is now able to spend much of her time in a local hospice where she can receive the medical care she needs. Lily also stays in the hospice in a special children's unit where she is well looked after. Although Veerna is very weak she no longer resists medical care because she is able to be with her daughter.

***One fifth of South Africa's population is living with HIV. Already 1.2 million children have lost their parents to the disease - and this number continues to rise***

## Child health in Mali

In the West African country of Mali, one in five children will die before they reach their fifth birthday. To help reduce this alarmingly high rate of child mortality we have set up a health centre in the capital city of Bamako. The Centre of Hope provides medical care, treatment for malnutrition, psychological support and health education sessions for children and their mothers. The centre aims to improve the health of vulnerable children, many of whom have lost their fathers. It also teaches mothers about issues such as health, sanitation, waterborne diseases and breastfeeding.

## Hope for Mohamed

The Centre of Hope also provides an HIV screening service and support for mothers and children who test HIV positive. In Mali, HIV is an ever-increasing problem and over 94,000 children have already been orphaned because of the disease. Eight-year-old Mohamed lost his father when he was four months old and his mother when he was three to HIV. Mohamed is now also living with the disease himself.

Since the death of his parents, Mohamed has been cared for by his grandmother. She used to make her living selling groundnut butter in the local market but as she gets older she can no longer work. She has three daughters and four sons but only one of her sons is employed. Her family find it very difficult to make ends meet. The whole family share a very small house that has no running water or electricity and often when it rains the water leaks through the gaps in the roof.

*Right: Eight-year-old Mohammed from Mali*

## A new start

Mohamed's grandmother first learned about Islamic Relief's orphan sponsorship programme when her daughter told her about a charity that provides support to orphans and widows. Fortunately it was not long before Mohamed was put in touch with an Islamic Relief supporter. Since being sponsored the whole family has seen an improvement in their living conditions and they all feel less apprehensive about the future.

As well making sure Mohammed has enough food and sufficient clothing, the sponsorship also means he can go to school and get the medical care he needs. Mohammed is provided with free anti-retroviral drugs at the Centre of Hope, his health is regularly monitored and he is treated if he has any infections. Since receiving regular health checks and medicine Mohamed's health has improved and he is now able to go to school and play with his friends; simple things that he was not able to do before.





# How you can help

**You can support Islamic Relief's work with children by sponsoring a child or making a donation to our Orphan's General Fund.**

## Becoming a sponsor

By sponsoring a child through Islamic Relief's One-to-one Orphan Sponsorship scheme you can help make a significant improvement to a child's life. The scheme allows you to select an orphan in a country of your choice and keep in touch with his or her progress.

The monthly payment you make will ensure that the child has adequate food, clean water, access to education and that their medical needs are taken care of. If necessary and where possible, improvements can also be made to the child's home to improve their living conditions.

## Helping communities

By becoming an Islamic Relief sponsor you will be helping more than just one child, as your support will benefit the whole family and even the wider community. Often the child's guardian will be able to use some of the sponsorship money to ensure that other children in the family are cared for as well as perhaps investing in animals or crops so that the family can become self-sufficient.

Our sponsorship scheme covers vulnerable children from diverse backgrounds around the world. Children can be sponsored up to the age of 18 although we encourage



donors to sponsor for a minimum of one year. If you choose to withdraw your sponsorship we ask you to give us three months notice so that we can find another sponsor. Islamic Relief will care for the child's needs until a replacement donor is found.

## How to start sponsoring

The easiest way to sponsor a child is to do so via the website [www.alyateem.com](http://www.alyateem.com) or [www.onlineorphans.com](http://www.onlineorphans.com)

You can also contact the Orphans Dept at your local office or at Islamic Relief headquarters (see back of booklet for contact details). Islamic Relief staff will be happy to answer your questions and arrange sponsorship.

Costs for sponsorship vary depending on where the child you choose to sponsor lives, but start from as little as €33/£23/\$33. You can pay by credit or debit card, standing order or cheque.

## Keeping in touch

If you sponsor a child online you will be able to access a photograph and details of the child via [www.alyateem.com/myorphan](http://www.alyateem.com/myorphan)

If you have sponsored a child via any other method, we will send you the information within 21 days of receiving your first payment.

Every year you will receive a report that updates you on the child's progress and allows you to see how your support has made a difference to their life. Some children like to send drawings and letters to their sponsors, and you can also send letters or gifts via your local Islamic Relief office. All materials sent by donors must conform to Islamic Relief's policy.

## Donating to the Orphans Fund

You can also support our work with vulnerable children by donating any amount to our Orphans General Fund

(OGF). The OGF allows you to help more than one child as donations are used for projects that benefit children within their communities. Projects focus on providing education and health care facilities, social welfare and leisure activities for vulnerable children.

To make a donation to the OGF and help improve the life of a whole community please contact Islamic Relief headquarters or your local Islamic Relief office (see back of booklet for contact details).



*Left: Islamic Relief staff at a primary school in Mali  
Above: Mohammed Shibley and his mother, Sri Lanka*



# Frequently Asked Questions

## 1) How much of the sponsorship money will reach the child and their family?

From every 1 Euro that is donated, 87.5 cents will go to the child and their family. The rest is used for administration purposes and the costs associated with monitoring the child's progress.

## 2) Can I contact the child?

You can exchange letters or gifts with your sponsored child by sending them to your local Islamic Relief fundraising office. All materials sent by donors must conform to Islamic Relief's policy and donors are not permitted to attempt to contact the child or their family without the permission of Islamic Relief.

## 3) Can I visit?

Yes, supervised visits may be organised after prior arrangement with your local Islamic Relief office. Of course, if you do make an arranged visit you would be responsible for your own travel arrangements and travelling at your own expense and risk. For obvious safety reasons, sponsored children cannot be brought to the donor's country for visits.

## 4) Do you only sponsor Muslim children?

No. As an organisation Islamic Relief works with a wide

range of communities both Muslim and non-Muslim. We do not discriminate on the basis of religion, gender, race or ethnicity but give aid to those who are most in need and as such the children that we support come from a variety of backgrounds.

## 5) How can I be sure that the money is going to the child?

The sponsorship money goes directly to the sponsored child's guardians. Islamic Relief staff regularly monitor that the money is being spent in a way that benefits the child. Our staff compile regular updates to ensure that all the child's medical, educational and social needs are taken care of. This monitoring is carried out directly by our staff – we do not rely on any third party to do this on our behalf.

## 6) How do you define an orphan?

Islamic Relief defines an orphan as “a child below the age of 18, without both parents or father, or whose father has abandoned them for a minimum of four years, regardless of gender, religion or race.”

This is because in many communities men have responsibility for financially providing for their family and when they die the family can face economic hardship. This problem is more acute in countries where the percentage of women who have finished their education

is low and where they have little chance to support their children after their husband's death.

## 7) How do you ensure the safety of the children you work with?

Islamic Relief has a strict Child Protection Policy and our staff are given regular training on child protection issues.

We never give out the full name or location of any child on our website. Photos and information used on the website may not be downloaded, copied or replicated without the express permission of Islamic Relief.

Correspondence from donors to sponsored children must go through an Islamic Relief office and must conform to our Child Protection Policy. Islamic Relief will not allow unannounced visits of donors to sponsored children and donors are not permitted to try and contact any sponsored child without Islamic Relief's permission. All visits to sponsored children will be supervised by an Islamic Relief Orphan Welfare Officer at all times and police background checks may be carried out before allowing visits.

## 8) How do I sponsor a child?

It is very easy. Visit our website [www.alyateem.com](http://www.alyateem.com) or [www.onlineorphans.com](http://www.onlineorphans.com) where you can select which child you would like to support. Alternatively you can contact your local Islamic Relief office or our International Call Centre on +44 121 622 0622.

## 9) How much does it cost?

Below are the costs per month depending on where the child you choose to sponsor is from

€33/£25/\$33	€39/£29/\$39	€48/£35/\$48
Bangladesh	Albania	Bosnia-Herzegovina
India	Kenya	
Mali	Pakistan/Kashmir	Jordan*
Sudan		Kosova
Chechnya	Iraq	Palestinian Territories
Ethiopia	Indonesia	
South Africa	Niger	Lebanon*
Sri Lanka		
Yemen		
Somalia		

Prices are subject to review and may change in the future.

## 10) How do I pay?

Payments can be made in various ways, including online, credit or debit card, standing order or cheques. For all other payment queries please contact Islamic Relief's International Call Centre on +44 121 622 0622 or your nearest Islamic Relief office. The contact details for our local offices are available at the back of this booklet or on our main website [www.islamic-relief.com](http://www.islamic-relief.com)

\*Most orphans sponsored in these countries are Palestinian refugees



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