



## Beyond Business

June 13, 2008

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### BEYOND BUSINESS

Bindu Rai

#### I AM...

**NAME:** Matthew Morgan-Jones  
**AGE:** 36  
**NATIONALITY:** British  
**JOB:** Country Director, All As One



**Tell us about the charity Gala Ball on Sunday at the Le Méridien Dubai?** It is part of the 5th Corporate Social Responsibility Summit organised by IIR Middle East, with proceeds going to the All As One charity for Sierra Leone. It will aid in the operation of the Children's Centre that cares for more than 50 children in Freetown and will support a new home for more than 150 children.

**How much are you hoping to raise?** It costs approximately Dh37,000 a month to run the facility. Sierra Leone has nearly 350,000 orphaned or vulnerable children – six per cent of the population. Our strategy is to ensure we can assist more.

**How did you get involved with AAO?** I started researching adoption after working in South Africa and visiting Aids orphanages there. Later, I found information on All As One and contacted Deanna Wallace, the founder. That was four years ago, and it took about 18 months of heartache and stress to complete the adoption of my first two children, Dauda and Magda. When I returned to Dubai, I wanted to do something. Four months later Deanna e-mailed to say they were closing the centre due to the lack of funds. I knew I had to do something.

**Your family has grown over the years.** Yes, it's been zero to four in two years! David and Dauda are five, Magda just turned four and Mariama will soon be two. It's been a fantastic three years and I'm enjoying the challenges and delights of parenthood. It's amazing to see their personalities shining through.

**Is it true you bumped into Angelina Jolie in Sierra Leone?** I had just arrived in Freetown and at breakfast thought, 'hang on, that's Angelina Jolie'. After a day of spotting her around, I plucked up the courage to approach her. She was brilliant, and as soon as I told her I was adopting, she was so engaging. She had just returned from Ethiopia where she had seen her soon-to-be daughter and we chatted about the difficulties of single parenthood (it was pre-Brad).