

Blood Diamond will help keep war orphans off mean streets

■ All proceeds from special screening will go to charity ■ All As One hopes it will put Sierra Leone back on the map

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A special screening of blockbuster *Blood Diamond* is being held tomorrow in the hope that a retelling of Sierra Leone's forgotten war will open minds and wallets for people in need in the impoverished nation.

Warner Brothers and distributor Shooting Stars have given permission for the screening to benefit All As One.

Cinestar Theatres will give proceeds from tickets sold for its 250-capacity theatre at

Mall of the Emirates to the charity. The Dh30 ticket price will include viewing of the movie that stars Leonardo DiCaprio and Jennifer Connelly, popcorn and a drink.

All As One's Dubai office funds an orphanage for victims of Sierra Leone's 10-year civil war, which saw the death of 200,000 and the displacement of countless others.

Matthew Morgan-Jones, Director of All As One, Dubai, said: "*Blood Diamond* is based on the civil war in Sierra Leone. Lots of people have heard about the war, but the

film puts it in visual context.

"The children in our orphanage in Sierra Leone are paying the price of that war,"

"This is a special film for us. We hope it will put Sierra Leone back on the map. It's still one of the poorest countries in the world.

"The problems that the country had before the war – high unemployment and maternal mortality – have not improved," said Morgan-Jones.

Sierra Leone is listed in the United Nations Human Development Index as being the world's second worst place to live. In the civil war in the

1990s, an estimated 100,000 children were affected, with about 10,000 recruited as soldiers and 10,000 abducted for sexual slavery and forced labour. Thousands are now orphaned and abandoned.

The charity is facing a massive funding shortage that the special screening will only partially reduce.

"We still have quite a lot of work to do. But we are still hand to mouth. The orphanage in Sierra Leone survives by the fund raising we do in Dubai. We only have enough money to run through March," said Morgan-Jones.

The screening and the All As One Charity Dinner at Wafi City on March 22 will benefit the orphans on Sierra Leone's mean streets.

"We will be asking people to first watch the film to raise awareness of the situation in Sierra Leone.

"We will also be handing out information on our child sponsorship programme and the children-for-children programme, where schools and parents involve their children and students in charity work by raising funds for one of the orphans," added Morgan-Jones.



■ An acclaimed film

SUPPLIED