

International Annual Report 2020



SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES

SOS Children's Villages

Founded in 1949, SOS Children's Villages is the world's largest non-governmental organization focused on supporting children and young people without parental care or at risk of losing it.

Child neglect, abuse and abandonment is everywhere. Families are at risk of separation. Locally led, we work in more than 130 countries and territories to strengthen families who are under pressure so they can stay together. When this is not in a child or young person's best interests, we provide quality care according to their unique needs.

Together with partners, donors, communities, children, young people and families, we enable children to grow up with the bonds they need to develop and become their strongest selves. We speak up for each child's rights and advocate for change so all children can grow up in a supportive environment.

www.sos-childrensvillages.org



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Some names in this report have been changed to protect the child's privacy.

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Connecting in Times of Crisis



Dereje Wordofa
President



Ingrid Maria Johansen
Chief Executive Officer

After decades of steady progress on the child rights agenda, 2020 proved to be a major setback for children worldwide, especially those growing up alone or in families at risk of breaking down. More than 700,000 children had lost a parent to COVID-19 by year's end, and millions more are now at risk of being deprived of their families. As the world builds back, we urgently need to come together as a global community to respond to the new pressures facing children without parental care or at risk of losing it. (Read more in "Year in Review.")

There is no doubt that 2020 was a difficult year for the children, young people and families in our programmes across the world. They too struggled with not seeing loved ones, school closures, mental stress, health issues and job loss. After the initial shock of the first lockdowns, we spent much of the year adapting our services to support children and families to cope with the pandemic's pressures. Despite the new challenges, there have been silver linings and things we have learned – the paradox of crisis.

In particular, the pandemic forced us to scale up our digital efforts. As a result, we are connecting faster and reaching even more people – be it through online trainings on mental health, mentoring activities through our YouthCan! employability initiative, or being there via live chat for a young person in crisis. The pandemic pushed us away physically from each other, but technology brought us together.

And while lockdowns have been stressful, we have also seen families spending more quality time together, playing games and having conversations they normally don't have the time for. We have seen young people who left care checking in on their peers over social media groups. The pandemic has demonstrated how important connection is, especially in times of crisis. (Read more in "In Their Own Words.")

Children need safe and nurturing relationships to be able to thrive and become their strongest selves. SOS Children's Villages is committed to making this happen wherever we can. We support families to stay together and strengthen the connection with their children. We support caregivers to connect with the children and young people in our care, care leavers to connect with one another, and so much more.

To our 4.2 million donors and partners, we say thank you for supporting our work during these challenging times. Whether through a donation, sharing a post or becoming a mentor, you make connection possible – which is now more important than ever.



AL-THAWRA BANIN SCHOOL, ALEPPO

All children have the right to quality education, yet this year the pandemic left millions without access to the learning, resources and socialization that school provides. This school in Aleppo, Syria, which we helped to rebuild in 2018, was one of many that had to close its doors for several months. It reopened in September 2020 for the start of the new school year.



A country is not only made up of adults, we children exist and should be heard as well.

— Girl, Costa Rica, #CovidUnder19 survey

Year in Review 2020

The year 2020 was dominated by a single topic – COVID-19 – with most of the world adjusting to a difficult new reality. What was the pandemic’s impact on children and young people growing up without parental care or in families already struggling to stay together? What have we learned and how can we respond better to the new pressures they are facing?

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization classified COVID-19 as a global pandemic. With mortality occurring primarily in older adults, it seemed at first that children and young people were being spared. Parents exhaled. But by year’s end, it became clear that the pandemic and the measures associated with containing the virus – school closures, lockdowns and physical distancing – were taking an extreme toll on children and young people and their overall well-being. Many witnessed the death of a parent or grandparent with no opportunity to say goodbye. Many experienced isolation, anxiety and depression – in families under increased economic strain and pressure. Children growing up without strong, supportive environments were even more likely to have their rights violated, especially due to the suspension of or lack of access to social services.

The statistics are staggering. To name just a few: 85 million more children have been put at risk of physical, sexual, and emotional violence;¹ schools closed for nearly 1.5 billion children and young people, with 31% unable to access remote learning² and an estimated 24 million dropping out altogether.³ Children living in poverty were at even greater risk of becoming engaged in labour or exploitation as a means of supporting their families.

GLOBAL RESPONSE

Child-focused organizations worldwide called for child protection and family welfare to be at the centre of governments’ pandemic response and for child rights to be upheld. The focus has been on ensuring access to food and healthcare including mental health and psychosocial support, as well

as appropriate care, protection and education. At the UN General Assembly Special Session on COVID-19, SOS Children’s Villages, together with UNICEF and other partners, advocated for countries to ensure children were priority.

Encouragingly, important steps to include the voices of children in these discussions have been achieved. One promising example is the #CovidUnder19 initiative, coordinated by Terre des hommes in collaboration with children and young people, and with UN stakeholders, academics and around 30 organizations. More than 26,000 children worldwide responded to the initiative’s Life Under Coronavirus survey, giving insights into how their lives have been affected by COVID-19. The results were shared with governments and are feeding into our understanding of how we can best support children during the pandemic.

COMPOUNDING PRESSURES

For children and young people growing up without the support and safety net of a stable family environment, the pandemic has added yet another layer of pressure and another obstacle on their journey to becoming strong adults. Research proves what our own common sense tells us: children develop best in the context of safe and healthy family relationships.⁴ From infancy through adolescence and into their transition to independence, all children need a reliable adult caregiver they can trust and turn to for guidance.

But this year, an estimated 1 in 10 children worldwide⁵ navigated the new challenges of COVID-19 basically on their own.

¹ World Vision (2020), A Perfect Storm. ² <https://data.unicef.org/resources/remote-learning-reachability-factsheet/>. ³ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373992>.

⁴ Dozier, M. et al. (2014), The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry. ⁵ SOS Children’s Villages International (2016), Child at Risk.

Families already struggling to stay together were put under further strain, making an environment for safe and healthy relationships more difficult and increasing the likelihood of children losing parental care.

The drivers for child-family separation are complex and generally include a multitude of factors, such as: death or poor health of a parent or caregiver; violence, abuse and neglect; poverty; substance abuse; migration; lack of access to education; lack of social networks; and incarceration. Nearly all of these areas were negatively affected this year as either a direct or indirect consequence of the pandemic.

CHILDREN LOSING PARENTS

Especially concerning for us at SOS Children's Villages is the number of children whose parents or grandparents have died due to COVID-19. As of 31 December 2020, an estimated minimum of 700,000 children had lost a parent, grandparent or other adult primary caregiver.⁶ Many teenagers and young adults just starting out on their own were forced to take on the role of caregiver and breadwinner for their younger siblings. Grandparents, who play a crucial role in many societies as either direct caregiver or general family helper, were more likely to succumb to the virus, leaving families to both mourn their loss and cope with less support.

”

The important thing is to analyze the experience of the pandemic from the perspective of young people.

— Luis, 17, speaking at the high-level launch of #CovidUnder19 global survey findings

Many of these children may suffer long-term effects from the trauma of a lost loved one; many families will be further strained due to the loss of a caregiver; and many children who do not have support networks or extended family will be in need of quality alternative care that supports their development – at a time when governments are struggling with the economic fallout of the pandemic.

CHILDREN IN ALTERNATIVE CARE

Indeed, governments in some countries responded to the COVID-19 crisis by reducing or closing residential care services. For many children and young people in alternative care – 80% of whom have at least one living parent⁷ – this meant a hurried and often unprepared return to their biological families, often without the underlying conditions for their original placement in care being addressed. A recent study expressed concern that rapid returns were made without appropriate preparation, support, and monitoring to ensure child safety or family stability.⁸

In our own programmes, many young people who had formally left care had their plans for internships, jobs or further studies put on hold or cancelled as a result of the pandemic. Without family to lean on, many of these care leavers returned to our youth homes for extended stays.

Young people have repeatedly identified the gap in government support for care leavers as they transition out of care and into independence. Increased financial and housing support was one of their major asks at the first International Care Leavers Convention in November, which was led by care leavers and supported by SOS Children's Villages along with partners. A silver lining of the pandemic: the event, originally intended to be in person, was able to have a much broader reach

once it moved online, connecting care leavers, policymakers and researchers from 80 countries.

MENTAL HEALTH

The COVID-19 crisis has had a profound effect on the mental health of children and youth: worldwide, 25% experienced clinically elevated levels of depression, double that of pre-pandemic

levels.⁹ Isolation from peers, disruption of routines, additional tensions in the home and overall anxiety about the virus were by-products of the pandemic not immediately visible. For children and young people without parental care or at risk of losing it, the mental health toll is likely higher.

The majority of children in alternative care have experienced some form of trauma before entering the care system. In our own programmes, we have seen that the stress and anxiety of the pandemic have in some cases compounded pre-existing mental health issues, triggering past fears and emotions not yet fully processed.

While we have been increasingly focusing on mental health, the pandemic underlined how important it is for parents and care practitioners to be “trauma-informed” – that is, making the connections between the challenges in a child's past and their behaviour in the present. This year, we continued to build and expand our programmatic pillar on trauma-informed care for our own staff and beyond. Being trauma-informed holds true for parents as well. With the pandemic's additional burdens on families, it is critical that parents receive as much mental health support as possible, so they can focus on caring for children, rather than the other way around.

PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE

For many children and youth, staying at home due to lockdowns did not equate to staying safe. In interviews with children at the height of the first wave, 81% saw an increase in violence at home, online, or in their community.¹⁰

Additional stress on families triggered by the rise in unemployment and the loss of livelihood is strongly linked with higher risk of violence against children. With movement restrictions, social isolation and school closures added to the mix, high-stress home environments are created. This can lead to increased child abuse, neglect and abandonment, resulting in the need for emergency or longer-term alternative care.

In our family strengthening programmes this year, we learned that the groundwork laid prior to COVID-19 helped most families to withstand the added pressures of the pandemic and not resort

to violence. That groundwork included workshops on how to use non-violent discipline with children, psychological counseling to help parents deal with their own traumas, as well as other measures to reduce strain, such as livelihood support and help in accessing services.

Now more than ever, families at risk of breaking down need additional support. By addressing the root causes of child-family separation, government and society can help families to stay together and ensure that children grow up in safe and healthy family relationships.

BUILDING BACK FOR WITH

While COVID-19 has undeniably set child rights back, we know what the levers are to getting back on track: working in partnership, across sectors, with children and young people leading the way. Also, let us not forget the progress that was made in spite of the pandemic and the new opportunities that arose.

In 2020, Guinea, Japan and Seychelles joined the list of countries and territories that outlaw corporal punishment of children, even in the home, bringing the total to 61. Countries worldwide began implementing the 2019 UN Resolution on the Rights on the Child, which holds great promise for improving the lives of children without parental care or at risk of losing it.

So too does the digital transformation taking place as a result of COVID-19. For us, this means an increased capacity for knowledge-sharing; more opportunities for collecting data – key to helping governments understand the benefits of investing in families and providing quality care; and a step on the way to reducing the digital divide that became so clear this year. Most importantly, it provides children and youth with more opportunities to speak up and get involved, paving the way for a future that is more inclusive and participatory.

Children and young people are the experts of their lives. Today, they are organizing themselves, making specific recommendations to governments and leading change. We are very encouraged to see their voices being heard by decision-makers more and more. Now is the time to include them in setting the agenda.

⁶Hillis, S. et al. (2021), The Lancet, Vol. 398, Issue 10298.
⁷Save the Children (2009), Keeping Children out of Harmful Institutions.

⁸Wilke, N.G. et al. (2020), Child Abuse & Neglect Vol. 110, Part 2.

⁹Racine, N. et al. (2021), JAMA Pediatrics.

¹⁰World Vision (2020), Act Now.

COVID-19 DATA

140 MILLION MORE CHILDREN



slipped into poverty due to the pandemic

(source: UNICEF)

25%

of youth worldwide experienced clinically elevated depression symptoms

(source: JAMA Pediatrics)

700,000

children lost a primary caregiver to COVID-19

(source: The Lancet)

85 MILLION MORE CHILDREN

were at risk of physical, sexual, and emotional violence

(source: World Vision)

24 MILLION LEARNERS



may not return to school post-pandemic

(source: UNESCO)

463 MILLION CHILDREN

worldwide were unable to access remote learning

(source: UNICEF)

20%

increase in domestic violence during lockdowns

(source: UNFPA)

13 MILLION



more estimated child marriages over next ten years due to the pandemic

(source: UNFPA)

4 IN 10

adults in the US reported struggling with mental health or substance abuse

(source: CDC)

YOUNG VOICES 2020

”

It is important that people all over the world know what a care leaver is, and what they are struggling with in life.

— Fabienne, 24, Austria

”

The coronavirus threatens me and creates in me a kind of insecurity.

— Olivier, 18, Burundi

”

I miss my friends a lot. I miss getting up to mischief. But sharing meals and doing activities with my family has also been fun.

— Franck, 15, Peru

”

I would tell politicians when they are making laws to do that with the heart of mothers and not of politicians.

— Girl, 12, Bolivia, #CovidUnder19 survey

”

Being in good health is precious.

— Amira, 10, Morocco

”

Do you not want to live in a world where no young person has to suffer from depression?

— Ronalyn, 23, Philippines, Youth Power project

Our Programmes

SOS Children's Villages provides a range of services to support children and young people in difficult circumstances to become their strongest selves. We speak up for children's rights around the world and advocate for systemic change. Guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, we always work in the best interests of the child.



PROGRAMMES
IN 2020

2,845



PEOPLE REACHED
IN 2020

1,178,200

OUR CHILD SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENTS

- We create a safe environment for children in all our programmes.
- We do not tolerate any abusive behaviour towards children, whether intentional or inadvertent, anywhere in our sphere of influence.
- We promote child protection in the communities where we work.

Child Safeguarding

Protecting children is at the heart of what we do. We remain ever vigilant to continuously improve our safeguarding policies and practices, and to ensure a safe and caring environment for children and young people.

As outlined in our Child Protection Policy, we focus on awareness, prevention, reporting and responding to create a safe and caring environment. For us, this means an environment where children and young people feel safe, loved and cared for; where their rights are respected; and where they can raise concerns, knowing they will be listened to and their concerns acted upon swiftly and immediately.

We have learned to approach safeguarding holistically, meaning ensuring a high level of programme quality overall. We provide ongoing training for our staff, especially those working directly with children and youth, and for parents in our family strengthening programmes. We work with children to make sure they know their rights and how to report concerns. In 2020, with in-person visits limited by the pandemic, much of this work was done virtually or by phone calls.

The year 2020 also saw the Independent Child Safeguarding Review near completion. We commissioned this review in order to learn from past child safeguarding cases and improve our practices. The final report is now available on the Child Safeguarding Info Hub on our international website. The Review noted important progress SOS Children's Villages has made in the last decade. At the same time, it identified significant gaps where we were not able to prevent harm and did not respond appropriately.

We have committed to implementing all recommendations from the Review at rapid pace. Our Child Safeguarding Action Plan has outlined eight priority areas, including an independent Special Commission to review past cases, an ombudsperson system and individual support to those who suffered harm. We will report transparently on our progress alongside our Child Safeguarding Annual Reports. We owe it to the children and young people we work for and to everyone engaged in our mission. We also hope these materials serve as a resource for others to improve child safeguarding practices across our sector.

Strengthening Families

In many places around the world, families experiencing crisis or extreme hardship may have difficulties caring for their children. Beyond receiving sufficient nutritious food or having access to water and healthcare, children need to feel protected, encouraged and respected by reliable adults who love them unconditionally.

SOS Children's Villages works with families, caregivers and communities to prevent crises that can lead to child-family separation. Our services strengthen and stabilize families and their social networks so that children are better cared for and protected.

GLOBAL CONTEXT

In 2020, pandemic lockdown measures imposed by governments increased pressure on families already struggling to stay together. Worldwide, 140 million more children slipped into poverty and more than 700,000 children lost a parent to COVID-19. In many countries, families in our programmes experienced increased fragility due to loss of income, isolation, and lack of access to health and education services. Lockdowns led to limitations or interruptions of vital support services.

PANDEMIC RESPONSE

This year, we adapted our services to help struggling families manage the crisis and ensure they could care for themselves and their children. We distributed basic food and hygiene kits; raised awareness on ways to prevent the spread of the virus; helped families to access government, education and community services; and conducted virtual counseling to help parents and caregivers cope with the added



© Jakob Fuhr | Kenya

LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT

Single father Antony, raising two young children in Kenya, found himself forced to sell all his work tools and possessions to buy food after COVID-19 shuttered his shoe repair business. We supported families like his to make it through the pandemic and rebuild their lives so they can stay together.

620

FAMILY STRENGTHENING PROGRAMMES WORLDWIDE IN 2020



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Lockdowns in Peru left more than a third of Peruvians without food. A group of women in Nueva Ciudad Inca, supported by our family strengthening programme, organized a soup kitchen to help each other by combining their resources. On a typical day, they fed over 250 people in the community.

35

COMMUNITY KITCHENS SUPPORTED IN PERU

anxiety and stress. In Mongolia, for example, the family strengthening team provided food, vitamins, disinfectants, toiletries and school supplies. Some parents also received sewing machines to make masks to earn a living and help the community.

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Although online learning worked for many children and young people around the world, those living in vulnerable conditions – with limited or no access to electricity and the internet, or whose schools lack the capacity to offer digital learning – missed out on their education. Of the 1.5 billion students whose schools closed, more than 30% were unable to gain access through remote learning. In 2020, we supported many families to bridge the digital divide. In Adwa, Ethiopia, for example, more than 400 families received solar-powered radios to help children tune into and keep up with their studies.

PREVENTING VIOLENCE

In 2020, stay-at-home orders to contain the spread of infection led to sharp increases in reports of domestic violence around the world. Fortunately, SOS Children's Villages has been running various types of programmes to stop violence in the home, such as our Active Fatherhood workshops in North Macedonia. These workshops provided parents with a good base for managing stress. Our social workers report that because of progress made before the pandemic, nearly all families were able to cope without resorting to violence.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Mental well-being is crucial for children and young people, and for parents to be able to care for their children. We offer mental health support to families, which was especially important in managing the anxiety of the pandemic. In Lebanon, for example, we counseled families struggling not only with the pandemic but also with the aftermath of a massive explosion in Beirut. With loved ones lost and homes destroyed, parents were emotionally devastated and their children fearful. Providing mental health support is key for their healing and resilience, and helps prevent the family from breaking down.

Alternative Care

According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, children have the right to care and protection even when their own family cannot care for them. Our first priority is to strengthen existing families so they can stay together. However, when this is not in the child's best interests or when there is no family to care for them, SOS Children's Villages offers a range of care options, adapted to the local context, to best meet the individual needs of each child or young person.



© Pearl Sandhu | Vietnam

In cooperation with child protection authorities and with the children themselves, we conduct a thorough assessment to determine which care setting best suits them. No matter the length of time of the placement, we work to build trust with each child and support them on their path to independence. In 2020, we cared for 65,600 children and young people in our family-like care, foster care, youth care and other care programmes.

FAMILY-LIKE CARE

In our family-like care, children and young people experience a reliable caregiver as well as a home and a community. Biological siblings live together as long as it is in their best interests, so that the emotional bond between them can remain and grow. Specialists regularly assess the child's placement, with an eye toward reintegration into the child's family of origin wherever possible. In 2020, we provided family-like care for 37,600 children and youth around the world.

COVID-19 saw many children lose parental care, if only temporarily. In India, for example, hundreds of children whose parents or caregivers were sick were cared for on a short-term basis. Tragically, 21 of them lost their parents to the virus. Eighteen children found a new home with relatives, and three children with no extended family are being cared for in our family-like care programme.

LIFE UNDER COVID-19

Like everywhere, the lockdowns of 2020 were a challenge for the children and youth in our care in terms of mental well-being, education and health. Movement restrictions meant that visits from social workers, friends and children's biological families could only happen virtually. In Bosnia & Herzegovina, instructional videos were made to help caregivers learn about how to best support children through the pandemic, like encouraging children to call loved ones and helping them to express their emotions through creative work.

ADJUSTING TO NEW REALITIES

Around the world, the children and youth in our care had to adapt to the new reality, dealing with quarantines, masking up, and learning from home.

65,600

CHILDREN AND YOUTH
CARED FOR IN 2020

ENSURING EDUCATION

School closures imposed in 188 countries during the pandemic affected nearly 1.5 billion children and youth. Like others worldwide, our caregivers adapted to the situation, homeschooling their children and ensuring they had access to online education where available. In some places, such as Cochabamba, Bolivia, children received laptops and tablets to stay on top of their studies. When local schools could not offer virtual classes, care practitioners and educators in SOS Children's Villages organized their own.

FOSTER CARE

Our foster care services are unique to the national context. In some countries, we provide counseling or training to foster families, or we work with governments to implement quality foster care standards. In other countries, our caregivers are registered as foster parents. In 2020, many foster parents required extra support. In Ukraine, we moved activities of psychologists and social workers online, and we provided additional trainings on child safeguarding amid the stresses of the pandemic.

YOUTH CARE

Our youth care programmes aim to equip young people with the skills and confidence they need to transition to independence. This year, COVID-19 hindered the academic and career prospects of many youth leaving care because of job losses and university closures; some care leavers needed to return to youth care for housing, often for as long as six months. In 2020, we cared for nearly 19,000 young people around the world.

TRAUMA-INFORMED TRAINING

Many children and youth in alternative care have had adverse childhood experiences which may have resulted in trauma. Care practitioners need specialized training to recognize certain behaviours and support children to heal. In the project "Safe Places, Thriving Children," we collaborate with partners to deliver training, raise awareness of the topic in related professions, and support alternative care providers in embedding trauma-informed practices into their daily work. The project is currently active in six countries in Europe.

Amal grew up in family-like care in Jordan and is a multiple gold medallist in taekwondo. She has used her dedication and discipline to help others in her community, making sports equipment accessible to children who live in remote areas via a roving bus.

”

I won't give up.



Youth Employability

Young people who have lost or are at risk of losing parental care often find the transition from school to starting a career particularly challenging, as they cannot count on the networks, resources or guidance that their peers may have access to. SOS Children's Villages, together with young people, partners and corporate volunteers, has been developing innovative ways to ensure a confident transition to independence.

© Tania Thorngreen | Morocco



37

COUNTRIES

1,500

VOLUNTEERS

6,500

YOUNG PEOPLE

GLOBAL CONTEXT

The COVID-19 pandemic gave young people across the globe a rocky start to their careers in 2020. The ILO warned of a real risk of a lost generation, citing an 8.7% employment loss among youth, more than double that for adults. Young workers were often the first to lose their jobs and also more likely to accept part-time or precarious employment. On top of this, disrupted education and lack of digital access put young people from vulnerable backgrounds at an even further disadvantage.

YOUTHCAN! GOING DIGITAL

Our global partnership for youth employability continued to expand in 2020, thanks in part to our YouthLinks digital platform – with 211 of our 334 activities taking place at least partially online to combat the challenges of COVID-19. As a result, six times as many people took part in our YouthCan! online activities as in previous years and 74% of young people believe that connecting with mentors and peers helped them cope with the pandemic while being confined at home.

WORLD OF TOMORROW WEBINAR

In December 2020, young people moderated a global conversation between youth and the CEO of Deutsche Post DHL on youth employability. The event was organized in collaboration with DPDHL, a long-standing strategic partner of YouthCan!. DPDHL employees have been mentoring young people in our programmes since 2011. The webinar connected youth and volunteers from over 91 countries, facilitating exchange on a larger scale in the face of the pandemic.

”

I have found new self-confidence about what I can achieve.

— Adjokê, participant in the SOS Children's Villages / NetHope Device Challenge project

Education

Every child has a right to education. Yet this year, millions of children worldwide were denied that right due to COVID-19 lockdowns and lack of digital access. This was on top of pre-existing barriers caused by poverty, discrimination, violence, family illness and more.

Our education programmes encompass early childhood care and development, primary and secondary learning, and employment and entrepreneurship training. We focus on the child as a resourceful individual with unique skills and capabilities.

DIGITAL VILLAGES

Our Digital Village project was crucial this year in helping children and youth in our programmes to access education. The project equips both children and parents with digital skills to improve school grades and employability, support with household tasks, and safely participate in the global digital community. In 2020, it expanded threefold, reaching more than 18,300 children and youth and 3,700 caregivers in 59 locations worldwide – also delivering computer equipment to many rural schools and communities.

EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Our training programmes are designed to support young people from vulnerable backgrounds to become self-reliant. Parents in struggling families can also avail themselves of our services – to build skills or learn how to start a small business. In some countries we operate our own vocational training centres, and in others we work in partnership. Due to the pandemic, some of our services were suspended and some went virtual. In total, we reached 11,600 young people and adults in 2020.



PRIMARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION

Directly and with partners, we support children from disadvantaged backgrounds to have access to high-quality education.

159,500

PEOPLE REACHED IN 2020

Humanitarian Action

We respond to the urgent needs of children and families in times of conflict, natural disaster or mass displacement. Drawing on our long-term presence in the countries and communities where we work, we are well-positioned to understand the needs, identify partners and act quickly. Our focus is always on caring for children, protecting their rights and keeping families together. In 2020, we responded to emergencies in 26 countries and territories.

© Ali Mahmoud Itani | Lebanon

OUR FOCUS



CARING FOR CHILDREN



PROTECTING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS



KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER

COMBATTING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

In 2020, it became evident that the social and economic impact of the pandemic on families already under pressure would be severe. Child rights violations were exacerbated, and the ability to meet basic needs threatened. SOS Children's Villages member associations around the globe took measures to minimize the pandemic's impact in all types of programmes, including protecting programme participants and reaching out to further families in an effort to prevent family separation. These measures covered activities related to food; health; water, sanitation and hygiene; and access to education.

GLOBAL REACH

During the year, we responded to catastrophes in Honduras, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mozambique and Nicaragua; food insecurity in Ethiopia, Somalia, Somaliland and Zimbabwe; and displacement crises sparked by armed conflict or civil unrest. We supported refugees, displaced people and host communities in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Colombia, Greece, Jordan and Ukraine.

QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

SOS Children's Villages has continued the joint effort for principled, accountable and high-quality humanitarian aid. The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) serves as our frame of action for improving the quality and effectiveness of the assistance provided by our member associations. In 2020, the CHS was mainstreamed in all operational guidelines. A first pilot group of member associations has gone through the self-assessment process and are implementing the improvement plan.

SUPPORT TO REBUILD

Around the world, we support families to stay together through a crisis. After the massive explosion in Beirut, Lebanon in August 2020, we provided financial and mental health support to help families get through the disaster.

240,000

PEOPLE SUPPORTED IN 2020 IN EMERGENCIES WORLDWIDE

Innovation

As a learning organization, we are always looking for new ways to address the root causes of family breakdown and to strengthen the individual development of children, young people and families.

"RAT AUF DRAHT"

In Austria, SOS Children's Villages offers mental health support to children and youth via a 24-hour helpline. During periods of pandemic lockdown, there was a 30% increase in consultations, with trained counselors helping people to cope with heightened feeling of stress, isolation and depression. The team also expanded their written chat support to accommodate those struggling for privacy at home. Usage rose by 62%.

DIGITAL CARE ASSISTANT

In several countries across Africa, a text-voice chat bot revolutionized learning opportunities for caregivers, helping them respond to COVID-19 challenges. "Rafiki" is an artificial intelligence-based virtual assistant that can be accessed from mobile devices, tablets and desktops. The bot helps to find solutions to questions about parenting, mental health, education and more, acting as a "mini encyclopaedia" on alternative care. It will be rolled out further in 2021.

YOUTH POWER

This global project was developed in partnership with Ashoka and ChangemakerXchange and is supported by Deutsche Post DHL and Allianz. It offers a unique platform for young people to share their initiatives for positive change in their communities. In October, 18 youth-led initiatives were presented at the first virtual summit, where participants could learn from each other and access training, mentoring and funding.



LET'S TALK

In the Philippines, Ronalyn and Jeremy's youth-led initiative "Let's talk, be active and plant joy" aims to help young people dealing with anxiety and emotionally challenging situations through exercise, fun and urban farming.

18

YOUTH-LED INITIATIVES SPARKED BY YOUTH POWER

Advocacy

Drawing on our 70 years of programme expertise, SOS Children's Villages speaks out for and with children and young people to protect their rights on the global, regional and national level. Our advocacy work is designed to change policy and practice to improve national child and family welfare systems. Since 2015, we have contributed to improved public policies and laws in 65 countries.

© Udayan Care photo bank | India



PANDEMIC RESPONSE

In 2020, we saw the urgent need to make sure that children and families' realities are part of all pandemic-related policy debates. We called on governments to scale up social protection and family support services, enhance support to care leavers, and ensure that quality care is not jeopardized and basic services such as education not interrupted. With partners, we drafted policy positions, issued joint calls to actions and developed guidance on provision of alternative care in humanitarian crises to influence high-level fora and debates, such as the UN General Assembly Special Session on COVID-19.

ADVOCATING TO KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER

One of our main objectives is to help decision makers understand that investing in strengthening families can often prevent the unnecessary separation of children from their parents, other forms of harm and the need for additional alternative care placements. In 2020, an increasing number of our member associations engaged in the Universal Periodic Review of human rights implementation and in country reviews of the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, thereby providing recommendations to states on how to support families to stay together.

ADVOCATING FOR QUALITY CARE

We advocate for a range of quality alternative care services according to each child's individual needs. This year, we worked on a national and global scale to promote the implementation of the 2019 UN Resolution on the Rights of the Child, focusing on children without parental care. This included strategic engagement with member associations and targeted use of user-friendly materials.

"NOTHING ABOUT US, WITHOUT US"

The first-ever International Care Leavers Convention took place virtually in November. The event gave young people ageing out of care the chance to connect and strategize about how best to get their voices heard by policymakers worldwide.

2,300

DELEGATES AT THE 2020
INTERNATIONAL CARE
LEAVERS CONVENTION

Among other efforts, a two-year project by the Tracking Progress Initiative was launched in January 2020. The project, underway in Kenya, Malawi, Uganda and Zambia, is focused on assessing how national policies, frameworks and procedures are in line with the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. The overall aim is to strengthen evidence-based alternative care policies through improved child protection information management systems.

EXAMPLES OF POLICY CHANGE ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2020

Central African Republic: SOS Children's Villages actively participated in the development of the Child Protection Code, adopted by the National Assembly in June 2020. Based on our advocacy efforts, the Code also sets standards for the provision of alternative care.

Latvia: In Latvia, we engaged with the Ministry of Social Affairs to develop legislation on foster care. The legislation addresses the role of NGOs in providing foster care and legally defines this new type of social service.

Vietnam: Our member association in Vietnam influenced a range of policy processes, including contributing to six national action plans for child care and protection as well as establishing a formal three-year collaboration with the country's Department of Child Affairs.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH INFORMING POLICYMAKING

The European Commission developed an EU Child Rights strategy, mainstreaming children's rights into all policy areas to advance child rights within the EU and worldwide. To ensure that the realities of children without parental care and those living in families facing difficulties were reflected, SOS Children's Villages initiated a global consultation with children and youth.

We asked for the views of children and young people in residential care as well as in our family strengthening programmes. The outcomes of the consultation were shared with the European Commission and considered in the strategy development process.

CHILD PARLIAMENTS

13-year old Fasika, in her role as Charity and Development Wing Minister, leads a discussion with other child parliament members at an SOS Children's Village in Ethiopia.

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Without our voice, any work done for us is worthless.





**COUNTRIES
AT THE 2020
INTERNATIONAL
CARE LEAVERS
CONVENTION**

80



**SUPPORTERS AND
DONORS IN 2020**

4,200,000



**EMPLOYEES
WORLDWIDE IN 2020**

39,600*

The Movement

Every child should grow up in a loving family environment, where they can experience strong and reliable relationships. By working together – with children, young people, families and communities, and with donors, partners and like-minded organizations – we can build on a movement that makes a child's right to quality care a reality.

*This figure represents average full-time equivalents.

In Their Own Words

This year we share with you the voices of people who are part of our greater community. They describe the additional hardship and stress that COVID-19 created, but also positive moments and opportunities for change that have resulted from the pandemic.



Shaiima (12) is in grade three. He lives with his parents, three younger brothers and sister in a rural village in Ethiopia and participates in our emergency response programme.

How do you spend your day?

I attend school in the morning hours only because it is too hot here to have lessons in the afternoon. I wear a mask for protection. Science is my best subject. After school, I feed my father's cows and then I play volleyball with my brother.

Which challenges are you currently facing?

I am afraid that Covid will infect children in my community because people here do not always follow prevention instructions. I also worry that our small farm does not produce much food. Now my father has to find work at a construction site so we can eat, but the money is not enough, and we do not have enough water. The water at the water point here comes once a week and what we fetch lasts three days only.

How does your family bond?

In the evening when we come together, my younger brother tells us funny stories and everyone laughs. He gets the fairy tales he shares from my grandparents. I also tell stories but my brother is better at it. It's a good way to end a difficult day.

Who do you talk to when you are feeling discouraged?

My father and I are very close. He is the one I talk to when I am sad or disturbed by our home situation or life itself. I go to him because I am able to talk to him freely. I believe he is able to protect me.

Which is your future dream job?

When I grow up, I want to be a doctor to help sick people feel better again. I visited a hospital once and I saw the doctors in their white coats helping patients and that inspired me.

SHAIIMA | CURRENT PARTICIPANT, ETHIOPIA

”

My father and I are very close. He is the one I talk to.



ROBERTA | MANAGING DIRECTOR, ITALY

Managing Director Roberta Capella (56) leads SOS Children's Villages in Italy. As one of our first member associations to experience the pandemic, they were at the forefront of learning how to respond.

How has the pandemic affected children?

Children and young people in care have suffered the interruption of the relationship with their parents and not seeing their peers. This would have had a much higher psychological impact if we had not worked together to alleviate their distress. Distance learning has been hardest on the most vulnerable, and the digital divide has grown. The situation has been particularly challenging for adolescents.

But being part of the global SOS Children's Villages family helped to strengthen in all of us the idea that we were and are not alone. At the height of the pandemic, we facilitated the exchange of drawings between children in our programmes in Italy with children in other programmes around the world. This was a sign of extraordinary solidarity.

What have you learned?

Meeting the individual needs of children and families in a time of increasing uncertainty and instability is our main challenge, and we have to be more and more adaptive. Our association is now the global coordinator of the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Hub for our federation. We have extensive experience in this field, but now we need to systematize and share the knowledge more.

”

We are not alone.

What change would you like to see moving forward?

An acceleration of what we have been doing in recent years – working in partnerships with other organizations, donors and institutions. The legacy of the pandemic is that if we work together more we can find effective answers faster and can therefore have a greater impact on the lives of children and young people.



© SOS Children's Villages Italy

Phong Le (28) grew up in family-like care in Ho Chi Minh City and has since founded his own education centre. He is also a dedicated advocate for the rights of care leavers.

How has the pandemic affected you personally?

In terms of my business, I've been hit really hard. When the first lockdown happened, I could not provide an online platform to teach students and at that time a lot of the students claimed back their money. It's been difficult.

Who have you been able to lean on?

Our family members created a group chat on social media and asked a lot of questions: "Are you ok?" "Do you need any help?" My mother called all the children on rotation, and we only needed to hear our mother's voice for our mental health – it works, honestly. Because of coronavirus, we also had very serious and direct conversations about financial management. Before, when we talked about money, we were shy.

”

Self-care is the lesson I learned.

PHONG | CARE LEAVER, VIETNAM



© Phong Le | Vietnam

Have you learned anything from the pandemic?

Be a lover of yourself. Everyone needs a person who is always there for them, who always supports them and who always listens to their concerns. But during a pandemic there is no guarantee someone will be able to look after you, so self-care is the lesson I learned.

What can we do to better support care leavers during this difficult time?

In terms of housing support for care leavers, I think we should have a common house – like a safe house – for every care leaver, who can share it, who can use it when they have any trouble in life.

Care leavers really need to connect with each other around the world to address our problems directly. The thing I learned from the Care Leavers Convention is that our voices matter. We not only talk about our individual history but we also talk on behalf of other care leavers.



© SOS Children's Villages Vietnam



WILFRIDO | INDIVIDUAL DONOR, MEXICO

Wilfrido Ortiz (70) works as a doctor in Mexico and has been an SOS Children's Villages donor since 2015.

What motivated you to become a donor?

My mother and grandmother always supported children in need and this is something I inherited from them. Some time ago, I spent a year in Austria and I heard about SOS Children's Villages and was very moved by the work they do. I really like the concept of family they offer and whenever I go I see happy children, which says a lot.

What effect has COVID-19 had on your personal and work life?

My specialty is paediatrics, but since the virus began I have seen adults rather than children, since my consultations are face-to-face and children do not go out. Also, because I work directly with people, I have to take very good care of myself and respect all the protocols so as not to expose my family.

What interventions would you like to see to mitigate the negative consequences of the pandemic?

The most important thing now is to protect children. Mexico has been badly hit by the pandemic, and as adults, we must comply with putting on masks and taking care of ourselves, so that children do not get sick.

What can ordinary people do to help children?

Currently, it is important to donate non-perishable food, such as bags of rice, tuna, sugar, pasta. Money is important, but I think that for now the main thing is food.

What change would you like to see coming out of the pandemic?

I would like people to start being more altruistic, supporting each other, because only in that way can we be better. In the future, I would like to see children become agents of change to achieve this.

”

I would like to see children become agents of change.

Teresa Ngigi (53) has worked at SOS Children's Villages for five years. A specialist in trauma-informed care, she is Kenyan by birth and lives with her family in Italy.

Have you learned anything from the pandemic?

How to use Zoom! Initially it was difficult because I'm such a people person. Now I'm conducting a lot more trainings virtually – we can connect faster. Technology has really saved us.

What has been the biggest impact on children?

The stress generated by COVID-19 has put many families under strain. The caregiver may not have any more resources to take care of the child, which the child is expecting, and this has caused conflict.

How has the pandemic affected mental health?

Covid has reawakened a lot of tigers in people's lives. There is unpredictability and that keeps a person in anxiety. We must ensure that caregivers have all

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Covid has reawakened a lot of tigers in people's lives.

TERESA | MENTAL HEALTH EXPERT, ITALY



© Kabura Ngigi | Italy

the resources they need, that they are trained and supported in dealing with their own traumas. When we don't recognize our own traumas, we may be triggered by a child's behaviour, and in some cases, roles can get reversed: the child we care for starts taking care of us.

How have we supported caregivers this year?

There have been capacity-building sessions, one-on-one sessions and trainings. We have also developed a Digital Care Assistant, where caregivers can use their cell phones to help them deal with challenges.

Have you seen any positive change come out of the pandemic?

Before, when people spoke about mental health it wasn't really given the importance it deserves. But now because of Covid, we've been able to put it first and we know that if somebody's mental health is not safeguarded then their holistic life is affected.



© Lama Qattush | Palestine

Hermann Gmeiner Award

The Hermann Gmeiner Award recognizes outstanding individuals who were cared for in an SOS Children's Villages programme and have gone on to become role models in their communities. This year's three winners are united by their resilience in the face of hardship and an overwhelming desire to give back.

Hermann Gmeiner was a child welfare worker who founded SOS Children's Villages in 1949 after observing the suffering of children who had been orphaned during World War II. These children were often separated from their siblings and placed into institutions; Gmeiner was committed to providing them with a loving family environment, giving them a better chance at a bright future.

In 2020, we congratulated Kristina Ivanuš, an environmental activist in Croatia; Lucian Mustata, a tech entrepreneur supporting families in Romania; and Gebre-egziabher Gebre, the president of a youth foundation in Ethiopia, as the latest recipients of the award. After 60 people worldwide were nominated and eight selected as finalists, the winners were decided by an online voting process that was open to all staff, as well as friends and supporters. Joining the ranks of winners from previous years, the lives and contributions to society of these three care leavers serve as an inspiration to children and young people from vulnerable backgrounds around the globe.

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Kristina, Lucian and Gebre are living proof that care and support have the power not only to change the lives of individuals but of communities as a whole.

— Kay Vorwerk, Hermann Gmeiner Academy Board President

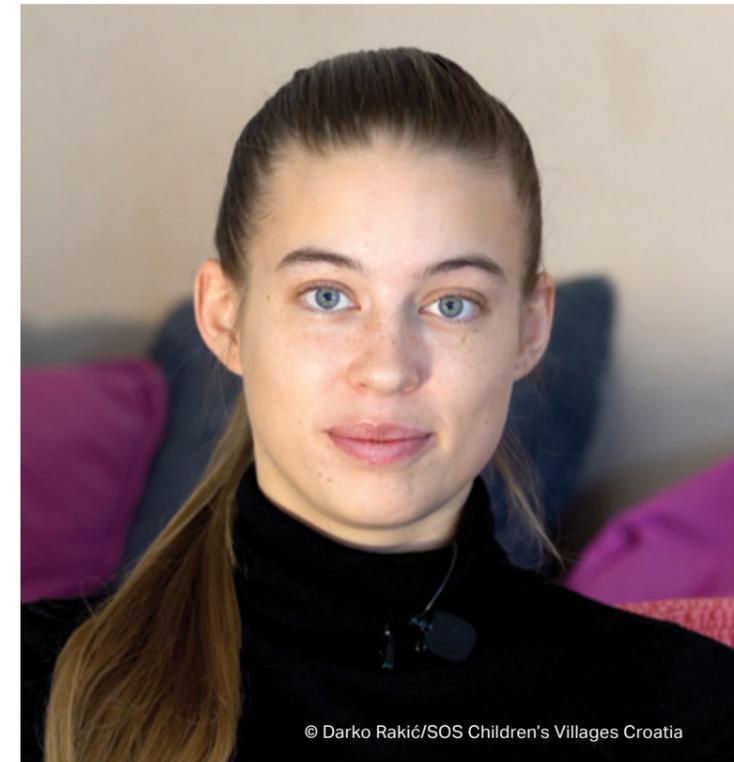
KRISTINA IVANUŠ

Kristina, an environmental activist dedicated to “putting a smile on nature’s face” grew up in family-like care in Lekenik, central Croatia. She entered care with her sister when she was four years old and was looked after by her “SOS mother” Gordana for her entire childhood. She has also kept in touch with her biological mother, who visited on weekends.

Kristina was a very active child and loved being outdoors, climbing trees and roller skating with her friends. When she was six, she was diagnosed with a peripheral nerve disorder that made her fall down a lot, but was determined not to let this stop her: her experiences in the children’s village and hospitals prepared her well for high school, and upon entering the youth programme in Velika Gorica when she was a teenager, she started playing football and later took up diving.

According to Gordana, “When Kristina sets her mind to do something, she doesn’t stop until she has achieved her goal.” Kristina has since won medal after medal in national and international diving competitions, and her active lifestyle ultimately paid off in other ways: in 2018, medical tests showed that her neurological condition had disappeared.

Today, Kristina uses her diving skills to rid our seas and oceans of plastic and pollution. In the summer of 2018, she and her diving club took part in the Think Green campaign in Pelješac, Croatia. By the end of the campaign, they had removed five tonnes of plastic from the sea floor. “Just as diving and nature helped me heal, I am now helping nature to heal and overcome pollution.”



© Darko Rakić/SOS Children's Villages Croatia

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I am honoured I can inspire other people growing up the same way I did, and offer them the motivation to never give up on their dreams.



© Hermann Gmeiner Academy/Archive | Austria



© Damir Zurub | Croatia



© SOS Children's Villages Romania

LUCIAN MUSTATA

Lucian was one of the first children to be cared for in family-like care at the SOS Children's Village in Bucharest when it was first opened in 1993. He is now an entrepreneur and philanthropist, dedicated to giving back what he can and providing people with the same second chance in life that he had. Lucian spent ten happy years in our care until entering a mathematics and IT high school when he was 14. "Of all the private organizations of this kind, SOS Children's Villages offered me the closest thing to a true family."

Lucian worked as a programmer assistant before going on to study business informatics and becoming a software engineer. After graduating from university the first time around, he studied for two master's degrees at the same time: political sciences and project management. A firm believer in the power of education and the right of every child to the love and support of a family, Lucian set up the School for Parents in 2017, aiming to reduce the number of children abandoned or neglected in Romania. The school offers free in-person parenting courses to adults with children of all ages, and has so far provided support to over 100 families in need.

He has also founded his own IT company and a global social media platform called "Note about life," which encourages people around the world to share their life experiences and words of wisdom. He was featured in Forbes Romania's "30 under 30" young people to watch list in 2014 and hopes that his Note about life project will eventually have a national reach.

Lucian is proud to be part of the SOS Children's Villages family and has maintained strong ties with SOS Children's Villages in Romania: as well as raising awareness and making regular financial contributions, he organizes a meeting of fellow former care leavers each year, which is also attended by retired and current caregivers, employees and friends.



© SOS Children's Villages Romania

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You make the world a better place by making yourself a better person.

GEBRE-EGZIABHER GEBRE

Gebre-egziabher Gebre is the president of a foundation that builds computer facilities and educational centres across Africa. After losing both his parents to the worst famine in Ethiopian history, Gebre-egziabher was taken into family-like care at the SOS Children's Village in Mekelle in 1984, when he was just five months old. That the tiny baby survived was enough to defy expectations, but he then went on to thrive, attending the SOS Hermann Gmeiner International College in Ghana before being admitted to Harvard University on a full scholarship and graduating with honours in applied mathematics.

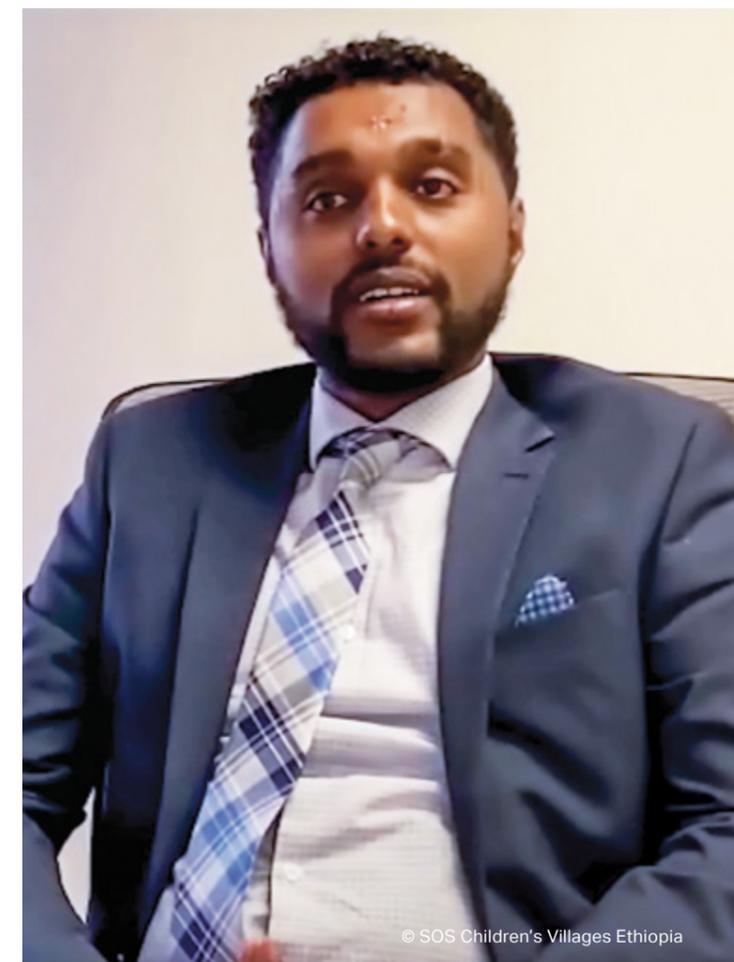
"For me to be an inspiration to the younger generation, for people to have something to look up to, that's for me an accomplishment." Today, Gebre-egziabher works as an energy trader and lives with his wife and two children in Houston, Texas. He takes great joy in being a father and hopes to provide his children with the same balance of care, love and discipline as he received growing up in family-like care.

The Leul Girmay Memorial Fund, of which Gebre-egziabher is president, was set up in honour of another boy who grew up in family-like care in Mekelle and studied in the USA, obtaining his master's degree from Columbia University before suddenly passing away. The fund is financed by care leavers and focuses on education, which Gebre-egziabher sees as the key to success for younger generations. It provides financial aid for securing scholarships, medicine, books, supplies, food and running water and collaborates with other relief agencies operating in Africa. So far, it has established centres in Ethiopia, Ghana and The Gambia.

Gebre-egziabher lives his life according to the idea that "to whom much is given, much is expected," and is actively engaged in raising awareness about the work of SOS Children's Villages, hoping to help other young people who have overcome similarly challenging starts in life.

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To the children, I would say: we don't decide our initial circumstances, but we can determine our destination.



© SOS Children's Villages Ethiopia



© SOS Children's Villages Ethiopia



Partnership Philosophy

We are grateful to have so many partners around the world who are committed to genuine social change for children and young people. Together, we will build a world where every child can become their strongest self.

Our partnerships today take shape in a variety of forms and ways. Much of our financial support comes from individuals who make donations large and small, and who also donate their time. We work with governments and institutional funding partners, and with corporates on the global and national level. Through initiatives and networks, we collaborate across sectors to find innovative solutions to broaden our impact. Especially this year, through digitalization, we are seeing the fruits of joint thinking come to bear.

We partner with universities to conduct research and with other child-focused organizations on advocacy efforts, such as effecting change in child protection systems or improving quality in alternative care. We also partner with local NGOs, sharing knowledge and expertise, often serving as a multiplier.

Most importantly, we partner with the children, young people and families we work with – not only on the programmatic level, but also through advocacy and by supporting their ideas for change. This year, we continued to expand our role in facilitating youth-led initiatives and in ensuring that young voices are heard by policymakers.

Our 70 years of experience in directly caring for children has taught us a lot about relationships. Trust, which begins with eye-level respect, is essential and takes time to develop. Good relationships also involve listening and learning from each other, whether a father from a child, a mentee from a mentor, or a non-profit from a corporate. In our partnerships, we aim to leverage the powerful potential of good reciprocal relationships built on trust, with both sides giving and receiving as well as profiting from the realization of children's rights.

Featured Partners

We can only accomplish what we do for children, young people and families thanks to the creativity, generosity and commitment of our partners – corporate, government, institutional and individual. Partners, both international and local, support our ongoing running costs as well as our innovative projects.



© Ugo Panella | Italy



© Ugo Panella | Italy

M&G PLC.

Corporate partner

M&G plc. is a UK-based savings and investment business that aims to “make the world a little better” through how and where they invest their customers’ savings. Their partnership with SOS Children’s Villages began in 2020 and already spans many countries and programmes; their focus is on the prevention of family breakdown, education and access to the world of work.

M&G plc. sponsors the Youth Autonomy Programme in Italy, which provides those on the verge of leaving care with the skills, training and opportunities they need to achieve independence. Around 150 youths per year have so far benefitted from the programme through personalized support, mentoring and work placements. For instance, at “Bottega Contadina,” an organic food shop near the SOS Children’s Village in Saronno, young people are able to take up internships and gain professional experience in preparation for finding a future job. Also in 2020, M&G plc. worked with us to create a cross-border mentoring programme as part of our YouthLinks platform, connecting mentors from the UK company with young people in India and South Africa.

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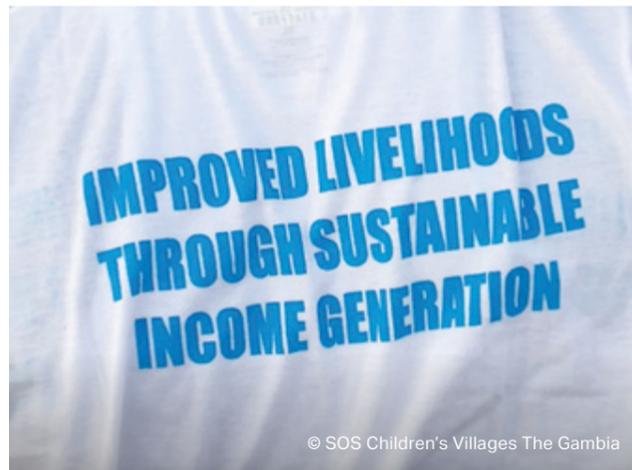
Mentors are a strength on our path.

They help us to follow our dreams.

— Care leaver, Italy



© SOS Children's Villages The Gambia



© SOS Children's Villages The Gambia



© Chille Hvid Orloff | Denmark

BMZ

Institutional partner

The (German) Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) provides grants to NGOs for international projects implemented by local organizations. They have been one of our institutional partners since 2010 and focus their funding on sustainably improving the economic, social or ecological situation of vulnerable groups, prioritizing the capacity building of local stakeholders.

The BMZ-funded “Sustainable Waste Management for the Reduction of Child Rights Violations Project” is based in Bakoteh, at the largest dumpsite in The Gambia. The site lacks a functioning waste management system, is prone to frequent fires and poses dangers to local children in terms of physical safety and hygiene. In partnership with the local city council, the aim is to improve on existing infrastructure, increase the capacities of relevant community and government partners and strengthen a total of 200 affected families through awareness-raising and income-generating activities geared towards self-reliance.

ARGUS MANAGEMENT

Major donor

Anders Hoen and his wife began their first child sponsorships 20 years ago and today sponsor four children in countries where they have a special connection. “I believe that helping and empowering children is the best way to build capacity in a community and create a long-lasting impact,” he says.

Mr. Hoen’s commitment to sustainable development is also central to his professional life. Through his investment advisory company, Argus Management, he has recently made a very generous donation to SOS Children’s Villages in Mali. “The company is pleased to be able to give something back and help now, when the corona crisis is worsening the vulnerable situation for families that are already under pressure.” Funding will go towards a comprehensive renovation project in the children’s village in Socoura, with a special focus on an IT educational facility powered by solar energy. The family strengthening programme in Kita will also receive financial support.



© NetHope | USA



© NetHope | UK



© Tdh/Grace Medina | Albania

NETHOPE
Global consortium

The NetHope platform enables peer-to-peer learning and facilitates relationships between leading international non-profits and innovative corporate technology partners. Since joining in 2010, SOS Children's Villages has become involved in working groups in areas such as artificial intelligence, connectivity and infrastructure, and data protection, in addition to receiving financial benefits and better access to NetHope partners such as Microsoft and Salesforce. We are also active in regional chapters in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe.

Despite COVID-19, collaboration continued to work well: the virtual global NetHope Summit in October 2020 was a huge success, with over 1,000 participants worldwide; our regional chapters in Africa succeeded in developing an IT helpdesk chatbot, financed by Microsoft; and finally, we stepped in to co-lead an artificial intelligence working group in order to stay up to date with the most important trends in digitalization.

#COVIDUNDER19
Global initiative

Children are among those worst affected by the pandemic, yet their voices are often left out of decision-making processes. Last year, we joined other major stakeholders, experts and child rights activists in the #CovidUnder19 initiative, coordinated by Terre des hommes. The goal is to get young voices heard by governments and policymakers, involving children in developing responses to the specific issues they are currently facing. The initiative's worldwide "Life Under Coronavirus" survey gave 26,000 children, 1,770 of whom were living in alternative care, the chance to share their insights on how COVID-19 affected them in terms of education, family life, safety, violence and more. Queen's University Belfast led the design and analysis of the survey, directly engaging young people in the process.



ICSCENTRE
Global network

The International Civil Society Centre (ICSCentre) is a leading convener and collaborator for international civil society organizations (ICSOs) who work across environmental, human rights, social justice and humanitarian issues. Founded in 2007, the Centre scans the horizon for opportunities to enable learning and cooperation among such organizations and their stakeholders, assist in developing effective leadership and promote robust accountability to strengthen legitimacy.

SOS Children's Villages joined the Centre in 2010. In 2020, the outbreak of COVID-19 brought about the first virtual exchange of the Solidarity Action Network (SANE). SANE brings together ICSOs and their local partners to support each other when faced with undue threats and challenges to their operations. It provides a unique opportunity for learning and support, with a focus on organizational governance, inclusive decision-making and navigating uncertainty for maximum efficiency.

DECENT JOBS FOR YOUTH
Global initiative

Decent Jobs for Youth (DJY) is the global initiative to scale up action and impact on youth employment under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It promotes partnership, collaboration and coordinated action, grounded in evidence-based solutions. Launched in 2016 with the endorsement of the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination, DJY brings together governments, social partners, youth and civil society, the private sector, and many more partners advancing the vision: a world in which young people everywhere have greater access to decent jobs!

SOS Children's Villages has been an active member since 2017 through our YouthCan! initiative. We work to bring awareness about the unique challenges that children living in alternative care or as part of struggling families face when they enter the job market, and how much this resilient group has to contribute. We highlight the importance of digital access and skills, and provide resources and information about innovative ways to support young people at risk to achieve independence.



© Zala Films, Ashenafi | Ethiopia



© Decent Jobs for Youth

Thank You All

Our national, international and local partners support our ongoing running costs and many of our innovative projects. We say thank you to those listed here and the many thousands of other partners who make our work possible.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL & GOVERNMENTAL PARTNERS

European Commission

Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

Directorate-General for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations

Directorate-General for International Partnerships

Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers

Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs

European Investment Bank Institute

Government of Austria

Austrian Development Agency (ADA)
Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sports

State Government of Tyrol

State Government of Vorarlberg

Government of Belgium

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation (DGD)

Brussels International

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Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)

Government of Finland

Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Ministry for Social Affairs & Health

Government of France

Embassy of France

French Development Agency (AFD)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Government of Germany

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Italian Agency for Development Cooperation

Ministry of the Interior

Ministry of Welfare

Region of Calabria

Government of Luxembourg

Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs

Government of Monaco

Department of International Cooperation (DIC)

Government of Morocco

Government of the Netherlands

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Government of Norway

Ministry of Health and Care Services

Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)

Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (BUFDIR)

Norwegian Directorate for Integration and Diversity (IMDI)

Government of Spain

Province of Canary Islands

Province of Madrid

Government of Sweden

Gothenburg Municipality

Swedish Gender Equality Agency

Government of Switzerland

State Secretariat for Migration

United Nations

Funds and Programmes

International Labour Organization (ILO)

International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

UN Development Programme (UNDP)

UN Global Compact

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

UNWomen

World Food Programme (WFP)

FOUNDATION PARTNERS

Akelius Foundation

Balder Foundation

Bernard van Leer Foundation

Bernhard Waldinger Foundation

Big Heart Foundation

Canada Feminist Fund

Captain Vassilis & Carmen

Constantakopoulos Foundation

Cariplo Foundation

Costas M. Lemos Foundation

Dutch Postcode Lottery

Edith & Gotfred Kirk

Fondation de France

Fondation de Luxembourg

Fondation Roi Baudouin

Fundacja Drzewo i Jutro

Fundación Sus Buenos Vecinos

Gelsenwasser Foundation

Grieg Foundation

GS Foundation

Harry Hole Foundation

Hempel Foundation

Institute Circle

Intesa Bank Charity Fund

Maestro Cares Foundation

Mapfre Foundation

National Lottery Community Fund

Nostos Foundation

Novo Nordisk Foundation

OAK Foundation

Obel Family Foundation

Orange Foundation

Signe Marie Foundation

Stavros Niarchos Foundation

Stiftelsen Radiohjälpen

Stiftung Kinderhilfe

Stiftung zur Unterstützung der SOS

Kinderdörfer-Liechtenstein

Swissair Staff Foundation for Children in Need

SWISS Children's Foundation

The Erling-Persson Family Foundation
The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust

The PD Foundation

The SOL Foundation

LEADING LONG-TERM CORPORATE PARTNERS

Action

adidas

Aegean Airlines

AkzoNobel

Allen & Overy

Allianz

Apotea

AstraZeneca

Bechgaard Foundation

Bel: La Vache Qui Rit®

Bertelsmann

CEWE

Clarins

Deutsche Post DHL Group

Dr. August Oetker

Dufry International

Equinor

Gazprombank

Gekås Ullared

GodEl / GoodCause

Hasbro

Hemköpskedjan

Hilti

HOFER

HSBC

IKEA

Interquell

INTERSPAR

Johnson & Johnson

Johnson & Johnson Foundation

Kaufland

KFC Social Responsibility Trust Fund

M&G plc.

MAN

Marriott International

Mars Sverige

Mars Wrigley Confectionery

MAX Burgers

Norsk Postkodelotteriet

OBOS

Oriflame

OTP Group / DSK Bank

Postcode Lotterie DT

Procter & Gamble

Radisson Hotel Group

Samruk-Kazyna Trust

Schmidt Groupe

Svenska Petroleum Exploration

Svenska Postkodlotteriet

Swedbank Robur

Swiss International Air Lines

Swisscom

Transat

UniCredit Bank Austria

Vaillant

Vodafone Greece

Vorwerk

Western Union Foundation

Xellia Pharmaceuticals

OTHER PARTNERSHIPS

Accountable Now

Better Care Network

Central European Initiative

Child Rights Connect

Children's Rights Action Group

Civil Society in Development (CISU)

Comic Relief

CONCORD

Decent Jobs for Youth Initiative

EU Alliance for Investing in Children

Eurochild

European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)

Forum CIV

Fundamental Rights Platform

Generation Unlimited

Global Coalition to End Child Poverty

Global Responsibility: Platform for Development and Humanitarian Aid

International Civil Society Centre

International NGO Cooperation for Children (EDUCO)

International Organization of Francophonie (OIF)

IsraAID

Joining Forces

Kinderrechten in

Ontwikkelingsorganisaties NL (KROS)

NetHope

PATROS (including its Leaving No One Behind Platform)

Social Platform

The Civil Society Forum to End Violence Against Children (CSO Forum)

The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children

The NGO Committee on UNICEF

The NGO Major Group

Valdese Church

Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies (VOICE)



Learn more about our national corporate partnerships.

By the Numbers

The following section provides a global overview of our financial results and programme statistics. These results represent the combined efforts of locally rooted member associations around the world. Thanks to the loyalty of our donors, we were able to adapt our services and continue supporting children and families to stay together during this very difficult year.



**GROWTH IN DONOR
SUPPORT 2020**

3%



**GLOBAL
REVENUE 2020**

1.4
billion

Financial Report

Our federation's financial information (see page 60) is based on the global, combined total of reports provided by our member associations and by our umbrella organization SOS Children's Villages International. These reports are audited annually by independent and esteemed auditors according to internationally accepted and/or legally required national accounting standards.

FEDERATION INCOME

In 2020, our preliminary figures show that our federation income was stable despite the COVID-19 crisis. Support from donors increased by 3%, and government subsidies for domestic programmes by 4%. These increases were offset by a decrease in other income as a result of the forced closure of our schools and other facilities due to pandemic-related lockdowns. Contrary to previous years, institutional revenue was 10% lower this year due to the challenges in implementing projects and grants during the pandemic. After years of especially fast growth in the regions outside Europe, 2020 saw a reversal of this trend, with an overall decline in these regions being offset by a stable increase of income in Europe.

Maintaining revenue levels during such a challenging year has been possible due to swift adaptation, especially in the much-affected "face-to-face" fundraising area, and a strong shift to telemarketing and digital channels. This was supported by our incredibly loyal donors, who responded immediately to the adverse impact of the pandemic on the lives of vulnerable children around the world. We saw a 5% increase in sporadic donations.

FEDERATION EXPENDITURES

The year 2020 also saw targeted spending on our COVID-19 response, with adapted programmes to support family strengthening, health (including WASH activities and mental health support), and education. This increase was more than offset by careful spending on other programme elements.

In total, an expenditures decrease of 4% was achieved, as we had prepared ourselves for a sharper decline in revenue. Construction projects and investments were delayed, resulting in a steep 24% reduction in construction costs in 2020. As schools and health facilities were temporarily closed, education costs also declined by 6% and health services by 11%. On the other hand, other activities including community outreach and integration support increased by 14%.



FINANCIAL INFORMATION

All amounts in EUR 1,000 ¹

REVENUE	ACTUALS 2018	ACTUALS 2019	ACTUALS 2020 preliminary ²	% change 2019-2020
Sporadic donors	305,382	337,976	354,235	5%
Sponsorship/committed giving	308,844	314,302	310,910	-1%
Major donors	27,153	28,821	29,271	2%
Foundations & lotteries	36,078	42,106	42,704	1%
Corporate donors	52,839	55,988	49,480	-12%
Governmental subsidies for domestic programmes	422,302	452,332	468,193	4%
Institutional funding	32,005	38,996	35,082 ³	-10%
Emergency appeals	2,658	2,287	3,766	65%
Other income ⁴	114,153	117,967	88,350	-25%
Total revenue	1,301,414	1,390,774	1,381,990	-1%

EXPENDITURES ⁵	ACTUALS 2018	ACTUALS 2019	ACTUALS 2020 preliminary ²	% change 2019-2020
Alternative care	559,995	579,640	562,167	-3%
Prevention	112,669	116,354	115,444	-1%
Education	131,491	143,160	134,485	-6%
SOS social centres ⁵	11,118	-	-	
Other activities ⁶	20,318	35,646	40,484	14%
Health services	10,861	13,467	11,991	-11%
Emergency response programmes	14,217	11,220	10,509	-6%
Construction & investments	37,320	44,263	33,660	-24%
Programme support in national associations	107,621	114,744	94,228	-18%
International coordination & programme support	44,727	48,775	46,900	-4%
Information & fundraising work and administration in promoting & supporting associations ⁷	202,491	205,576	206,373	0%
Total expenditures	1,252,829	1,312,845	1,256,241	-4%

¹ Due to rounding, total numbers may not add up exactly.

² These figures, captured on 30 April 2021, are considered preliminary, as final, audited figures from our member associations are available only as of 30 September 2021.

³ This figure represents the grant amount effectively transferred and earmarked for operations; in 2020, members of SOS Children's Villages International managed a total IPD project volume of €85 million.

⁴ Refers to operational income from schools, kindergartens, health and other facilities, events or merchandising, as well as interest and other financial income.

⁵ Due to the introduction of a new programme structure in January 2019, an exact comparison between 2018 and 2019 expenditure data is not possible. Programme units such as "SOS social centre" were recategorized to other units.

⁶ Includes community outreach and education on children's rights, integration support, holiday camps and play buses. Please note that the preliminary 2019 figure "running costs for other" was posted to this category upon final analysis.

⁷ Promoting & supporting associations are associations that raise funds for international programmes; some of them also operate domestic programmes.

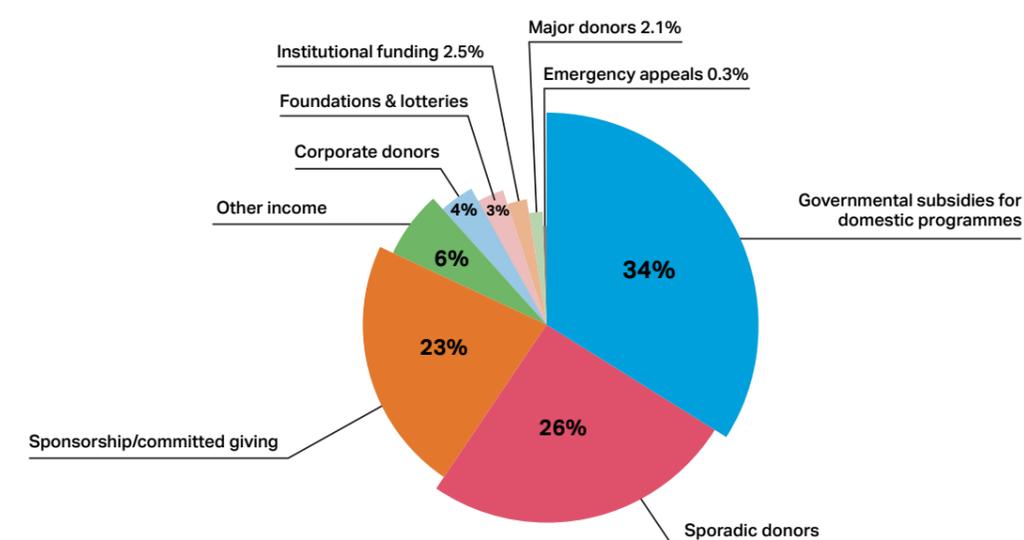
ACCOUNTABILITY

As a member of Accountable Now and of the International Civil Society Centre, we take our obligations around management transparency and accountability very seriously. The foundation of our approach is our policy document Good Management and Accountability Quality Standards. Our activities and progress in this regard are reflected in our regular reports to Accountable Now, which are publicly available.

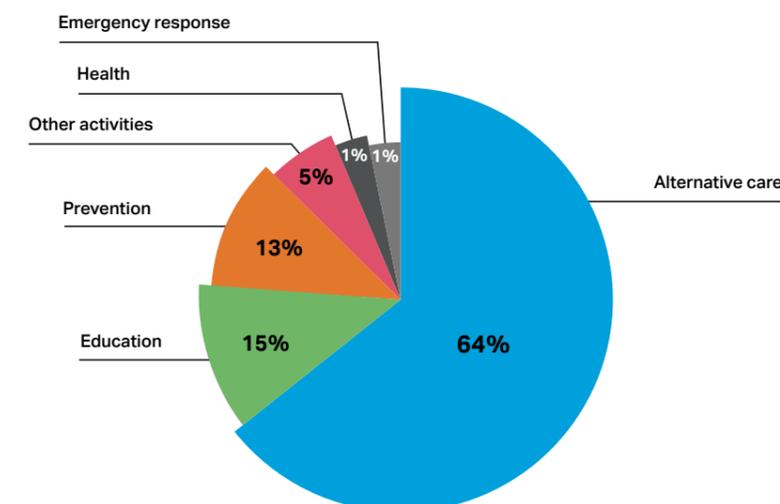


SOS Children's Villages follows a zero tolerance approach to fraud and corruption. Our Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Guideline aims to support all associations, board members and employees in preventing and managing potential issues of corruption. The detailed financial audit report of SOS Children's Villages International is available on our international website, along with links to the websites of all our member associations.

TOTAL REVENUE BY TYPE¹



PROGRAMME EXPENDITURES BY TYPE¹



Programme Statistics

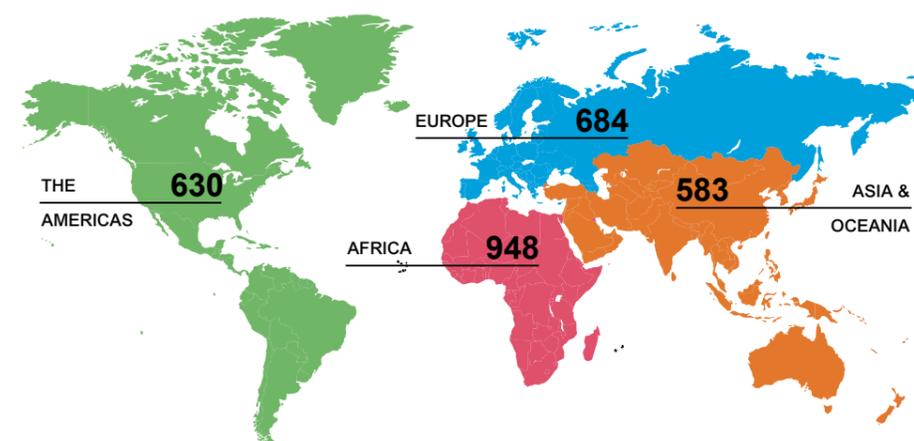
SOS Children's Villages is a global federation of locally rooted member associations. Our programmatic services, tailored to the unique needs of a community, are designed to ensure that children and youth from vulnerable backgrounds grow up with the bonds they need to become their strongest selves. These statistics are based on reporting by our associations and represent our services for the calendar year 2020.

PEOPLE WE REACHED

	AFRICA	THE AMERICAS	ASIA & OCEANIA	EUROPE	TOTAL
ALTERNATIVE CARE					
<i>Children & young people</i>					
Family-like care	14,500	5,300	12,700	5,100	37,600
Youth care	6,800	2,500	6,300	3,200	18,800
Foster family care	2,300	200	0	3,300	5,800
Small group homes	300	50	50	1,400	1,800
Other alternative care ¹	300	1,050	50	200	1,600
TOTAL	24,200	9,100	19,100	13,200	65,600
PREVENTION					
<i>Children, young people & adults</i>					
Family strengthening	154,200	35,300	91,100	66,400	347,000
EDUCATION					
<i>Children, young people & adults</i>					
Early childhood care & development	10,100	8,100	6,000	3,300	27,500
Primary & secondary education	54,700	5,900	32,600	66,300	159,500
Employment & entrepreneurship training	3,800	1,300	1,800	4,700	11,600
TOTAL	68,600	15,300	40,400	74,300	198,600
OTHER ACTIVITIES²					
<i>Children, young people & adults</i>	47,000	4,000	0	4,800	55,800
HEALTH					
<i>Children, young people & adults</i>					
Health promotion & prevention	57,500	600	1,700	900	60,700
Mother & Child Hospital, Somalia	210,500	-	-	-	210,500
TOTAL	268,000	600	1,700	900	271,200
EMERGENCY RESPONSE					
<i>Children, young people & adults</i>	180,800	10,400	4,400	44,400	240,000
GRAND TOTAL	742,800	74,700	156,700	204,000	1,178,200

¹ Includes care in transitional settings for unaccompanied minor refugees awaiting legal decision and support to other service providers to improve the quality of their care.
² Includes community outreach and education on children's rights, integration support, holiday camps and play buses.

PROGRAMMES BY CONTINENT



PROGRAMMES WE OPERATED

	AFRICA	THE AMERICAS	ASIA & OCEANIA	EUROPE	TOTAL
ALTERNATIVE CARE					
Family-like care	163	134	141	130	568
Small group homes	20	15	3	50	88
Foster family care	23	26	0	24	73
Youth care	142	122	173	142	579
Other alternative care	8	54	8	16	86
TOTAL	356	351	325	362	1,394
PREVENTION					
Family strengthening	185	152	109	174	620
EDUCATION					
Early childhood care & development	122	57	58	40	277
Primary & secondary education	113	8	53	22	196
Employment & entrepreneurship	60	24	21	32	137
TOTAL	295	89	132	94	610
OTHER ACTIVITIES					
	23	34	0	47	104
HEALTH					
Health promotion & prevention	21	0	2	2	25
Medical care	45	1	9	2	57
TOTAL	66	1	11	4	82
EMERGENCY RESPONSE					
	23	3	6	3	35
GRAND TOTAL	948	630	583	684	2,845

SOS Children's Villages worked for children and young people in 137 countries and territories in 2020.

Countries and territories in which we operated an emergency response programme in 2020 are shown in **bold**.

Join us!



www.sos-childrensvillages.org

Africa

Algeria
Angola
Benin
Botswana
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cameroon
Cabo Verde
Central African Republic
Chad
Côte d'Ivoire
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Djibouti
Egypt
Equatorial Guinea
Eswatini
Ethiopia
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Kenya
Lesotho
Liberia
Madagascar
Malawi
Mali
Mauritius
Morocco
Mozambique

Namibia
Niger
Nigeria
Rwanda
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Somalia
Somaliland
South Africa
South Sudan
Sudan
Tanzania
The Gambia
Togo
Tunisia
Uganda
Zambia
Zanzibar
Zimbabwe

The Americas

Argentina
Bolivia
Brazil
Canada
Chile
Colombia
Costa Rica
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
El Salvador
Guatemala
Haiti
Honduras
Jamaica
Mexico
Nicaragua
Panama
Paraguay
Peru
Uruguay
USA
Venezuela

Asia & Oceania

Armenia
Australia
Azerbaijan
Bangladesh
Cambodia
China
French Polynesia
Georgia
Hong Kong, SAR of China
India
Indonesia
Iraq
Israel
Japan
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Kyrgyzstan
Laos
Lebanon
Mongolia
Nepal
Pakistan
Palestine
Philippines
South Korea
Sri Lanka
Syria
Taiwan, China
Thailand
United Arab Emirates
Uzbekistan
Vietnam

Europe

Albania
Austria
Belarus
Belgium
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgaria
Croatia
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Iceland
Italy
Kosovo
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Netherlands
North Macedonia
Northern Cyprus
Norway
Poland
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