

# CARE FOR CHILDREN IS CARE FOR DEVELOPMENT

## How SOS Children's Villages supports the Sustainable Development Goals



The quality of childhood sets the stage for our future development – as individuals and societies. Childhood is when we plant the seeds of a new generation, which can flourish only within a caring family environment. For a sustainable future, every child must be valued and included.

Children who have lost parental care, or who risk losing it, are among those most likely to suffer social injustice and miss out on human development. These children must be prioritised to ensure that they too benefit from sustainable development.

SOS Children's Villages is a global NGO committed to improving development outcomes for disadvantaged children and young people who cannot count on a caring family environment. Worldwide, we promote their human rights and make sure their voices are heard.

Directly and with partners, we provide care and support to hundreds of thousands of children around the world, through family strengthening, social protection, education and vocational training, health care, emergency relief, counselling for mental and social well-being, and prevention of violence and exploitation.

All these areas are recognised as priorities under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the United Nations in September 2015.

SOS Children's Villages supports governments through a range of actions which relate to specific SDGs. Turn the page to read how.



# THE SDGs AND US

Through the efforts of SOS Children's Villages and our many partners, the 17 SDGs embody a driving principle to ensure that no one is left behind in the fight against poverty and inequality. SOS Children's Villages contributes to SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 16 and 17. However, five SDGs – 1, 4, 8, 10 and 16 – are central to our programmes and strategy to ensure the greatest impact of our work and partnerships on children's outcomes.

## The problem:

## Our response:

### 1 NO POVERTY



Poverty is a key contributing factor to children losing parental care. The majority of these children could actually live with their family of origin, if adequate social protections were available. Too many alternative care arrangements lack quality control and expose children to sub-standard living conditions and psychological or emotional deprivation – in short, denying them their rights as children.

SOS Children's Villages builds the capacities and resilience of families and communities to help break the cycle of poverty and exclusion. We work with partners to empower families, including support for generating income, as well as managing household resources. When it is in the child's best interest, we provide alternative care following the international *Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children*. Nationally and internationally, we advocate for inclusive state social protection for vulnerable children, young people and families.

### 4 QUALITY EDUCATION



Children without parental care face challenges in accessing quality education from early childhood through higher education – in many cases, due to lack of economic support or help from an adult who understands their situation and looks out for their interests. In emergencies and non-emergencies, children without parental care are at greater risk of dropping out of school to provide for themselves or siblings in child-headed households.

SOS Children's Villages supports children and young people in accessing quality education – from early childhood and basic education, through upper education and preparation for employability. We promote learning and training programmes open to the whole community, helping to build skills and capacities. We strengthen public education through partnerships and advocacy. During humanitarian emergencies, our child friendly spaces offer safe spaces for learning and play.

### 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



Unemployment and unstable or low paid jobs can undermine parents' abilities to provide for their children. While employment can help prevent family breakdown, in the absence of affordable, quality childcare, it can also result in lack of supervised care for children. Young people who have lost parental care may struggle to become independent, coping with increased rates of unemployment, informal employment, child labour, sexual exploitation or trafficking, and homelessness.

SOS Children's Villages works with trusted partners to provide access to post-secondary education, technical courses and mentorship programmes, and together we support young people in developing the employability skills and self-confidence necessary to become independent adults with decent work. We assist young people leaving care in developing life skills and obtaining stable housing and decent work.

### 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



Children and young people who lack an attentive caregiver to protect and guide them are less likely to exercise their rights, and more likely to miss out on vital information and access to health, education, good nutrition, or social and life skills. Such exclusion can lead to a vicious cycle of poverty, diminished health and social inequality.

SOS Children's Villages advocates for policies and practices that ensure equal opportunities, non-discrimination and social inclusion for all children and young people. We help children, families and communities break the cycle of poverty and exclusion so that future generations can be active and equal participants in society.

### 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



Violence is a major risk factor for children being removed from their family. Adding to the problem, children separated from their family are at higher risk of violence. Children who lack the fundamental protection of a caregiver, whether parents, extended family members or care professionals, are easy targets for abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Tragically, violence fuels a cycle of violence: children who experience violence are more likely to become victims or perpetrators of violence later in life.

SOS Children's Villages is a non-political, non-denominational organisation that works to protect and safeguard children by strengthening families and building-up the capacities of child care professionals, also training them in how to fulfil quality standards and children's rights. We raise awareness of the factors that put children at risk of violence and advocate for improved protections for all children. We teach parenting skills and positive discipline techniques, and we train caregivers, community members and children to recognise and safely report abuse.

All children count,  
but not all children  
are counted.



Accessible and reliable data are key tools for measuring progress on SDGs among all children. Yet unacceptable data gaps remain when it comes to children without parental care and children living out of the household, who are still virtually invisible in statistics.

SOS Children's Villages and partners advocate for the inclusion of data on these children in national and international monitoring systems for the SDGs, and for the development of disaggregated data categories relating to children's care. Through ongoing research and data from the SOS Children's Villages Programme Database we continue to promote understanding of the factors that can lead to child neglect, and the rights violations faced by children who lose parental care.

#### Our work in action:



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#### COMMUNITY-DRIVEN RESPONSES IN TOGO

In Kpalassi and Kngangasipio, two remote villages in Togo, children were not going to school for lack of classrooms and teachers, while mothers and children were dying of preventable illnesses, for lack of a clinic.

In Kngangasipio, SOS co-workers helped community members open a Community Health Post and start a locally-run health committee to manage it. The SOS Children's Villages Hospital in Kara provided nursing support and training for two people from Kngangasipio to become community health workers.

These community-driven responses save lives and ensure that children from vulnerable communities can go to school. Community involvement each step of the way means that the responses are appropriate and communities are empowered to become more self-sufficient.



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#### ACTION FOR YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

SOS Children's Villages is committed to preparing young people for independent life. We provide access to education and specialised programmes to help them develop relevant job skills, personal skills, and self-confidence.

In five years, 7.000 young people from SOS programmes in 26 countries have participated in GoTeach, a career-orientation programme developed in partnership with Deutsche Post DHL Group.

In 2015, 40 young people from SOS Children's Villages Palestine experienced personalised career counselling and practical days at companies and organisations linked to their job interests, as part of "Partnership to Identify Youth Priorities". SOS Palestine's alumni association helps young people find job opportunities, while promoting volunteering and community integration.



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#### ACTION TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

SOS Children's Villages International joined UNICEF and other partners in 2015 to form the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, which brings together partners in health, education, child protection, emergency response, and more, to make all societies safe for children.

Through Keeping Children Safe, of which SOS Children's Villages International is a member, in 2015 an international group of SOS co-workers completed in-depth training in conducting child safeguarding investigations.

SOS Children's Villages in Latin America ran trainings in treating and preventing sexual abuse between young people in alternative care and, together with the NGO Paicabi, published a guide in Spanish (2014) and English (2015).

# WE SUPPORT STATES IN MEETING THE SDGS

SOS Children's Villages helps states achieve the SDGs with **expertise, trusted partners** and **accountability**.

## More than 65 years of expertise

- Alternative child care
- Family strengthening
- Community strengthening
- Capacity building
- Care system reform
- Children's rights
- 117 member associations
- 134 countries and territories

## Trusted partners in development

- Community-based organisations
- Governments
- Child-focused NGOs
- Relief agencies
- Corporate partners
- Institutional partners
- Major donors
- 1.4 million sponsors

## Accountability

- Member INGO Accountability Charter
- Rigorous impact assessment method
- SOS Children's Villages Programme Monitoring Database (local, national, global)



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"The eradication of poverty and inequality will be measured by how children live better with their families, without violence and with love."

Rodrigo, 14, SOS Chile, speaking to the plenary of UN representatives in New York, September 2015

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