



SOS CHILDREN'S  
VILLAGES  
USA

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019





# SOS Children's Villages

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. It was founded in 1949 by Hermann Gmeiner.

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-usa.org](http://www.sos-usa.org)



## CONTENTS

03	Foreword
05	Year in Review 2019
13	Our Programmes
37	The Movement
59	By the Numbers

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# Celebrating Child Rights

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This annual report reflects our work during the calendar year 2019. Yet, as we write this foreword in fall 2020, the world has radically changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many more children and families today are living in vulnerable circumstances, and the need for our work has grown. While we are focused right now on responding effectively at the local level, we owe it to our partners to report on 2019. So let us take this moment to look back at the opportunities and challenges that existed before the world was turned upside down.

The year 2019 was a significant anniversary year for children's rights and for SOS Children's Villages. We celebrated the 30-year anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the 10-year anniversary of the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, 70 years of our existence, and the 100th birthday of our founder Hermann Gmeiner. Greatest of all was the international recognition, via a UN resolution in November, of the children we support and speak up for – children without parental care or at risk of losing it.

At the same time, it was a year to take stock and to ask: How far have we come? Despite the incredible strides that have been made in recent years, every day and everywhere children are growing up in environments of abuse, abandonment and neglect. Events around the world called on leaders and citizens to band together with renewed commitment to uphold children's rights. Read more in the "Year in Review" feature article.

For SOS Children's Villages, these milestones were an opportunity to reflect on our own work. Our *70 Years of Impact* report, for example, shared evidence of the positive results of our work with children and families and outlined areas for improvement. In forums across our federation, senior leaders listened to the voices of young people in our programmes as to how we can support them better. This year's *Annual Report* continues this reflection and asks: What does it take to become your strongest self? Three care leavers and the CEO of Allianz explore this topic in the "Conversations" feature.

Now more than ever, we thank our four million partners, donors and supporters for making our work possible, as well as our more than 38,000 employees worldwide. Despite the new challenges that lie ahead, by working together, along with children, young people, families and communities, we will make children's rights a reality for all.



FAMILY STRENGTHENING PROGRAMME DASSA-ZOUMÉ

We work with communities to keep families together. Our programme strengthens the capacity of parents and guardians and encourages teamwork, cooperative development and entrepreneurship. Through collective income-generating activities, families develop sufficient financial resources to meet the needs of their children.





# Year in Review 2019

*This year as last year, we take a look at the developments and events that affected children and young people without parental care or at risk of losing it. What did the milestone of the 30-year anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child mean for them? How far have we come and what have we learned?*

In November 1989, two weeks after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the global community signed a document that would represent an extraordinary shift in the status of children. Historically, children had often been considered as the property of their parents or as passive half-persons. While Eglantyne Jebb recognized this injustice already in 1924,<sup>1</sup> it wasn't until the closing of the 20th century before the world would acknowledge children as holders of their own rights, equal to adults, and deserving of special protection.

This document, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, has since become the most universally ratified treaty. It has provided a framework for countries to adopt legislation that has dramatically improved the lives of millions of children over the last 30 years. Its four core principles are: non-discrimination – every child has the same rights; the best interests of the child shall always be considered; the right to life, survival and development; and the right to freely express views and be heard.

## AWARENESS RAISING EVENTS

Around the world in 2019, from Ecuador to Ethiopia, advocacy events marking the Convention's anniversary raised public awareness of child rights, including a child's right to care and protection. Along with partners, SOS Children's Villages called on governments to uphold their commitments to children. In France, for example, SOS Children's Villages hosted a round table, along with children, at the National Assembly on how to use a child rights-based approach to improve the quality of alternative care. In June, *A Second Revolution: Thirty years*

*of child rights and the unfinished agenda* was published by Joining Forces, an alliance of the six largest international child-focused organizations, including SOS Children's Villages. The global report builds on national analyses in more than 20 countries and calls for bold action to fulfill the promises of the Convention. While acknowledging great advances, the report highlights the shortcomings in reaching all children – especially children living in fragile states, refugee children and children without parental care.

## GAINS IN HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Since 1989, incredible gains have been made in health and education. The global child mortality rate, for example, has dropped from 12.7 million per year to 5.4 million. This, despite an increase in the world's population. In education, the global net enrolment rate for primary education has risen from 82% to 90%, which means that today 64 million primary-age children are missing out on school, rather than 120 million 30 years ago.<sup>2</sup>

SOS Children's Villages is striving to make sure that it doesn't take another 30 years for the remaining 64 million children to have their right to education fulfilled.

Interestingly, these gains were made due to intense engagement immediately following the adoption of the Convention. Through a series of world summits, governments worked across sectors and translated a child's right to health and education into time-bound targets backed up by financial investments – proving that when reinforced by action, international agreements can transform children's lives.



## CARE REFORM

Clear progress has also been made in improving the quality of alternative care. There is more regulation of care today and some countries have phased out large-scale institutions that cause physical and emotional damage in favour of more appropriate care settings. In 1990, for example, 100,000 Romanian children were growing up in large facilities. In 2018, that number stood at 6,600.<sup>3</sup>

Many of these gains are attributable to the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. Welcomed by the UN 10 years ago, the Guidelines provide governments with a technical and practical framework for providing quality alternative care, when necessary and in the child's best interest, and for supporting families to stay together.

## PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE

A major gap that still exists is a child's right to be protected from harm. Children and young people around the world have stated that violence – be it in the home, school, in public spaces or online – is

The body of research on the negative long-term impact of violence on children is unequivocal. In addition to direct physical harm, violence can impair cognitive development and can lead to negative coping and health risk behaviours, such as misuse of alcohol and drugs. It contributes to diseases later in life, such as cancer, and can take a toll on a child's mental health, leading to higher rates of anxiety, depression and suicide.

Despite these grim statistics, there is reason for hope. In 2019, four more countries – France, Georgia, Kosovo and South Africa – outlawed the corporal punishment of children, bringing the total to 58.<sup>5</sup> This is good news for children and for society as well. Evidence shows that physical punishment of children leads to increased aggression in children, damaged family relationships and increased violent and criminal behaviour when children become adults. In Germany, the change in law to end corporal punishment in 2000 can be directly linked to decreases in violence by young people in school and to reductions in injuries due to domestic violence.<sup>6</sup> While it seems that violence

millions to protest for action on climate change. The audacity and perseverance of this 16-year-old along with many other young climate strikers helped put this critical topic on the agenda of governments and into mainstream media.

Young people leaving alternative care are also becoming agents of change. Through care leaver networks, they are advocating to local governments for better care and after-care support. This is an important role that NGOs working with children can play: supporting and facilitating youth-led initiatives.

## MENTAL HEALTH

Young people are asking that more attention be paid to mental health and that caregivers receive adequate training. Our social workers and care workforce have been stressing this as a core issue for a child's well-being for decades. Family separation and unstable family environments are one of the biggest triggers of mental health problems in children. According to research, 50% of children in alternative care had experienced violence in their families<sup>7</sup> and 75% had some traumatic experience before entering the care system.<sup>8</sup>

SOS Children's Villages has established a core programmatic pillar on what is known as trauma-informed care. We provide specialized training for child and youth care professionals to support healing in children who have experienced trauma. This past year alone, workshops took place in 10 countries on three continents.

## DATA & RESEARCH

We have learned that the more data we have on the children and families we work with and the more context we have about their situation, the better and faster we can respond to their needs. Contrary to popular belief, 80% of children living in formal alternative care have one or more parents alive.<sup>9</sup> Investing in keeping families together can help prevent the need for children to be placed in alternative care.

But what are the drivers for family breakdown? In 2019, Brown University teamed up with SOS Children's Villages to conduct the first-ever global literature review to gather data and evidence to answer this question. These results will feed into our family strengthening interventions.

Good data is also required in order for governments, civil society and NGOs to assess whether child rights obligations are being met. In October, we welcomed the African Union's decision to conduct a continental study on alternative care in Africa. Along with partners, SOS Children's Villages advocated for such a study during the African Committee of Expert's 34th Session in Cairo, Egypt and is now preparing to share expertise and knowledge.

## RIGHTS OF THE CHILD RESOLUTION

The highlight of the year that celebrated 30 years of child rights came on November 18th when the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly adopted the Rights of the Child resolution focusing on children without parental care. For the children, young people and families we work with, this resolution has significant implications. SOS Children's Villages, along with partners, supported in drafting the actual legislation.

Governments around the world acknowledged the particular vulnerability of millions of children who are growing up without parental care or risk losing it. They committed to put policies, programmes and investment in place to ensure quality alternative care that meets the needs of the individual child, and they called for improved data collection to inform policies and programming. Governments also committed to improve the economic and social situation of families and to strengthen their capacity to care for their children – so that alternative care is always a measure of last resort.

With the Resolution, the cause of child rights has taken another giant step forward. But we know that it will take focused engagement on the part of government, NGOs and civil society – similar to the phase after the Convention was adopted – to ensure that the Resolution is implemented and each child's right to care and protection is realized. We have seen that great progress takes place when this happens.

SOS Children's Villages will build on the momentum of this exciting year for child rights and continue to work in connecting partners, creating knowledge and supporting governments to turn words into action. Best of all, we will make sure that this time around, children and young people are included. We need them.

”  
*Every child has the right to live free from violence and abuse and to participate.*

— Bereket, care leaver from Ethiopia, addressing the European Parliament

one of their most urgent concerns. According to the World Health Organization, it is estimated that this year alone, up to one billion children aged 2 to 17 have experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence or neglect.

Violence against children and youth transcends cultures, geography and socio-economic situations. In April, world attention to the sexual trafficking case against high-profile millionaire Jeffrey Epstein illustrated how pervasive, overlooked and deep-rooted violence against children is today. But this case is just the tip of the iceberg: an estimated 15 million adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 have experienced forced sex, and every year, 95,000 children – 70% of them boys – are murdered.<sup>4</sup>

begets violence, it also seems that breaking the cycle of violence is within our grasp.

## CHILD & YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Another unfortunate gap in child rights today is that the principle of participation has been only partially articulated and poorly implemented – if not directly attacked – across the world. This is disconcerting since children are the experts of their lives and thus the best advisors and sounding boards for policies made for them. Including them in solutions is what holds the power for true transformation and sustainable impact.

Children have shown incredible ability to lead. In 2019, Greta Thunberg continued to galvanize

<sup>3,4</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>5</sup> Global Initiative to End all Corporal Punishment of Children (GIECPC), Global

Progress web page: <https://endcorporalpunishment.org/countdown/>.  
<sup>6</sup> GIECPC (2016), *Corporal punishment of children: Summary of research*.

<sup>7</sup> Anthony, E. R., Paine, A. L., Shelton, K. H. (2019), *International Journal of Environment Research and Public Health*, 16(12).

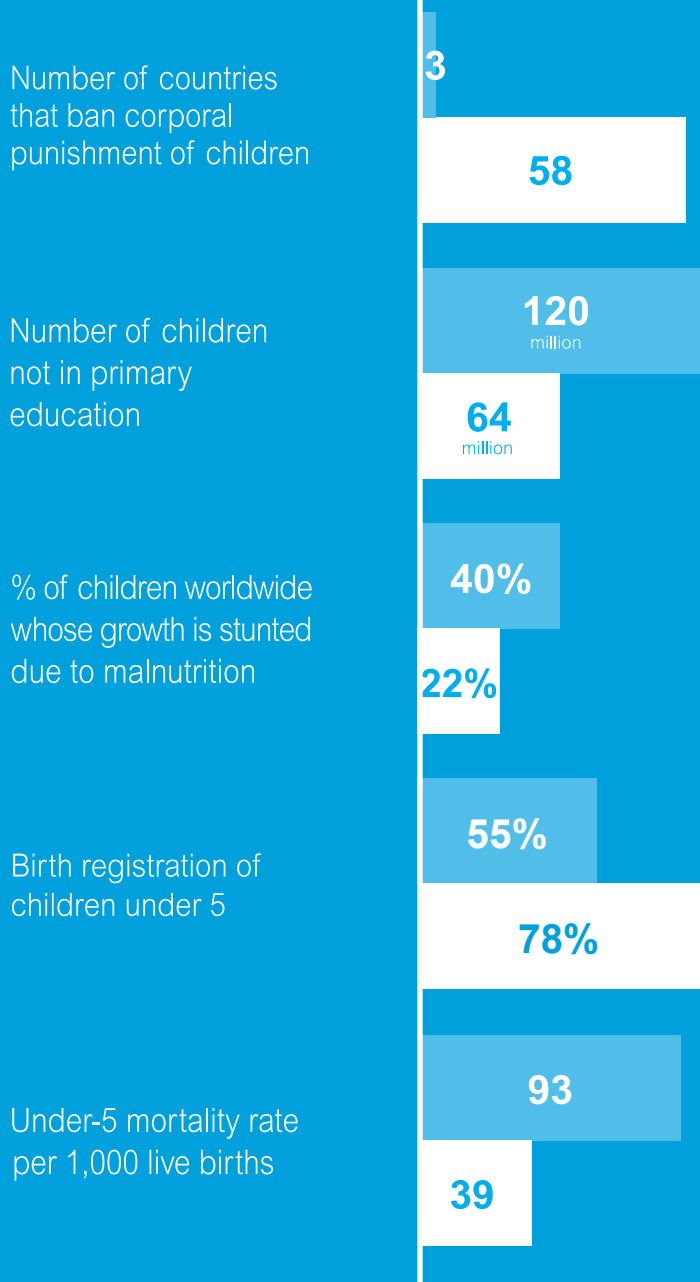
<sup>8</sup> Jaritz, C., Wiesinger, D., & Schmid, M. (2008), *Trauma & Gewalt* 2(4).  
<sup>9</sup> Csáky, C., (2009) Save the Children.



# GLOBAL DATA

## 30 years of child rights

### THERE HAS BEEN PROGRESS



(sources: Global Initiative to End all Corporal Punishment of Children; Joining Forces (2019), A Second Revolution)

1989  
today

1 BILLION CHILDREN



have experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence, or neglect in this year alone

(source: WHO)

### BUT MANY CHALLENGES REMAIN

75%

of children in alternative care have had a traumatic experience before entering the care system

(source: "Trauma & Gewalt" Journal)

MORE THAN 5 MILLION CHILDREN



die every year from preventable causes

(source: WHO)

AN ESTIMATED 15 MILLION ADOLESCENT GIRLS

aged 15 to 19 have experienced forced sex

(source: Joining Forces)

BETWEEN 2% AND 5% GDP

estimated annual cost of violence against children

(source: Joining Forces)

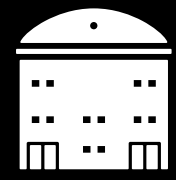
NEARLY 13 MILLION REFUGEES



who have been forced from their homes are under the age of 18

(source: UNHCR)

MORE THAN 5 MILLION CHILDREN



live in institutions

(source: UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty)

80%

of children in formal alternative care have one or both parents alive

(source: Save the Children)

95,000 CHILDREN A YEAR

70% of them boys – are murdered

(source: Joining Forces)

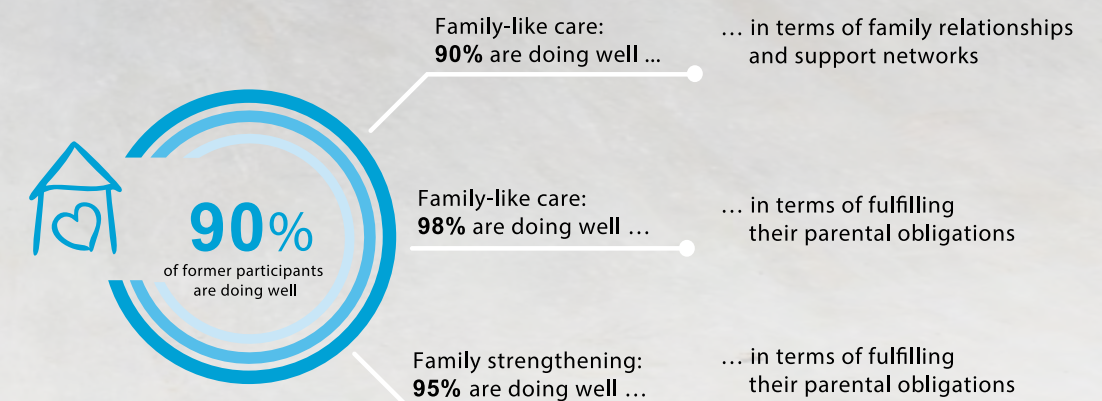
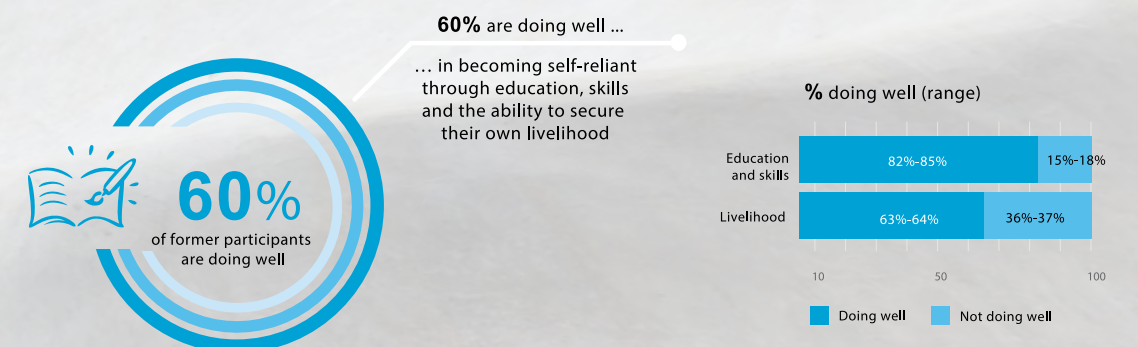
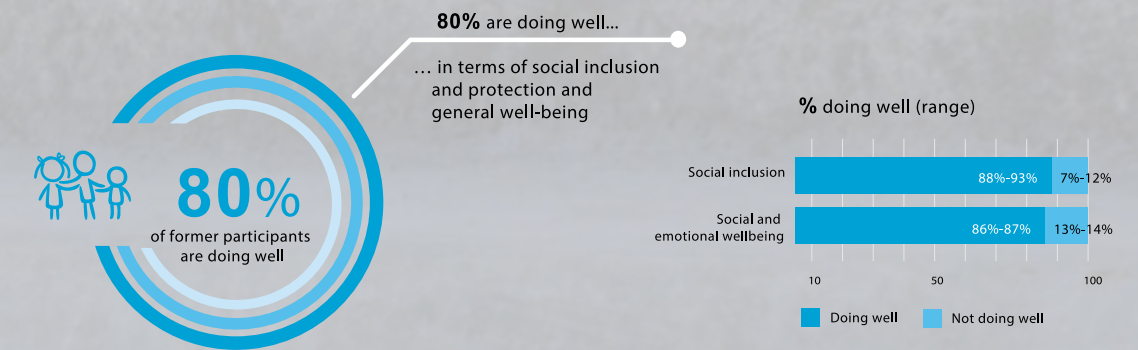
of the nearly 140 million orphaned children around the world  
15.1 MILLION HAVE LOST BOTH PARENTS

(source: UNICEF)



# OUR IMPACT

SOS Children's Villages has been directly caring for children since 1949. Our 70 Years of Impact report, published in April, tracks the long-term impact of our work in the lives of children and young people through our care and family strengthening programmes.





# 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 2019

2,828



PEOPLE REACHED  
IN 2019

1,233,600



## 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. This has long been a part of our organization's DNA. Our greatest responsibility is to safeguard the children and young people in our programmes from harm, and we remain ever-vigilant to improve our policies and practices.*

To truly deliver on our child safeguarding commitments, we have learned that we have to be open about how we are doing and work towards creating an environment – both within our programmes and in communities around the world – where people feel free to raise concerns.

One way we have fostered an environment of openness is through our Child Safeguarding Annual Report, which we make available publicly on our international website. The report reflects our efforts to understand child safeguarding risks and the steps we are taking to improve our existing practice and mitigate these risks. It provides data on critical safeguarding incidents, including deaths of children in our programmes and child-on-child incidents. The report also describes how we are establishing a culture in which our staff and partners feel free to come forward to report concerns.

Another important element of our efforts to improve has been the Independent Child Safeguarding Review, a project that started in 2017. We retained the services of the expert international organization Keeping Children Safe to conduct the review, which focuses on understanding past cases and the circumstances that contributed to the occurrence of child abuse, with the ultimate goal of helping the organization to reduce risks in programmes today and in the future. We expect that review to conclude in 2021.

In 2019, we continued to develop measures for applying best practice in child safeguarding. In addition to ongoing capacity building efforts, we initiated a project aimed at the prevention of bullying and further rolled out the Protective Behaviours programme, which helps children understand their rights and develop skills in avoiding violence. We updated our procedures for reporting and responding to child safeguarding incidents and strengthened programme quality in general by developing user guides for SOS parents and youth care.



# 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 health care, 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.

## SUPPORT IN ACCESSING SERVICES

In some countries, families are overwhelmed by the struggle for survival. Linking them with available essential services helps parents to focus on caring for their children. In Kosovo, for example, unemployment and poverty are high. Our family strengthening programme in Pristina supports families who may be living in homes without heat or running water to apply for social housing. This in turn can improve the family's physical and psychological health. The programme also assists families to access food, clothes, school supplies and educational support for their children.

## ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Creating economic opportunity helps keep families together. In many parts of the world, we provide parents and caregivers with vocational training to find a job or provide financing for them to start a small business. In Nepal, for example, SOS Children's Villages works with nearly 2,600 families. Single mothers can be particularly



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## SUPPORTING EXTENDED FAMILIES

Doris and her husband are raising their four grandchildren; the children's parents live and work away from home. When Cyclone Idai hit, they lost parts of their house. Our family strengthening services are supporting them so they rebuild their home and stay together.

# 112

COUNTRIES WITH  
FAMILY STRENGTHENING  
PROGRAMMES IN 2019





## FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

We work with each family in our family strengthening programme to create a family development plan that draws on their strengths and identifies steps to overcome challenges in caring for their children.

# 80,200

FAMILIES SUPPORTED  
TO STAY TOGETHER IN 2019

vulnerable, often bearing the full weight to feed, care for and educate their children. Be it a sewing machine to start a dress shop or seed money to open a grocery store, women are empowered to become financially independent and improve the living conditions for their families.

## PARENTING WORKSHOPS

Many of our family strengthening programmes offer parenting classes to families at risk to support children's development and build nurturing and safe homes. The range of classes offered is vast, from positive discipline to nutrition. The specific subject taken up is based on the needs of the group. In the West Bank in Palestine, for example, the subject is opening up dialogue with children and building stronger relationships. Through role play with sock puppets, mothers learn to feel more comfortable talking with their children about sensitive topics, such as bullying, smoking, hygiene and puberty.

## WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

In many countries, our unique community-based approach supports families to provide better care and protection for their children. In Cote d'Ivoire, for example, our family strengthening programme in Yamoussoukro works with the community to put an end to a common child labour practice. As a *tantie baggage*, young girls carry heavy loads for people in the market to bring back additional income to their families. With the support of the community, we initiated a project to connect these girls with vocational training opportunities that offer the prospect of decent employment instead of engaging in *tantie baggage*. Based on its success, the project was expanded in 2019.

## RIGHTS EDUCATION

We adapt our services to the specific needs of children and their families. In El Refugio, a small rural community in Mexico on the border with Guatemala, our programme supports migrants to learn about their rights. Workshops include sessions on the rights of children and women, domestic violence and on family planning and contraceptive methods. We also support families in advocating for clean drinking water, obtaining birth certificates for their children and in registering as Mexican citizens.



# 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.*

© Katarina Ilievska | Ukraine

In conjunction 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 always take the long view, working to build trust with each child and supporting them on their path to independence.

## FAMILY-LIKE CARE

One care option we provide is family-like care. Children and young people experience a reliable caregiver in the form of an SOS parent, 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. There is regular assessment of the child's placement, with an eye toward reintegration into the child's family of origin wherever possible.

SOS parents receive ongoing training to best support the children coming into their care, many of whom have experienced trauma. Specialized psychologists and other types of support are also available. The goal is to create an environment where children can experience the value of strong and reliable relationships, which helps them in their development and in their future relationships with others. In 2019, over 40,300 children and young people were cared for in 541 family-like care programmes around the world.

## FOSTER CARE

Foster care implementation is unique to every national context. In some countries, we provide support services to foster families, such as counselling or training, or we work with governments to implement quality foster care through knowledge transfer or in the development and distribution of quality training material. In other countries, our SOS parents are registered as foster parents.

## MAINTAINING TIES

We support children and youth in our care to maintain and improve relationships with their family of origin, when possible and in their best interests. We also support them to build strong social networks.

# 2,529

CHILDREN AND YOUTH LEFT  
ALTERNATIVE CARE TO RETURN TO  
THEIR FAMILY OF ORIGIN IN 2019



### SHORT-TERM CARE

Sometimes, for example during family crises or emergencies, children need care on a temporary basis, pending family reunification. In these situations, we provide an environment that protects them from harm. If it is determined that it is in the child's best interest to return to their family, we facilitate and carefully support this process. If not, we work together with child protection authorities to find the most appropriate care option for the child.

### YOUTH CARE

The goal of our youth care programmes is to equip young people with the skills and confidence they need to smoothly transition into independence and realize their potential. We provide individualized support in preparing for higher education, the job market or self-employment. With guidance, each young person actively engages in the leaving care process. In 2019, more than 18,400 young people were cared for in 595 youth care programmes.

### CHILD AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Children and youth have a right to participate in the decisions that affect them. Strengthening their participation in everyday life and at different organizational levels is one of our primary objectives. The International Youth Coalition is made up of young people from across the world who are part of a care or family strengthening programme. At a federation-wide meeting in July 2019, the Coalition shared their views on how to increase youth participation in our programmes with senior leaders from over 120 countries.

### TRAUMA-INFORMED TRAINING

A recent study shows that 75% of children in alternative care have experienced at least one traumatic event in their past. If a trauma is not dealt with adequately, it can affect the child's psychological, physical and social development. In recent years, we have been focusing on this topic in our trainings for caregivers. In 2019, SOS Children's Villages held trauma-informed trainings and educational workshops with care professionals as well as children and young people in 10 countries from Latin America to Eastern Europe to Africa.

### KEEPING SIBLINGS TOGETHER

Two groups of biological siblings who cannot live with their parents for the moment are growing up together in a family environment. Little by little, SOS mother Selda has managed to earn their trust and make a home where they all feel safe.

# 65,800

CHILDREN AND YOUTH CARED FOR IN 2019





# 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 partners and the young people themselves, has been developing innovative ways to ensure a confident transition to independence.

© Philipp Hedemann | Gambia



31

COUNTRIES

1,700

VOLUNTEERS

5,700

YOUNG PEOPLE

## A GLOBAL CHALLENGE

Finding employment and decent work is key for young people to become self-reliant members of their communities, but 68 million young people around the world are unemployed. Those who do find work often have jobs that are unstable. Lack of work can have devastating consequences for young people as it puts them at risk of poverty, social exclusion and exploitation. Communities and societies also suffer cyclical effects if young people fail to become contributing members of society.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTORS

A recent study commissioned by SOS Children's Villages found that young people who grew up without parental care are 1.5 times more likely to be unemployed and looking for work than those who grew up with parental care. While both groups share similar challenges in their search for work, the research found that those who grew up without parental care valued support networks more than their counterparts. Specifically, having a mentor (18% vs 12%) and having connections (23% vs 18%) were ranked as more important.

## YOUTHCAN!

Equipping young care leavers with the skills they need to transition to independence and find decent work is the main objective of YouthCan! – our global partnership for youth employability. Reaching 5,700 young people with the help of six global partners, more than 220 national partners and 1,700 volunteers across the globe, YouthCan! celebrated a successful third year in 2019. YouthCan! also integrates a digital platform, YouthLinks, where young people have access to mentorship and training opportunities.

”

*I want to design the first ‘made in Gambia’ car and mass-produce it here.*

— Ida, mechanics trainee, SOS Children's Villages Vocational Training Centre Bakoteh



# Education

*Every child has a right to education. Yet millions of children worldwide are denied their right because of poverty, discrimination, violence, family illness and other reasons. We promote child-centred quality education across all of our programmes, focusing on the child as a resourceful individual with unique skills and capabilities.*

## EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Children who have lost parental care or are at risk of losing it are often excluded from adequate early childhood education, yet research shows that the early years of childhood lay the foundation for a child's future. We partner with communities to provide high-quality day care and kindergartens where children feel safe to learn, play and develop friendships. In 2019, we reached 37,800 children.

## EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Be it computer classes in Eswatini or a cosmetology school in Haiti, 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. In 2019, we reached 17,500 young people and adults.

## DIGITAL VILLAGE

The Digital Village project equips children and families with digital skills to improve school grades and employability, support with household tasks, and be part of the global digital community of learning, working and communicating. In 2019, the Digital Village project reached over 6,800 children and young people and 1,100 caregivers in 57 SOS Children's Villages locations.



© Alea Horst | Syria

## PRIMARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION

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

# 95%

LITERACY RATE OF CHILDREN & YOUTH IN OUR PROGRAMMES



# Emergency Response

*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 2019, we responded to emergencies in 20 countries and territories.*

© Alejandra Kaiser | Colombia

## OUR FOCUS



CARING FOR  
CHILDREN



PROTECTING  
CHILDREN'S  
RIGHTS



KEEPING FAMILIES  
TOGETHER

## PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES

The Emergency Preparedness Project, initiated with partners in 2017, supports high-risk communities where we operate to better respond to a potential emergency. It provides essential material, first aid and evacuation training, access to early-warning tools, and contingency plans. In 2019, the project was rolled out to nine countries, including the Dominican Republic, Nigeria and Somaliland. It has now reached 24 countries and plans to expand in 2020.

## PROTECTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Cyclone Idai tore through Beira, Mozambique in March 2019, destroying homes and livelihoods and leaving nearly two million people in need of humanitarian assistance. To help meet basic needs and keep families together, we launched an emergency response programme. In 2019, the programme distributed 2,900 food and hygiene kits to 500 families. Two hundred children were cared for at a temporary shelter at SOS Children's Village Beira, where they also benefited from a child-friendly space that offered them a safe space to play and learn.

## ENSURING EDUCATION

Since the start of the economic and social crisis in Venezuela, millions of people have fled the country, with Colombia hosting the largest number. A recent study found that 36% of children close to the borders do not have access to education, which is crucial for a child's development. As part of the overall response, SOS Children's Villages Colombia is focusing on "Education in Emergencies." The initiative has established community-based learning spaces with the support of institutional and private donors. In 2019, 840 children participated in educational activities, with 126 being integrated into the local school system.

## PARTNERING TO PROTECT CHILDREN

The UN Refugee Agency opened a refugee reception centre in La Guajira on the border of Venezuela/Colombia. As a complement, SOS Children's Villages opened a child-friendly space in March 2019 to address the specific needs of children in emergencies.

# 209,800

PEOPLE SUPPORTED IN  
EMERGENCIES IN 2019



# 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.*

## GIVEKIDSAVOICE CAMPAIGN

In Germany, SOS Children's Villages launched a campaign to engage children and draw attention to the right of every child to grow up in a protective and caring environment. Under the rallying cry of "One family for every child in this world," signatures were gathered for the country's first children's petition, which was delivered to the German Parliament in September 2019. More than 8,000 schools took part in the campaign's educational component.

## TEXT2CHANGE

Through short text messages, big changes can happen. This digital learning model was initiated to reach parents living in remote areas who are part of our family strengthening programmes in Sri Lanka. Among other things, mothers have learned about domestic violence, and girls and families are rejecting under-age marriage. The project has since expanded to other countries in Asia and now also focuses on education and youth employability topics.

## MALNUTRITION CENTRE

In the rural province of Ratanakiri, Cambodia, we work with local authorities to identify severely malnourished children under the age of five. Children stay at the centre where they are nourished back to health while our family strengthening team works with the parents to improve their financial situation and teach them about good nutrition and hygiene. In this way, the conditions that led to the malnutrition are addressed and families can stay together.



## SOCIAL CIRCUS

This creative approach uses circus arts as a tool to nurture self-esteem, confidence and trust in others. Cirque du Soleil began sponsoring workshops for children and youth in our programmes in Mexico in 2014. The programme has since expanded to Brazil, Canada, Peru and South Africa.

# 71%

OF PARTICIPANTS REPORT  
INCREASED SELF-CONFIDENCE



# 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.*

© Jakob Fuhr | Romania



We speak up at national and international political forums and provide recommendations to governments and decision makers to promote child-centred and rights-based approaches. Our work also aims to empower children and youth, and we promote their participation in decisions affecting their lives.

## 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.

Among other efforts in 2019, we highlighted investing in families in the context of the European Union defining its next multiannual budgets and spending priorities. We also addressed fighting poverty in order to keep families together at the European Development Days, and called attention to children in particularly vulnerable situations such as migration and the need to prevent family separation.

## ADVOCATING FOR QUALITY CARE

We advocate for quality alternative care services according to each child's individual needs. A key success this year was the UN General Assembly's adoption of the 2019 Rights of the Child Resolution focusing for the first time ever on children without parental care. The resolution marks a milestone in recognizing the specific realities of this group and will support governments in providing them with quality care.

Together with child rights partners, SOS Children's Villages also advocated for quality alternative care for children with disabilities at the 40th Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva and contributed to the development of the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty.

## YOUNG CARE LEAVERS SPEAK OUT

Andreea, a young person in care from Romania, shares her experience and ideas on how to improve the transition from alternative care to independent living at the Be the Change! Conference, part of the EU co-funded Leaving Care project.

# 92

COUNTRIES IN WHICH WE  
ARE ENGAGING IN LOCAL  
ADVOCACY IN 2019



## EXAMPLES OF POLICY CHANGE ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2019

**Georgia:** The National Parliament adopted the Child Rights Code, making the state legally responsible to provide support to care leavers. Together with partners, SOS Children's Villages Georgia had been advocating for this entitlement and is now supporting the government to develop relevant programmes.

**Indonesia:** SOS Children's Villages Indonesia contributed to the drafting of the Ministerial Regulation of Social Affairs on Foster Care and the guidelines for the implementation of the government's foster care pilot project.

**Malawi:** Working with UNICEF to share expertise with the government, SOS Children's Villages Malawi successfully advocated for the development of the National Children's Rights Policy. The policy covers all areas of children's lives in the country including alternative care.

## #ISEEYOU CAMPAIGN

Seizing the opportunity of the anniversaries of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, SOS Children's Villages launched the global campaign #iseeyou to give visibility to children and young people without parental care or at risk of losing it.

Member associations in more than 70 countries adapted the campaign to their local contexts. Through joint awareness raising, including TV spots, news articles, a billboard ad in Times Square, and strategic use of social media, the campaign reached a total of 26 million people worldwide.

## CHILD FRIENDLY BOOKLET ON CARE

Making sure children know their rights is an important part of our work. In 2019, SOS Children's Villages developed the booklet "You Have the Right to Care and Protection! The Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children in Child and Youth Friendly Language." Over 500 children and young people participated in all stages of its development. It has since been translated into multiple languages and shared around the world.

The booklet was launched on the 10th anniversary of the Guidelines, an internationally accepted framework that guides governments on the protection and well-being of children without parental care or at risk of losing it.

## "LISTEN TO US"

Children themselves share their views and experiences at an event to launch a report on child rights in India. "I request the government to ensure that the rights of children are respected and their well-being is protected," urged Jyoti.





# The Movement

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



COUNTRIES  
REPRESENTED  
2019 IN THE  
INTERNATIONAL  
YOUTH COALITION

10



SUPPORTERS AND  
DONORS IN 2019

4,000,000



EMPLOYEES  
WORLDWIDE IN 2019

37,970\*

\*This figure represents average full-time equivalents.



# Conversations

*This year we would like to share a set of conversations with you. We brought together four people connected to the mission of SOS Children's Villages – to exchange views and shed light on the issues facing children and young people in our programmes. We hope their conversations trigger personal reflection: Who was there for you as a child? What does it take to become your strongest self? How can we best support children and young people in vulnerable circumstances?*



OLIVER BÄTE, 55

© Allianz | Germany

Oliver is a German business executive. He is the CEO of Allianz, a global insurer and investor that has been an international corporate partner of SOS Children's Villages since 2015. The partnership focuses on emergency preparedness and response programmes, and youth employability initiatives.

Zule just finished her studies in law in Spain. She grew up in different forms of alternative care, from a failed kinship plan to an unexpectedly nurturing small group home called Chindia, to SOS Children's Village Tenerife. She is a child and human rights activist and a member of the International Youth Coalition.



© Jacob Fuhr | Romania

ZULE REYES, 24



YEENÍ GAMARRA, 38

Yeení is a policewoman and she also has a nursing degree. Married with a 12-year-old son, Yeení arrived at SOS Children's Village Cusco along with her three younger brothers when she was eleven. She originally studied nursing in order to fulfil her mother's dream.

Adan grew up in alternative care in SOS Children's Village Cusco, Peru. He arrived when he was six months old. He describes himself as creative, and is now studying marketing at the local university, as he prepares to become independent.



ADAN SARMIENTO, 19

© Diego del Río | Peru

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*Care leavers need mental support. You need to know what your thoughts are, what to call them, how to face them.*

— Zule Reyes



# Oliver & Zule

*In their full conversation, Oliver and Zule covered a wide range of topics, from politics and global issues to personal interests and career advice. We join them as they begin discussing their journey to adulthood and brainstorm about how to better support care leavers.*

**Zule:** Where I live we have created a community of care leavers. We are so different, yet we all have gone through the same difficult process of leaving care and becoming an adult. When we meet and start talking, you already get that feeling of being understood.

**Oliver:** I'm curious: How and when did you decide to get a good education and study?

**Zule:** I came from a family where I could see the poor quality of life and struggles they had, how broken it was and still is, mainly because they didn't have any education. That was all I knew, for me it was normal. When I got into care, I discovered that life wasn't like that. I had great caregivers. They were educated, dedicated, caring – but letting you make your own mistakes. I liked to study, so I thought ok, I am good at this, and I know I need to improve this skill of mine to have a better life, so I started.

**Oliver:** Given all of your energy and ambition, what are you going to do now that you are finished with your formal university education?

**Zule:** One thing I want to do is to spread the word: If we can do it here, if we can build this kind of community, then why can't we ask for this exact thing everywhere, in every place, for every kid and young person coming out of care.

Because normally society focuses on: "oh, children have to be cared for and children have to be protected." But children grow up. They become young adults. And if you protect them when they are young, and then you leave them alone when they need to adjust to life as a grown-up, they are going to be lost and then eventually crash.

**Oliver:** Yes.

**Zule:** And that's what happening here in Spain and I guess in many of the countries where SOS Children's Villages works. Yes, they have

opportunities, but they still need an after-care environment where they feel protected but independent. To hear: you can make mistakes and you will be ok. If I hadn't been supported to dream big, to realize that all the labels I had on me were not the definition of me as a person, I don't know how I would have coped.

**Oliver:** From what you are saying, it sounds like a lot of facilities are great for young children, but this transition during adolescence is not really well understood and not very well supported by institutions. I can only speak for myself and my children here, but this transition is generally difficult for every human being, because you have to define yourself. This is often done through separation rather than integration. Separation from your parents, from their values, their standards, to then defining who you are or who you are not. So do you have exact ideas on what could be a programme that either SOS Children's Villages or sponsors could support in order to make that transition more successful?

**Zule:** Care leavers themselves need to be included and listened to more. Having 0% participation in your future leaves you feeling anxious and unsafe. If the plan doesn't go smoothly, being a care leaver without any support could mean ending up homeless. So we need programmes that train caregivers to encourage youth participation.

Care leavers also need financial support, especially in emergencies. But the more important thing is mental support. You need to know what your thoughts are, what to call them, how to face them. And for that you need a professional telling you that the things you are thinking are not a problem. You just have to figure out how it works and know that you have been through a lot of "not normal things." It doesn't mean you are going to be like your father, your mother or your family. It only means that you have passed through something and now you are stronger, you are a superhero.

**Oliver:** Yes.

**Zule:** If that makes sense.

**Oliver:** Yes, a lot of sense. I know a little bit about that. Particularly if you have had stressful



experiences that have created some insecurities or development stress and you need support, our system often doesn't understand that. From my perspective, the problem is not that people don't see mental coaching is needed, but the capacity that we often provide, whether it's coaching or even medical support, is just two hours a week. And that is just not enough.

**Zule:** Exactly. One or two hours is not enough. You need someone who you can talk with anytime you need. You don't have the specific time when you will have a crisis.

**Oliver:** Now the question is what can institutions and supporters like Allianz do to help? What about a two-tiered system, because some of the problems I would feel personally able to support, but in some areas that you have described I think you need professional coaches who have the skill and professional background to deal with difficult situations.

**Zule:** Yes, we need professionals who know how to support, how to listen. The most important thing is to create a sense of safety and belonging – to feel that someone is there for you even though she is not your mom.

**Oliver:** I have been very fortunate at least for most of my youth because my mother and my grandmother were always there for me, even when my parents separated. But I was also lucky because I left the house and I went to do an apprenticeship, and then I went to the military, so I had some very clear structures around me for about four years that helped me mature.

**Zule:** I imagine you also had to struggle and to find a way to cope. Do you remember how it was when you were 18 and you left for your apprenticeship? How did you overcome that hardship and say, "ok, I can do this. This is my destiny somehow"?

**Oliver:** It is a very good question, but it was such a long time ago. I'm 55 now, so it's hard for me to remember, but for me this time was an adventure. I moved to bigger cities, I had a very small but my own place, you know. I met a lot of really cool people. To be honest I did not feel a lot of stress, at

least in hindsight. I think we always have a benign memory. The older we get, the more pleasant the memories become because the bad memories we sort of discard.

I was very happy because I felt free. I was earning very little money, but enough to keep going. And it is very motivating to prove to yourself that you can finance yourself, to not have to ask anybody for money. That was already a very good feeling. And when I was in the military I had a backup system. I had economic security, which is very important because you are also being taken care of: you have shelter, you have food, you have structure, you have clear expectations.

By the way, whether it's working or doing social services – in a hospital or a retirement home – if I had to make a proposal to society based on my own experience, I think dedicating one year of your life to your community after finishing school could teach people a lot about what really matters in order to function as a society.

**Zule:** Exactly.

**Oliver:** Nelson Mandela had a great concept out of the Bantu language. It is called Ubuntu: "I am because we are." People growing up now are taught that you are an individual and you need to be yourself. But we define ourselves through the communities we live in, whether that is a partner, is a marriage in a family, or in a company that we work with, or the community that we live in.

**Zule:** It is like Ouroboro, the symbol for cyclic renewal. Now, I need support from you, I need to know how things work. But in 10 years time, I am going to be you. I am going to be the one helping others.

**Oliver:** It was a real pleasure to meet you. I hope that one day we can meet in person.

**Zule:** Yes, me too. I really enjoyed getting to know you.



”  
*We define ourselves  
through the communities  
we live in.*

— Oliver Bäte



*Twenty years separate Adan and Yeení and the time they spent in the same children's village. Nevertheless, in this excerpt from their conversation, it is clear that many of their experiences and the values they learned are the same. They both consider the people they grew up with in care as part of their family today and maintain strong contact with them.*

**Adan:** What memories do you have from Cusco?

**Yeení:** I clearly remember the welcome party that Mama María Jesús organized for me and my brothers. We were in deep pain, our mother had passed away only six months earlier. We were afraid of being separated, we had no one to take care of us, we were alone. But when we arrived at our new SOS home, they all gave us a welcome hug. I felt the warmth and honesty and forgot my grief. A few years later, they also organized my quinceañero party. This is something I never thought I would have. It's a beautiful memory.

And there were so many activities: theatre, music, sports. I used to take dancing lessons and we would practice together. We even travelled to Lima and to Bolivia to dance, and we got to meet children from other children's villages. You?

**Adan:** I remember how we all used to play outside. I would bring my toys to play with everyone. At night, we would escape to the field. There was a special spot to make bonfires. Since not everyone was allowed by their SOS moms because it was late, we organized ourselves to knock three times on their bedroom windows, so they could come out and play. But one time, I made a mistake and knocked on the director's office! I thought, "What did I do!?" Do you remember any mischiefs?

**Yeení:** Of course! One time, me and the other children tricked one of the SOS caregivers to watch a movie with us. She fell asleep and we stole the keys to the main entrance. Afterwards, we met at four in the morning at the main gate. We ran and played around the neighbourhood until eight in the morning! When we came back, everyone was waiting for us and we were grounded for a month! I cannot believe we did that! What did you like to do during your free time?

**Adan:** I liked to play with plasticine and make little figures, use my imagination and creativity. I loved to dance and listen to music, write down the lyrics. Also, during my free time I liked to go to the big cypress trees. I sat down and just listened and relaxed, feeling the sun and the wind on my face. You?

**Yeení:** That's funny, because I also did that. I would climb those big trees you are talking about, with paper and a pencil to draw, and felt how the wind rocked me in the tree. We had similar tastes! I would also listen to my music cassettes and write the lyrics of the songs I liked. And like all the girls in the house, we would dance and make little parties in the living room.

**Yeení:** Were there any difficult times for you?

**Adan:** At our SOS home, we used to be 12 children, but some returned to their biological families and it was hard to see them go. It was a challenge to learn how to live without them, to understand why they had to leave and then have to adapt. Especially with the little ones, I felt they were better off with me, but I needed to learn that it is best for them to return to their families. That was hard.

**Yeení:** I think the hardest thing for me was living with children from different backgrounds, different homes and families. It's a challenge to live with people you don't see as your family at first. There were silly discussions, but in the end, we shared so much that now we feel like we are a family, wherever we are. Mami Carmen helped a lot to get us through those arguments and see ourselves as family.

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*Mami Carmen helped a lot to get us through those arguments and see ourselves as family.*

— Yeení Gamarra

## Adan & Yeení







**Adan:** How did you decide to become a policewoman?

**Yeen:** As a child, I always liked to help people. If someone fell or had a minor accident, I would tend to their wounds. That's why I first decided to become a nurse. Also, I lost my mother when I was nine years old. She told me she wanted to be a nurse and I think somehow, I wanted to fulfil her dream.

After I worked in a hospital, I learned about an opportunity to join the police force. Mami Carmen encouraged me to do it, and when I was accepted she was very proud. My SOS siblings grew up with that, she would tell them that I was going to take care of them, and I do, I will always take care of my family. How about you, brother?

**Adan:** When I was in the tenth grade, I didn't know what to study. I would talk to my SOS mom Carmen, and she would tell me to study something I like, that I feel inside me is the right thing.

I wanted to study something different. I am very creative, I like to use my imagination, and marketing called my attention. Before, I wanted to become an engineer like the director at Cusco. But my mother Carmen would always tell me I had to do something I like to I find happiness in my profession. And this is true, you must choose something you love.

**Yeen:** Indeed, to thrive in life, you must do something you love and feel passionate about and do your best. I am sure you will be very good. How do you feel now that you are fulfilling your goals?

**Adan:** I feel happy and thankful. I also feel I am in a process, in a process to fulfil my dreams.

**Yeen:** Exactly, it's like exhaling after you finish school, inhale again to go through university. After each phase is finished, new goals arise.

**Adan:** Yes, after university I would like to continue my studies. Every time I fulfil what I set myself to do, I feel happy and proud of myself. I feel I'm on the right path.

**Yeen:** Every time you set yourself an objective and fulfil it, this happiness and pride is contagious

to your family too. Mami Carmen is proud, so are my SOS brothers and sisters. They like me to talk about my work. You will get there, when you can tell us all about your experiences in the world.

**Adan:** How does it feel to be a mother?

**Yeen:** Being a mom is something very big, very beautiful. Like Mami Carmen said, there isn't a book that tells you how to be a parent. You just need love and patience – that's what teaches you how to raise them well. I just give my boy what I was given: authentic love.

And it's funny, but sometimes I think that this love that I give him – that I actually received from a stranger – this love is what fills the hole I have from losing my mother.

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*Every time I fulfil what I set myself to do, I feel happy and proud of myself. I feel I'm on the right path.*

— Adan Sarmiento



# Helmut Kutin Award

*Named after our organization's former president, the Helmut Kutin Award honours the commitment and dedication of caregivers at SOS Children's Villages. Two SOS mothers, from Syria and Nepal, received the award in 2019 in recognition of their unique contribution to the lives of children and young people.*



Imagine raising children in a war zone and being forced to evacuate your home, not once but twice. Imagine raising 35 children over a span of 40 years.

Those are the stories of Salam Khalaf of Syria and Chandra Kala Thapa of Nepal – the two recipients of the 2019 Helmut Kutin Award.

Ms. Khalaf, an SOS mother for more than 20 years, supported her children through two evacuations during the Syrian conflict. Ms. Kala Thapa was one of the longest serving caregivers in the global SOS Children's Villages organization, caring for children for over four decades.

"These inspiring SOS mothers shine brightly in the lives of children and families, bringing hope and a loving home at a time when they are needed the most," said President Siddhartha Kaul in announcing the winners.

Caregivers are at the heart of our work. In 2019, around 8,900 SOS parents, parent-trainees and family assistants cared for more than 65,800 children and young people worldwide. Every two years, the Helmut Kutin Award recognizes two outstanding individuals.

Ms. Khalaf is an example of those courageous SOS parents who provide care in difficult circumstances, sometimes in the midst of war. In 2012, escalating violence in Aleppo, Syria forced her and the children, as well as the other SOS families, to evacuate the children's village.

She helped her children cope through this period and adjust to a new life at SOS Children's Village Damascus in the suburb of Qudsaya. But intensified fighting forced her and the other families to flee again. "The second evacuation from the children's village in Damascus was more difficult because the sounds of clashes and bombs were so loud. We all felt scared," she said. "I tried to calm (the children) and tell them everything was going to be okay." Fortunately, they were able to return home a month later and bring some normalcy back into the lives of the children.

"Maybe we can't change what is happening in this world, but we can change the small world of many vulnerable children by showing them love and care," said Ms. Khalaf upon receiving the award. "It is unbelievable how the smallest act of caring can help them and turn their life around."

Ms. Kala Thapa is an example of a mother's commitment. She devoted 40 years to caring for children at SOS Children's Village Gandaki in Pokhara, Nepal. She joined our organization when she was 20 years old and raised 35 children, seven of them from the time they were babies, before retiring at the end of 2019.

All of the older children who grew up in her care have graduated from high school or have gone on to university. Many work or created businesses. Some married and have started their own families. "Being an SOS mother for 40 years, I have understood that mothers play a significant role in shaping the future of their children," said Ms. Thapa upon accepting her award. "We are mentors for our children. We show and guide them towards their right path. With pure love and affection, we make them feel at home, help ease their journey to independence, and leave their pain behind."

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*Maybe we can't change what is happening in this world, but we can change the small world of many vulnerable children by showing them love and care.*

— Ms. Khalaf







© Cornel van Heerden | Malawi

# 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. They also donate their time, by raising awareness on social media or volunteering to be a mentor. Prominent personalities are also raising their voices on behalf of children and families in vulnerable circumstances. We work with governments and institutional funding partners, and with corporates on the global and national level.

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 and sometimes serving as a multiplier.

We are particularly excited about new approaches that are developing in our sector, often with true participation and co-creation with the children, families and communities themselves. Care leavers are becoming change agents and are leading the way to accelerate progress and find meaningful solutions.

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.



*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 some of our innovative projects for children.*

© Katerina Ilievska | Hungary





© Cahungu Evariste | Burundi

## CIVIC DRIVEN CHANGE

### Innovative approach

Civic driven change is an approach to development work that looks at social change as the result of self-driven actions by citizens, rather than states or markets. It invites communities to become agents of their own development, thereby shifting the role of international NGOs from implementers to facilitators of projects.

In Burundi, the approach is taking root in communities that are part of our family strengthening programmes. As a facilitator and capacity-builder to the community, SOS Children's Villages fosters community solidarity and ownership over its problems and its members' sense of responsibility. It is the programmes' participants who identify amongst themselves who should be prioritized or receive support – for example, the most vulnerable children who are in need of school equipment or uniforms, or the families who will participate in agricultural collective income-generating activities.

## GENERATION NEVER GIVE UP

### Care leaver network

When young people leave care, they often face major challenges in the transition to independence due to lack of government or family support. To improve their situation and advocate for change, young people themselves are coming together in the form of care leaver networks.

Generation Never Give Up Network Sri Lanka (GNGN) is the first network of its kind in Asia. It was founded in 2017 with the support of SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka. With four care leavers at the helm, GNGN provides services such as career guidance, legal support, information on scholarships and an emergency hotline. It also represents Sri Lankan care leavers at many international forums.

The network advocates on key issues, such as lack of housing, and in 2019 laid the foundation for a major success. For care leavers, birth certificates have been a source of stigma and a stumbling block to employment since "marital status of parents" is often left blank. GNGN successfully advocated to have this requirement removed, paving the way to more inclusion for care leavers in Sri Lankan society.



© Akshana Yapa Abeywardene | Sri Lanka



## JOINING FORCES

### Global partnership

Joining Forces is an alliance of the six largest child-focused international NGOs, working for and with children and young people to secure their rights and end violence against them. There are two strands of action: "Child Rights Now," which focuses on advocacy towards policymakers and research and "Ending Violence against Children," focusing on programme work on the national level.

In commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the alliance launched the report, *A Second Revolution: Thirty years of child rights and the unfinished agenda*, at the United Nations in June 2019. Supported by data, the report takes stock of the progress made towards realizing children's rights in the last 30 years. It finds that despite extraordinary advances, millions of children have been bypassed and calls on governments to take bold action to target the children who have not been reached or have been systematically left out.

## EL ALTO, BOLIVIA

### Local government partner

Since 2014, SOS Children's Villages has been partnering with the city of El Alto to run the Yaticañ Uta community centre. Yaticañ Uta, which means "house of learning" in Aymara language, serves as an educational hub for children and families. In addition to being a day-care centre, it also offers workshops on topics such as nutrition and positive parenting. The families and community representatives have been involved with managing the centre since its inception, with the aim that the community takes over completely within seven years.

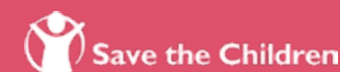
Yaticañ Uta has been such a success that the city of El Alto was inspired to create and finance 10 more community centres, based on its model. The new centres were established under the programmatic guidelines of SOS Children's Villages and are jointly managed with the community.



© Alejandra Kaiser | Bolivia



ChildFund  
Alliance



Terre des Hommes  
International Federation







# 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 to the many thousands of other partners who make our work possible.*

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL & GOVERNMENTAL PARTNERS

### Government of Austria

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

### Government of Belgium

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation (DGD)  
Wallonie-Bruxelles International

### Government of Denmark

Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)

### Government of Honduras

Secretary of Development and Social Security

### European Union

European Commission  
European Council  
European Investment Bank  
Council of the European Union  
European Parliament

### Government of Finland

Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs  
Ministry for Social Affairs & Health

### Government of France

French Development Agency (AFD)  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### Government of Germany

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)  
Federal Foreign Office

### Government of Iceland

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

### Government of Italy

Ministry of the Interior  
Ministry of Welfare  
Province of Trento  
Region of Calabria

### Government of Luxembourg

City of Luxembourg  
Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs

### Government of Monaco

### Government of Morocco

### Government of the Netherlands

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### Government of Norway

Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)  
Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (BUFDIR)  
Norwegian Directorate for Integration and Diversity (IMDI)  
Ministry of Health and Care Services

### Government of Spain

Province of Canary Islands  
Province of Madrid

### Government of Sweden

Gothenburg Municipality  
Swedish Gender Equality Agency

### United Nations

Funds and Programmes  
International Labour Organization (ILO)  
International Organisation for Migration (IOM)  
UN Global Compact  
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF)  
UNWomen

## FOUNDATION PARTNERS

Akelius Foundation

Balder Foundation

Bernard van Leer 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

Grieg Foundation

Harry Hole Foundation

Hempel Foundation

Institute Circle

Intesa Bank Charity Fund

Maestro Cares Foundation

Mapfre Foundation

National Lottery Community Fund

Novo Nordisk Foundation

OAK Foundation

Obel Family Foundation

Stavros Niarchos Foundation

Stiftelsen Radiehjälpen

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

adidas

Aegean Airlines

AkzoNobel

Allen & Overy

Allianz

Apotea

AstraZeneca

Bechgaard Foundation

Beiersdorf / Nivea

Bel: La Vache Qui Rit®

Bertelsmann

C&A Foundation

CEWE

Clarins

Deutsche Post DHL Group

Dr. August Oetker

Dufry Group

Foundation 4Life

Gazprombank

Gekås Ullared

GodEl / GoodCause

Hasbro

Hemköpskedjan

Herbalife Nutrition Foundation

Hilti

HOFER

HSBC

IKEA

Interquell

INTERSPAR

Johnson & Johnson

Johnson & Johnson Foundation

KFC

MAN

Marriott International

Mars Sverige

Mars Wrigley Confectionery

MAX Burgers

OBOS

Oriflame

OTP Group / DSK Bank

Preem

Procter & Gamble

Radisson Hotel Group

Schmidt Groupe

Svenska Petroleum Exploration

Svenska Postkodlotteriet

Swedbank Robur

Swiss International Air Lines

Swisscom

Transat

Vaillant

Vodafone Greece

Vorwerk

Western Union Foundation

White & Case

## OTHER PARTNERSHIPS

Accountable Now

Better Care Network

Child Rights Connect

Children’s Rights Action Group

Civil Society in Development (CISU)

CONCORD

Decent Jobs for Youth Initiative

European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)

International NGO Cooperation for Children (EDUCO)

EU Alliance for Investing in Children

Eurochild

Forum Syd

Fundamental Rights Platform

Generation Unlimited

Global Coalition to End Child Poverty

Global Responsibility: Platform for Development and Humanitarian Aid

International Civil Society Center

IsraAID

Joining Forces

NetHope

Social Platform

The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children

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

The NGO Committee on UNICEF

The NGO Major Group

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.*



GROWTH IN  
REVENUE 2019

7%



GLOBAL  
REVENUE 2019

1.4  
billion



# Financial Report

*Our federation's financial information (see page 63) is based on the global, combined total of reports provided by our member associations and by our umbrella organisation SOS Children's Villages International. These reports are audited annually by independent and esteemed national auditors according to internationally accepted accounting standards.*

## 2019 SUMMARY

The year 2019 continued the trend of positive growth in revenue for SOS Children's Villages. From 2018 to 2019, our federation's projected combined revenue grew by 7%, up from a growth rate of 2% in 2018. Individuals, with donations large and small, continue to be the financial backbone of our organization, sustaining nearly half of our annual revenue (growth rate of 8% in 2019). Our other primary funding source, government subsidies, was up by 5%, driven by an expansion in domestic programming and government partnerships in the American and European regions. Funding from our institutional partners continued to rise at a rapid rate of 22% in 2019.

While Western Europe remains our largest source of global revenue, countries in Central Eastern and Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States – such as Albania, Belarus, Kosovo and Kyrgyzstan – are experiencing strong growth rates. Asia also grew by 13% in 2018 and continued this trend in 2019. Meanwhile, the Americas experienced growth of more than 13% in 2019, driven by increases in individual monthly giving, especially in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru. This was further supplemented by continued progress on government subsidies in the region.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

As a member of Accountable Now and a board member of the International Civil Society Centre since 2012, 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, as well as links to the websites of all our member associations.





SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES INTERNATIONAL  
FINANCIAL INFORMATION

All amounts in EUR 1,000 <sup>1</sup>

REVENUE	ACTUALS 2018	ACTUALS 2019 preliminary <sup>2</sup>	% change 2018-2019
Sporadic donors	305,382	342,307	12%
Sponsorship/committed giving	308,844	319,508	3%
Major donors	27,153	28,721	6%
Foundations & lotteries	36,078	40,741	13%
Corporate donors	52,839	55,505	5%
Governmental subsidies for domestic programmes	422,302	444,563	5%
Institutional funding	32,005	38,996	22%
Emergency appeals	2,658	1,599	-40%
Other revenue <sup>3</sup>	114,153	117,198	3%
Total Revenue	1,301,414	1,389,139	7%

EXPENDITURES <sup>4</sup>	ACTUALS 2018	ACTUALS 2019 preliminary <sup>2</sup>	% change 2018-2019
Alternative care	559,995	584,334	4%
Prevention	112,669	115,289	2%
Education	131,491	143,098	9%
SOS social centres	11,118	–	–
Other activities <sup>5</sup>	20,318	27,509	35%
Health	10,861	13,467	24%
Emergency response	14,217	10,421	-27%
Running costs for other <sup>6</sup>	–	8,112	–
Construction & investments	37,320	28,577	-23%
Programme support for national associations	107,621	113,112	5%
International coordination & programme support	44,727	48,775	9%
Information and fundraising work in promoting & supporting associations <sup>7</sup>	202,491	205,576	2%
Total expenditures	1,252,829	1,298,269	4%

<sup>1</sup> Due to rounding, total numbers may not add up exactly.  
<sup>2</sup> Independent external audits have not yet been completed in all 136 countries and territories for 2019 (as of 9 December 2020).  
<sup>3</sup> Other income refers to operational income from facilities, local income from events or merchandising, interest and other financial income.  
<sup>4</sup> Please note that due to the introduction of a new programme structure in January 2019, an exact comparison with 2018 expenditure data is not possible.  
<sup>5</sup> Includes community outreach and education on children's rights, integration support, holiday camps and play buses.  
<sup>6</sup> Includes advocacy, awareness-raising and other programmatic work in promoting and supporting associations.  
<sup>7</sup> Promoting and supporting associations are associations who raise funds for international programmes; some of them also operate domestic programmes.

SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES USA  
FINANCIAL INFORMATION

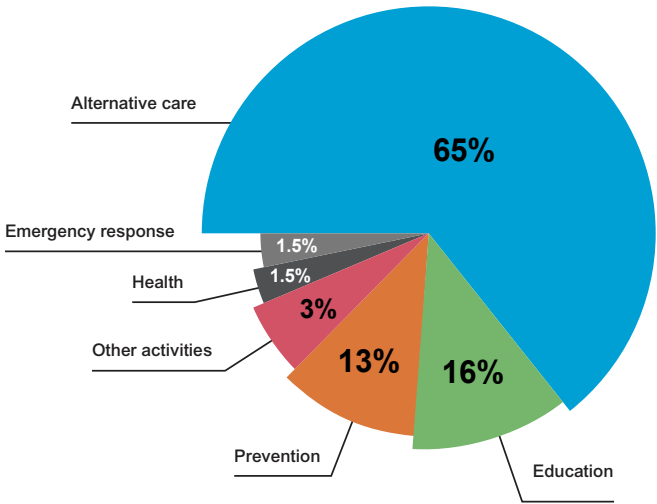
All amounts in USD <sup>1</sup>

REVENUE	ACTUALS 2018	ACTUALS 2019
Total Contributions	10,403,120	10,218,825
Special Event Income	93,773	26,042
Other Income	238,002	746,977
Total Revenue	10,734,895	10,991,844

EXPENDITURES <sup>4</sup>	ACTUALS 2018	ACTUALS 2019
Programs	10,257,773	9,323,897
<i>Villages and Programs</i>	8,293,871	7,549,329
<i>Education and Advocacy</i>	1,963,902	1,774,568
Management and General	800,222	1,173,590
Fundraising	1,224,399	1,183,923
Total expenditures	12,282,394	11,681,410
Change in Net Assets	(1,547,499)	(689,566)

NET ASSETS		
Beginning of Year	2,584,067	1,036,568
End of Year	1,036,568	347,002

GLOBAL PROGRAM EXPENDITURES BY TYPE





# Programme Statistics

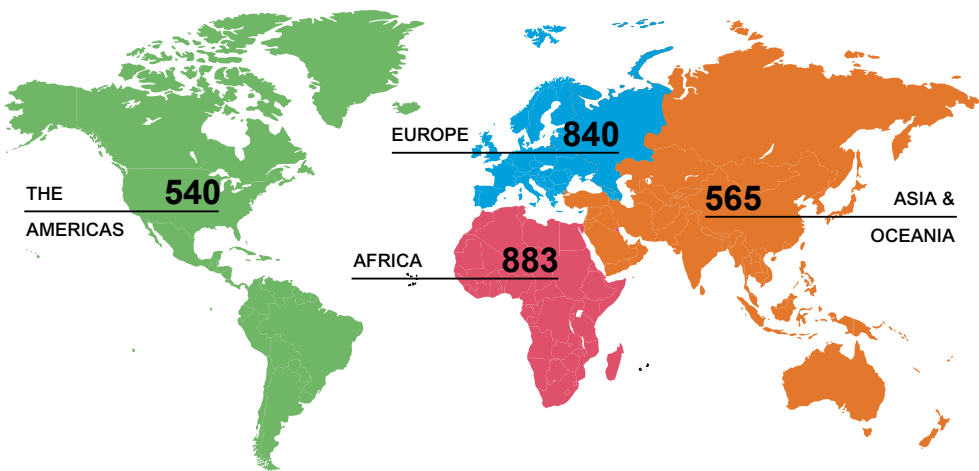
SOS Children's Villages is a global federation of locally rooted member associations. Our programmatic services, tailored to the unique needs of a community, are designed to keep families together and ensure that children and youth from vulnerable backgrounds grow up strong and resilient.

These statistics are based on reporting by our associations and represent our services for the calendar year 2019, as of 31 December 2019. Please note that in January 2019 a new programme structure was introduced. Certain services were renamed and/or re-mapped. Therefore, an exact comparison with 2018 data is not possible.

## PEOPLE WE REACHED

	AFRICA	THE AMERICAS	ASIA & OCEANIA	EUROPE	TOTAL
ALTERNATIVE CARE					
<i>Children &amp; young people</i>					
Family-like care	15,200	5,800	14,400	4,900	40,300
Youth care	6,400	2,600	6,400	3,000	18,400
Foster family care	500	650	0	3,000	4,150
Small group homes	200	50	50	1,400	1,700
Other alternative care <sup>1</sup>	200	800	50	200	1,250
TOTAL	22,500	9,900	20,900	12,500	65,800
PREVENTION					
<i>Children, young people &amp; adults</i>					
Family strengthening	155,600	40,000	82,600	116,800	395,000
EDUCATION					
<i>Children, young people &amp; adults</i>					
Early childhood care & development	13,200	13,800	4,800	6,000	37,800
Primary & secondary schools	80,200	6,100	43,700	54,200	184,200
Employment & entrepreneurship training	5,500	2,000	3,600	6,400	17,500
TOTAL	98,900	21,900	52,100	66,600	239,500
OTHER ACTIVITIES <sup>2</sup>					
<i>Children, young people &amp; adults</i>					
Health promotion & prevention	53,400	0	100	1,500	55,000
Mother & Child Hospital, Somalia	240,500	0	0	0	240,500
TOTAL	293,900	0	100	1,500	295,500
EMERGENCY RESPONSE					
<i>Children, young people &amp; adults</i>					
Children, young people & adults	146,500	12,300	16,200	34,800	209,800
GRAND TOTAL					1,233,600

## PROGRAMMES BY CONTINENT



## PROGRAMMES WE OPERATED

	AFRICA	THE AMERICAS	ASIA & OCEANIA	EUROPE	TOTAL
ALTERNATIVE CARE					
Family-like care	163	128	135	115	541
Small group homes	18	10	3	76	107
Foster family care	21	17	0	43	81
Youth care	128	117	169	181	595
Other alternative care	7	44	1	13	65
TOTAL	337	316	308	428	1,389
PREVENTION					
Family strengthening	180	137	107	256	680
EDUCATION					
Early childhood care & development	112	61	55	50	278
Primary & secondary education	111	8	54	27	200
Employment & entrepreneurship	51	15	24	35	125
TOTAL	274	84	133	112	603
OTHER ACTIVITIES					
	16	0	1	33	50
HEALTH					
Health promotion & prevention	19	0	2	5	26
Medical care <sup>3</sup>	44	1	4	0	49
TOTAL	63	1	6	5	75
EMERGENCY RESPONSE					
	13	2	10	6	31
GRAND TOTAL					2,828

<sup>1</sup> 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.  
<sup>2</sup> Includes community outreach and education on children's rights, integration support, holiday camps and play buses.  
<sup>3</sup> These units delivered 677,960 single health services and 157,300 days of health service, primarily in Africa.



# SOS Children's Villages worked for children and young people in 136 countries and territories in 2019.

Countries and territories in which we operated an emergency response programme in 2019 are shown in **bold**.

Join us!

click here  
or scan the code



## Africa

Algeria  
Angola  
Benin  
Botswana  
Burkina Faso  
Burundi  
Cameroon  
Cape 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  
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  
Portugal  
Romania  
Russia  
**Serbia**  
Spain  
Sweden  
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