



SOS CHILDREN'S  
VILLAGES  
USA

# Annual Report

2024



# Thank you for your unending compassion for the world's most vulnerable children.



**Cameron Schmidt**  
Chair of the Board of Directors  
SOS Children's Villages USA



**Jill Nosach**  
Chief Executive Officer  
SOS Children's Villages USA

In 2024, you were an invaluable member of our village.

**Thanks to compassionate supporters like you, children who once faced the unimaginable hardships of poverty, abandonment, violence or exploitation are now growing up in loving homes, amongst thriving families and resilient communities.**

Your generosity has made this possible for over 73,000 children in our care—providing them with nurturing caregivers, the comfort of growing up with their biological siblings, and essentials like nutritious food, quality education and professional health care.

**But your impact doesn't stop at childhood.**

It equips young people as they transition into independence, prepared with the tools and support they need to thrive in adulthood and pass along the same care they received to their own children—breaking generational cycles of family separation.

Together, we are also addressing the root causes of family separation—strengthening families to ensure children stay in stable, loving homes, which are best for their long-term development and health. This year, your support has helped to strengthen more than 1.3 million children and families.

**The power of your generosity can't be overstated—transforming children's and families' lives and paving the way to a brighter future for all of us.**

Thank you for being an integral part of our SOS family—and for giving a safe home and loving family to children who need it most.

With the deepest gratitude for all we've done and will do together,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Schmidt".

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jill".

## SOS Children's Villages USA Board of Directors

Cameron Schmidt, Chair | Bill Reese, Chair of Finance Committee | Irene Bailey, SOS Alumna

Adamseged Abebe | Frances Brown | Edwin Fountain | Klaus Grimm | Jerrold Keilson | Patrice Michaels | Lance Reisman | Jim McGrann

# EduCare Ethiopia: Celebrating 10 years of educational transformation

**More than 250 million children worldwide do not have access to the quality education they deserve.**

Instead of learning in classrooms, they face overwhelming barriers—poverty, hunger, inaccessible schools and more—that keep them from reaching their full potential.

At SOS Children’s Villages, we know that education is more than just knowledge—it’s a fundamental human right and the key to unlocking a brighter future.

Education equips children with the knowledge and skills they need to develop into adults who have the tools, resources and opportunities they need to thrive. It provides families with essential support to break cycles of family separation and to build stronger, more resilient communities.

Grounded in these beliefs, SOS—with the generous support of people like you—launched EduCare, a holistic program that promotes quality education access, decreases dropout rates and strengthens families, in Ethiopia in 2014.

For a decade, EduCare Ethiopia has delivered transformative, sustainable impact for young people, their families and their communities.

Through comprehensive support—like school supplies, professional development for teachers, nutrition support and caregivers’ economic empowerment so children remain in school instead of exploited through child labor—EduCare paves the way for children to build a brighter future with education.

Now, children like Erena\*, a teenage girl in Ethiopia, aren’t skipping school to earn enough money for food. Instead, they are learning, growing and working toward their dreams.



In 2024, your support helped give **282,400 children and young people** worldwide the education and skills training they need to reach their full potential and thrive.



**Over the course of a decade, your support helped EduCare:**

- Reach nearly 123,000 community members across Debre Tabor, Debre Markos, Woldia and Gondar.
- Increase the educational capacity of 22 crisis-affected schools across the Amhara region.
- Construct 16 new classrooms to increase children's access to quality education and reduce classroom overcrowding
- Install bathroom facilities to promote hygiene and dignity, especially for girls who previously had to skip school during their periods.
- Complete two income-generating buildings so caregivers can provide a sustainable, reliable income for their children.
- Ensure that more than 98% of students stay in school and continue their education.

Each impact number represents a real life you helped change—a child staying in school, a caregiver providing for their family and a more resilient community.

This decade of success demonstrates how holistic, comprehensive educational approaches can transform entire communities—and that lasting change is possible when we work together for children.

**Thank you for your dedication, support and belief that every child should grow up safe, loved and educated.** Together, we're ensuring children have access to the bright future education provides!

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Before I joined EduCare, life was very difficult. I was washing clothes every day to earn money. But now, I'm able to focus on my education and my dream of becoming a doctor.

ERENA

In 2024, your compassion provided **73,684 children** with safe homes and loving families.



## Caring for children: Karam's story

The sun barely crested the horizon, casting soft rays of light over the war-torn landscape, when SOS Children's Villages Rafah received an unexpected visitor.

Gently cradled in the arms of a humanitarian aid worker, a one-day-old baby boy silently watched the world.

His mother, injured in the ongoing conflict in Gaza, died while giving birth. With no surviving family members, the little boy, Karam\*, was brought to SOS Children's Villages.

At SOS, we believe that every child deserves to grow up in a safe, loving home with everything they need to thrive.

Yet 220 million children—one in 10 worldwide—are at risk of growing up alone, without the nurturing care and protection of a parent or caregiver.

As the world's largest organization dedicated to family-based alternative care, we work relentlessly to change that reality for children, providing safe homes and loving families for children who have lost parental care, like Karam.

Unlike the cold, clinical approach of institutional care— orphanages or large group homes, where children face caregiver-to-child ratios as high as 1:31 and siblings are often separated—we provide trauma-informed care in family-like homes where siblings remain together.

An SOS Mother, like Basma, nurtures children in a family-like home environment and provides all the resources children need to thrive—like healthy food, quality medical care, education and the deep emotional attachments research shows is crucial to children's long-term health and success.

At the end of 2024, Karam celebrated six months of life. Even in the chaos of war, he finds peace—his eyes drifting shut while Basma softly sings his favorite lullaby, rocking him to sleep in the comforting cradle of her arms.

Thank you for your dedicated partnership, which ensures children like Karam are growing up in safe, loving homes—no matter the state of the world around them.

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When he first came to me, he was so small and quiet. I could feel his fear—he didn't cry much, just looked around with those big eyes. I held him close and whispered, 'You're safe now.'

**BASMA, SOS MOTHER**

## Program spotlight: Take my Hand

**Every day—as part of a prolonged migration crisis which has resulted in more than seven million families and children fleeing Venezuela and settling in Colombia—children walk alone.**

Thousands of children have been separated from their families in this harrowing journey. Without the protection and provision of a parent, they lack critical survival resources—like food, clean water, shelter and more. Scared and alone, these children are incredibly vulnerable to trafficking, exploitation, hunger and other extreme hardships.

But with the support of generous child advocates like you, SOS Children's Villages is working to give unaccompanied or separated children the happy, healthy and protected childhoods they deserve.

Through Take my Hand, SOS provides these vulnerable children with the care and protection they need to thrive now and far into the future—so that no child is left alone in this migration crisis.

As families settle in Colombia, we help equip caregivers with the business trainings and economic empowerment they need to provide a sustainable, reliable income for their children.

Additionally, local SOS staff in Colombia and Venezuela collaborate to foster environments that help prevent discrimination against children and families who have migrated as well as help children adapt to their new home while staying connected to their cultural roots.



**With the compassionate support of people like you, Take my Hand has so far:**

- Provided essential aid to more than 5,000 individuals who migrated to Colombia—providing nutritious food, water and sanitation resources, and economic empowerment to caregivers while protecting children from abuse, neglect and violence.
- Supported 457 children and young people who are without—or have been separated from—parents with tailored services, protection and family-like care while working to trace and reunite them with their families.
- Created child-friendly spaces with educational and mental health resources, so 2,700 children and young people could continue learning and build brighter futures.
- Distributed critical supplies and resources for families to lead safe, healthy lives.
- Partnered with 360 local authorities to strengthen child protection, resource distribution and capacity building so communities have sustainable resources to support vulnerable families and children.

**Thank you for your unwavering dedication to children in need, which gives children the safe, loving homes they deserve and all the resources they need to achieve a bright, hopeful future.**

# Your impact in emergencies: Sudan's civil war

## Children suffer the most in emergencies.

They endure extreme mental and physical distress—like anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, disrupted education and life-threatening hunger and malnutrition.

They often lose everything—their belongings, their homes, their peace... and even their families.

But children living through humanitarian crises are not alone—because of compassionate people like you.

When disasters strike, local SOS Children's Villages emergency response teams are there. With a "first in, last out" approach, we help children, families and communities rebuild sustainably, preventing crises that arise from leaving an emergency-affected area prematurely.

Founded in the aftermath of World War II, SOS is a global leader in providing safe homes, loving families and vital resources to millions of children. We are the only organization who understands the unique needs of children without or separated from their parents, and we are equipped to provide quality care—no matter the state of the world they live in.

In 2024, your support helped SOS respond to many emergencies—including the devastating civil war in Sudan—and deliver the immediate aid children need to survive crises and the long-term support they need to thrive in the future.

## Your partnership helped respond to Sudan's civil war by:

- Launching a comprehensive, three-year emergency response program that will provide life-saving assistance to more than 32,000 of the most affected individuals by 2026—providing food security, water and sanitation resources to families while protecting children from abuse, neglect and violence.
- Providing hygiene kits, financial assistance and psychosocial support for children and young people to more than 10,000 people.
- Delivering child-friendly spaces for education and mental health services to 515 children.
- Supporting 150 families fostering children without parental care.
- Reuniting 25 children with their families after they had been separated in the conflict.

Thank you for partnering with us to care for and protect children in emergencies, delivering the immediate, life-saving aid they need to heal, grow and build a brighter future. **Because every child deserves a safe, loving childhood free from fear and conflict.**



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The conflict has exposed children to extreme difficulties and deep psychological scars... But the resilience of these children is remarkable, and with the right support, they can overcome the difficulties they face.

**LIMIA AHMED,**  
Deputy national director of  
SOS Children's Villages in Sudan



## Equipping young people for success with YouthCan!

**More than 20% of young people globally are not in employment, education or training.**

Without education or skills, young people face significant barriers to building successful, independent lives. For those who grew up without family support, these obstacles become even more challenging.

As soon as they become a legal adult, they're often forced to leave their home, thrust into unsupported independence. Without parental guidance or an emotional safety net, these young people are left to navigate housing, finances, education and other major life decisions—alone.

These teenagers face adult responsibilities almost overnight. Without support from a trusted adult, caregiver or mentor, these young people are more likely to experience homelessness, unemployment and mental health challenges.

**But with SOS' global YouthCan! program, young people aren't left to navigate the rite of passage into adulthood alone.** They receive comprehensive support with an encouraging community of peers and mentors to build their confidence, develop skills and achieve quality, sustainable employment.

### How YouthCan! helps young people create their own future

Launched in 2017, YouthCan! is specifically designed for young people without parental care or at risk of losing it. The comprehensive program combines three critical elements:

- Mentorship from professionals and peers to boost self-confidence and help young people build professional networks
- Soft skills training in communication, leadership and emotional intelligence
- Technical skills development tailored to each individual participant and the labor market in the community where they seek work, including high-demand fields like Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Each of YouthCan!'s 23,000+ participants worldwide receive holistic, personalized support to help them achieve their personal and professional goals—like Sneha, a young care leaver in India.

Growing up in an SOS Children's Village in India, Sneha was surrounded by love, encouragement and the joyful noise of her SOS siblings and SOS Mother.

But after the COVID-19 pandemic moved all of her college classes online, the 18-year-old young woman sat in her quiet dorm room, huddled in front of her computer, and suddenly felt completely alone.

**"I doubted myself and felt I wasn't good at anything," Sneha remembers. "[YouthCan!] gave me courage and confidence. I see myself growing every single day."**

At SOS, we believe that children and young people aren't silent participants—they're powerful leaders and catalysts for systemic change.

This belief is actualized through the YouthCan! Youth Council. This council, headed by young leaders across multiple countries, amplifies young people's voices as they contribute their expertise and advice, shaping YouthCan! to ensure the program delivers exactly what young people need.



*Sneha and her SOS Mother*

## Breaking digital barriers: YouthLinks Community

In our increasingly technological world, digital skills are crucial for young people to succeed.

Research highlights that 90% of jobs worldwide require some form of digital skills. To ensure young people are equipped for the ever-evolving digital economy, SOS developed YouthLinks.

YouthLinks is a digital platform where young people can access and develop their digital and employability skills through online training, mentorship and networking—ensuring all young people have the digital literacy training they need to reach their full potential.

## A future where every young person thrives

Through comprehensive support that addresses practical skills and emotional support, YouthCan! is proving that every young person deserves and can build a successful, independent future.

Thank you for helping equip young people to succeed and build a brighter future!

### With your partnership in 2024, YouthCan!:

- Equipped 23,020 young people in 48 countries with the soft and technical career skills they need to reach their full potential
- Reached an estimated 69,000 young people, caregivers and communities with indirect benefits that helped them thrive
- Supported 1,941 volunteers as they shared their time, knowledge and encouragement with young people
- Grew the YouthLinks Community to 5,000 members, so young people can access the learning materials and digital inclusion resources they need to build successful careers

In 2024, together, we strengthened **1,345,754 families** to prevent unnecessary family separation and ensure children grow up in stable, safe and loving families.

## Building strong families

**At SOS Children's Villages, we know the best place for children to grow and thrive is in a safe, loving family.**

But families around the world are increasingly vulnerable. Poverty, armed conflict, climate-related disasters and other threats outside of a parent's control destabilize families and result in unnecessary family separation.

**In fact, globally, eight in 10 children in alternative care have at least one living parent.**

That's why SOS invests in family strengthening programs—parenting support, women's economic empowerment, mental health services, counseling and access to essentials like nutrition, health care and education—to prevent the crisis and trauma of family separation before it occurs.

Our comprehensive programs deliver the training, guidance and resources families need to stay together and provide quality care and bright futures for their children.

For families like Amara's\*, who are living through a relentless drought in the Horn of Africa, this support is life-saving.

### Your support helped strengthen families in crisis in 2024

As she walked across the dry, cracked soil of her once-flourishing farm—past the shriveled maize and sorghum, past the bleached bones of her livestock—Amara, a mother of six in Ethiopia, worried that her children's small bodies might finally succumb to prolonged starvation.

"I feel sick and weak from not eating enough," she said in a broken whisper. "My children are weak from hunger. I'm afraid we are going to die if things continue like this."

**Every minute in 2024, 35 children were born into hunger—18.2 million children in total.** This number, more than double the population of New York City, represents children born into a life that will be immediately threatened by a lack of food.



“

We slept hungry  
and woke up  
to nothing.

A M A R A



Oftentimes, when parents can't meet their children's basic needs, like providing nutritious food, their children are removed from their care or they make the heartbreaking decision to send their children to orphanages or relatives, believing it's their only option for their child's well-being.

But your generous support in 2024 prevented the tragedy of family separation for families like Amara's.

**Your compassionate commitment to children and families in need helped:**

- Send the nutritious meals children need to fuel their bodies, nurture their minds and reach their full potential.
- Equip families with seeds and climate-smart agricultural trainings to grow food and withstand climate disasters.
- Provide access to essential medical services, health check-ups, preventative care and medication.
- Deliver the business mentorship, resources and ongoing support caregivers need to earn a sustainable income and provide for their children.
- Promote positive parenting with educational workshops, support groups and child protection initiatives.

Family strengthening programs don't just prevent today's separations—they create generational change build community resilience and ensure children grow up in the loving environments they need to thrive.

**Thank you for partnering with us in this critical work to keep families like Amara's together and give every child the loving, safe childhood they deserve.**

# A Child's Road to Resilience:

## The science behind the importance of love

In 2024, SOS Children's Villages published "A Child's Road to Resilience," a global report highlighting the critical importance of nurturing relationships for children's healthy brain development and lifelong resilience.

With insights from proven neuroscience and psychology research, the comprehensive publication emphasizes an area of child development that SOS has championed for decades: the significance of safe, loving families.

### How a nurturing relationship with a trusted adult forms the foundation for long-term well-being:

#### — Promotes healthy brain development.

Approximately 90% of brain growth occurs within the first five years of life. Research continues to show that a child's healthy cognitive development depends on a responsive relationship with an adult.

A responsive relationship with an adult is often referred to as "serve and return." A child observes something and makes a noise acknowledging the stimulus. The "return" is when a parent, caregiver or other loving adult notices the child's reaction and responds. This interaction is crucial for healthy synapse development and language acquisition.

However, when a child does not get a response from a loving adult, their stress system is activated. A prolonged or repeated activation of the body's stress response system is known as toxic stress, which severely disrupts healthy brain and body development and leads to deficits in language, attention, decision-making, memory and other executive functions.

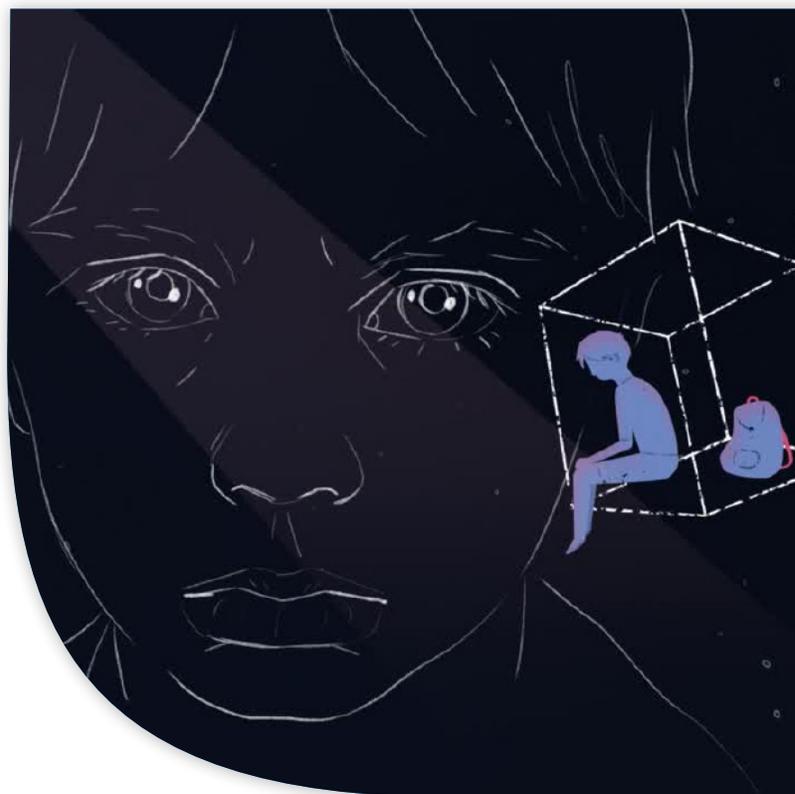
#### — Enhances emotional stability, social-emotional skills and self-worth.

Safe, stable and nurturing relationships with a trusted adult help children develop critical life skills like empathy, trust, healthy communication, emotional regulation and the ability to form and maintain interpersonal relationships.

Plus, when children know they are valued, loved and supported, they develop an intrinsic sense of self-worth—believing they are worthy of love and capable of achieving their goals.

#### — Fosters healing from traumatic events.

The Bucharest Early Intervention Project, a study included in this publication, studied children



who had faced severe physical and emotional neglect. Some children were placed in high-quality, family-like foster care while other children remained in institutional care. Both groups were evaluated on a regular schedule—and the results were remarkable.

Brain imaging revealed that children who grew up in institutions had reduced gray matter volume and reduced white matter integrity.

These structural changes translated into ongoing difficulties including memory problems, impaired problem-solving, poor decision-making skills, impulsive behavior, increased risk for depression and other mental health disorders, and difficulty forming and maintaining healthy relationships.

Meaning: Emotional neglect and lack of loving relationships literally alter a child's brain structure, creating a lifetime of physical and mental health challenges.

But this study didn't just reveal the biological impact of experiencing trauma.

The Bucharest Project discovered that when children were placed in a stable, loving family environment, their brains changed, too.

Brain imaging on children who were placed in family-like foster care showed increased white matter volume, improved neural activity, better cognitive functioning, enhanced social skills and ability to form attachments, and improved overall mental health outcomes.

The findings of the Bucharest Project and "A Child's Road to Resilience" are beacons of hope for all child advocates: Experiencing love from a nurturing, trusted family can rewire a child's brain and lead to a lifetime of healing, even after severe trauma.

### — Builds resiliency for future stressors.

A growing body of research continues to highlight how Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) help a child heal and mitigate harm caused by traumatic events, also known as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

PCEs include the safe, stable and nurturing relationships a child forms with family, friends and others in their community. These relationships encourage healthy brain development, alleviate the effects of toxic stress and help build resiliency.

**Thank you for your dedicated partnership in giving every child the positive relationships they need to heal, grow and thrive.** Your continued support not only provides for children's basic needs—like food, quality education, professional health care and more—but you also give children the loving, stable relationships that research shows can transform their entire future.



# Trauma-informed care: Healing childhood trauma with comprehensive care

**A dropped book, a slammed door, a burst of laughter—any loud, sudden sound and Anna\* would dissolve into uncontrollable trembles.**

The ten-year-old girl felt consumed by anxiety and dark memories after she witnessed her family suffer brutal acts of violence and her neighbor's home reduced to rubble during the war in Ukraine.

Although she and her family were now safe, she struggled to function past the trauma she experienced. Tension knotted her muscles, and she refused to close her eyes at night—terrified bombs would fall while she slept.

Like Anna, millions of children around the world have experienced an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE)—a traumatic event like violence, abuse, neglect, poverty or family separation that derails healthy development and future well-being.

When children experience trauma without a trusted, loving adult to provide proper support, their bodies trigger a toxic stress response. This constant "fight or flight" mode disrupts healthy brain development and can even lead to long-term physical health problems.

In fact, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports that at least five of the top 10 leading causes of deaths—heart and respiratory diseases, cancer, diabetes and suicide—are associated with ACEs.

**But because of generous friends like you, children like Anna aren't left to endure the devastating effects of childhood trauma alone.**

Your partnership in 2024 ensured Anna—and children like her—had access to the critical, trauma-informed mental health care they needed to process their experience, heal and build a bright, resilient future.

For Anna, healing began when a psychologist with SOS Children's Villages mobile mental health clinic, Natalia, noticed the young girl's debilitating anxiety and approached Anna's mother, suggesting counseling sessions.

In a peaceful, quiet setting, Natalia helped the young girl process the trauma she experienced through



*Natalia Kravchenko, SOS social worker*

“  
It didn't take long for Anna to open up about her fears of explosions, darkness and violence, loss, mistakes and loneliness.

NATALIA



counseling, art therapy and breathing exercises. This mental health support also helped Anna develop coping mechanisms to help her heal and increase her resilience for future stressful situations.

**“Her mother shares she sleeps through the night now,” Natalia said. “She is calmer, more grounded and more optimistic about her future.”**

Research continues to show that trauma-informed care works: children improve academically, build stronger relationships and develop better long-term physical, emotional and mental health. When children grow into healthy adults, they build resilient communities and pass down the same loving care they received to their own children.

Including Anna, more than 507 children and families accessed mental health services through the mobile mental health unit in Kharkiv, and 90% of participants reported improved mental health!

**Thank you for investing in a world where children grow up safe, loved and protected.**

Since war began in Ukraine in 2022, together, we have:

- Reached more than 370,000 children and families with life-saving resources.
- Created child-friendly spaces where children can continue their education and receive psychosocial support they need to thrive.
- Delivered financial assistance so families who lost everything can care for their basic needs.
- Provided mental health services to children and families recovering from the trauma of war.
- Ensured health care support for children overcoming injuries sustained in the conflict, including providing technological resources so they can continue their education while they heal in a hospital.
- Offered immediate relief—like food, supplies, psychosocial support and evacuations help—to children and their foster parents supported by SOS Children’s Villages Ukraine.
- Welcomed over 600 children without parental care into a safe home and loving family.

# Financial report

## Financial information, SOS Children's Villages USA

Revenue		
	All amounts in USD	
	2023	2024
Total contributions	5,408,672	5,377,754
Other income	443,934	315,889
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>5,852,606</b>	<b>5,693,643</b>

Expenditures		
	2023	2024
Programs		
<i>Alternative care and Programs</i>	4,229,611	4,688,321
<i>Education and Advocacy</i>	714,997	343,576
Management and General	819,731	799,907
Fundraising	1,048,467	750,439
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>6,812,806</b>	<b>6,582,243</b>

Net assets		
	2023	2024
Change in net assets	(960,200)	(888,600)
Beginning of year	5,815,037*	4,854,837
End of Year	4,854,837	3,966,237

## Accountability

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



Following a zero-tolerance approach to fraud and corruption, we are committed to continuously improving our asset protection frameworks. In addition to our current Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Guideline, we are introducing an Asset Safeguarding Action Plan. The detailed financial audit report of SOS Children's Villages International is available on our international website.

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*\*Some names in this report have been changed to protect the individual's privacy.*