Quality Care for four million lives since 1949: Report shows long-term impact and progress towards global goals

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 21 June 2019 - SOS Children’s Villages Eastern and Southern Africa together with the Austrian Embassy in Ethiopia, host a high-level meeting to highlight the rights and needs of children and young people without adequate parental care in East and Southern Africa, and to engage on their findings after 70 years of family-like care.

This year offers us a unique opportunity to make people more aware of the children and young people we serve and the parental care issues that they face. The year 2019 marks our organisational anniversary – 70 years of quality care – and the two global anniversaries of our guiding child rights frameworks: 30 years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and 10 years of the United Nations Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children.

SOS Children’s Villages estimates that 220 million children, 1 in 10 of the world’s two billion children, grow up without the loving care of a parent or stand at risk of losing it. Over our 70 years of experience SOS Children’s Villages International has attracted the support of numerous partners who agree that it is both a duty and a logical course of action that we focus global development investment efforts into this particularly vulnerable population – those most likely to be left behind.

SOS Children’s Villages International recently released its 70 Years of Impact report that tracks the organisation’s impact on the lives of children and young people through its family-like care and family strengthening services.

The methodology helps to identify not just numbers of children reached, but how they have actually improved their lives in the long term, and how the community has benefitted as well.

The results show that SOS Children’s Villages has achieved impact in four key ways:

1) “Breaking the cycle” through care – about 90% of former participants have strong family relationships and support networks and care well for their own children

2) Enabling self-reliance through education and employability – more than 80% of former participants have completed secondary school or vocational training and have the skills to obtain a decent job or are studying towards relevant qualifications; 60% already earn a decent living

3) Securing basic needs – 90% of former SOS participants are able to meet most of their basic needs, such as adequate accommodation, food security, education and health care

4) Building a foundation for a happy life – 80% of former participants feel safe and are positive about their lives
Senait Gebregziabher Bayessa, International Director of SOS Children’s Villages International, Eastern and Southern Africa Region said: “Children without parental care or at risk of losing parental care are amongst the world’s most vulnerable and marginalised populations. Without giving emphasis on these target groups it would be difficult to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal by 2030. The evidence shared in our 70 Years of Impact report demonstrates that the quality of our family-like care and family strengthening programmes breaks this cycle of vulnerability through “The Care Effect”, resulting in multiple generations who are happy, loved, secure and self-reliant.”

Importantly, the report also quantifies how the work of SOS Children’s Villages is contributing towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and in particular the goals for eliminating poverty, ensuring quality education, providing access to decent work, creating a more equal society, and preventing violence.

The report concludes that SOS Children’s Villages has contributed to transforming four million lives since its founding in 1949, by supporting children and young people to grow up in a safe and caring family environment.

As these children have grown up in stronger families, thus breaking the cycle of separation and abandonment, their own children and grandchildren also have a better life. This means about 13 million lives will have been positively impacted through the support of SOS Children’s Villages.

“At SOS Children’s Villages we aim to ensure that every child can grow in a secure, caring and loving family through giving special attention to each child. Together with our partners, we are always looking at the best possible alternative care option for each individual child – constantly innovating and using our experience and competence to explore unique care solutions,” continued Bayessa. “It is estimated that by 2055 Africa’s child population will reach one billion, making it the largest child population among all continents. It is therefore of utmost importance that all stakeholders join hands and plan the delivery of quality care solutions for vulnerable children and young people to enjoy their rights – the future of Africa depends on them.”

The full impact report, as well as a shorter booklet version, is available on our website: [https://www.sos-childrensvillages.org/impact](https://www.sos-childrensvillages.org/impact)

See also case studies of four individuals whose lives have been transformed in the videos available on our [YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/).

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About SOS Children’s Villages

SOS Children’s Villages is the world’s largest non-governmental organisation focused on supporting children and young people without parental care, or at risk of losing it. Founded in 1949 as a non-denominational organisation, today we have a presence in 136 countries and territories.

Our work is anchored in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. We operate more than 2,600 locally led programmes, directly reaching more than a million children, young people and families. We partner with donors, communities, governments and other organisations to reach the children and young people who need support, and we advocate for governments to uphold their obligations with regard to children’s rights.

Additional paragraph on 70 years of impact

Since 1949, SOS Children’s Villages has directly supported about four million children. By helping to break the cycle of separation and abandonment, when they grow up and have children themselves, the support SOS Children’s Villages provided to these four million children has an indirect effect on the lives of a second generation. An estimated the number of children and grandchildren who have benefitted from this generational effect, between 1949 and 2019, is about nine million. Since 1949, there has been a total of 13 million lives affected by the work of SOS Children’s Villages.

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