

SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES' PROPOSAL OF TARGETS FOR A POST-2015 FRAMEWORK THAT LEAVES NO ONE BEHIND

*To build a better future,
we must put children and young people first.*



SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES
INTERNATIONAL

A loving home for every child



INTRODUCTION

This document summarizes SOS Children's Villages' proposal of targets for a post-2015 development agenda. It also contains proposed indicators to measure progress on those targets. Based on over 60 years of experience working with the most marginalized and vulnerable children and families in over 130 countries, SOS Children's Villages believes that the following recommendations will help rectify some of the world's most pressing challenges, creating a solid foundation for sustainable and equitable development.

The document builds on *SOS Children's Villages' Key Messages for the Post-2015 Agenda*. It identifies five priority areas of policy intervention covering: **social protection, education, employment, health and violence**. For each area, a table presents proposed targets and indicators to track progress across countries.

Children and young people without parental care number approximately 153 million worldwide today, and many more are at risk of losing parental care. Without parents or families to adequately protect them, they are highly exposed to violence, abuse, neglect, stigmatization and social exclusion, which carry consequences that endure into adulthood. Although they are one of the most vulnerable groups in society, these children and young people have been largely left behind by the MDG framework.

Thus, in this document, SOS Children's Villages' recommendations are to ensure that the right of all children and young people to quality care and protection stays at the core of the post-2015 agenda. This implies that the future global partnership for development must ensure not only that children's basic needs are met, but also that each and every child experiences the stable, protective and empowering relationships that he or she needs for healthy personal development and achieving one's full potential.

DISAGGREGATED DATA

Key to the successful implementation of the whole post-2015 framework will be effective data collection and monitoring, for accountability and decision-making purposes. In particular, besides asking for indicators to be disaggregated by income, urban and rural residence, disability, gender and age, whenever appropriate and relevant, SOS Children's Villages is eager to see all indicators applicable to children disaggregated by *care status*. Data will therefore enable us to find out whether we are reaching those most in need and at risk.

It is well known that many States Parties lack adequate national data collection systems, and in particular that specific and disaggregated information on children in the early years is not readily available. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has urged all States Parties to develop a system of data collection and indicators consistent with the Convention and disaggregated by income, urban and rural residence, gender, age and other relevant categories.¹ In particular, it notes the importance of disaggregating by *family structure*.

While endorsing this proposal, SOS Children's Villages believes that the concept of *family* fails to capture the situation of the millions of children currently living without parental care. As an alternative, SOS Children's Villages proposes that national data collection systems, as well as the post-2015 framework itself, disaggregate targets and indicators which are applicable to children by *care status*. By **care status** we mean the kind of care environment in which children are growing up – for example, a biological family or an alternative care setting as defined in the *UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children* – and how this affects their access to services and opportunities.

Exemplary indicators for data collection are available, for example in the *Manual for the Measurement of Indicators for Children in Formal Care*,² which offers a set of common global indicators for children in formal care, allowing States to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of their alternative care system.

PRIORITIES FOR BUILDING SUSTAINABLE AND EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

1. SOCIAL PROTECTION

When families are pushed into poverty and social exclusion, the results are often disastrous for children who may be deprived of parental care, education, adequate nutrition or health care. Social protection measures that allow families to meet their responsibilities towards their children are critically needed, as they prevent family breakdown and help to ensure that children receive quality care and protection.

However, social protection measures must also be able to meet individual needs, and not just those of families.

Current social protection arrangements very often discriminate against children who are not growing up with their families and leave them completely unprotected.

For the post-2015 agenda, we believe it is important to consider the goal of promoting universal quality social protection systems that can reach out to every child and family in need and offer them support to become resilient to life's challenges.

SOCIAL PROTECTION		
Goal	Targets	Proposed Indicators
Universal social protection to ensure resilience and dignity for all, especially the most vulnerable	Reduce the number of children who live in households with per capita incomes below national poverty lines through strategies that provide social and income supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Percentage of households below the national poverty line ● Percentage of GDP allocated to social protection ● Percentage of children directly covered by social protection measures ● Percentage change in social protection coverage rates (nationally defined) for children, young people and families
	Ensure universal access to supportive social services and family strengthening services to prevent family separation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of cases per social worker ● Existence of national curriculum and accreditation rules to ensure professionalism of social workers ● Percentage of children registered at birth, with proof of registration as part of a universal registry of births and deaths
	Ensure quality care environments for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Existence of Independent Complaints and Inspection Mechanism to ensure alternative care services meet quality standards compliant with the International Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children ● Percentage of caregivers registered in the child protection system that have access to training on psycho-social, mental health, and behavioural subjects ● Funding for training and further education for care professionals and social workers ● Number of children living in institutional care ● Number of children living in family-based and family-type care

2. EDUCATION

Still today, a large number of children and young people are denied access to quality education because of poverty, but also because of other interlinking factors. They might face stigma or have frequent migration between homes; they might be forced to work to support themselves or contribute to a household income; or they may have to take on additional duties such as caring for siblings or elderly relatives. Based on our experience working with children without parental care or at risk of losing it, these children are less likely to attend school and more likely to drop out. Also UNICEF data show that in developing countries the proportion of orphaned children going to school is 22% lower than for that of their non-orphan peers.⁵

Similar challenges are faced by young people transitioning out of alternative care, who seldom access tertiary

education or vocational training. In the Czech Republic, for example, a child who was raised by his family is forty times more likely to access higher education than a child who grew up in alternative care.⁶ Many young people therefore leave alternative care ill-equipped to compete effectively in the labour market or earn a living with dignity, often becoming trapped in a cycle of poverty and social exclusion. If the post-2015 agenda is to cater for the most marginalized and vulnerable, a goal on education recognizing the importance of quality and learning for all is crucial. However, the definition of education should go beyond primary schooling contained in the MDG framework and should include: access to early childhood education, vocational training and lifelong skills development, secondary education to work transitions, and flexible life learning arrangements which are compatible with working.

EDUCATION		
Goal	Targets	Proposed Indicators
Equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all	Fulfill the equal right to quality education⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gaps in access to education (levels of education, intake, attendance, access to early childhood education, etc.) ● Persistence to last grade of primary ● Percentage of early leavers from education and training ● Percentage of new entrants to primary education with early childhood education
	Ensure that young people have sufficient technical, vocational and life skills for active participation in social and working life⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Percentage of young people with improved literacy, numeracy and life skills (for example, social competencies, positive identity and values) ● Percentage of secondary school graduates entering tertiary education

3. EMPLOYMENT

Young people in all regions of the world are more likely than adults to be unemployed or underemployed or to work in informal jobs, putting them at greater risk of earning lower wages, working in unsafe conditions, or holding only temporary employment with few or no prospects for advancement.¹⁰ Particular groups of young people – including young women,¹¹ young people with disabilities,¹² and young people transitioning from alternative care to independence – are at higher risk.

An SOS study from 2010 regarding the situation of young people leaving care showed that in the countries under review, young people leaving care were not competitive in the job market, they faced considerable social stigma and were therefore often forced to accept illegal work with minimal and irregular pay, and they had little or no access to health and social support.¹³ For young people leaving care, jobs are about more than just income; decent work can provide security, resilience and dignity, which are crucial

when there is no family to fall back on. Young people therefore need to be supported to find jobs and to acquire the necessary professional, vocational, and social skills to compete in the job market, through higher education and training, job counseling and entrepreneurship training.

Children are also highly affected by the employment status of adults, as parental livelihoods and job displacement have a tremendous effect on the capacity of parents to provide quality care to their children. Parents who find themselves unable to provide for their families may be forced to migrate and leave their children behind, or they seek alternative care arrangements for their children in the hope that they will have a better situation. Employment and the role that decent work and sustainable livelihoods play in eradicating poverty and reducing inequality should be therefore identified as one of the top issues to be covered by the post-2015 framework.

EMPLOYMENT		
Goal	Targets	Proposed Indicators
Decent work for all	Increase the number of households and individuals with decent and stable employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Employment rates and pay ● Share of informal employment in total employment ● Working poverty rate: proportion of employed people living in households with sufficient income and security ● Net job creation rate
	Increase the participation of young people in employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Percentage of young people not in education or employment ● Percentage of young people with access to services offering training, employment and mentorship

4. HEALTH

Children and young people without parental care or at risk of losing parental care are particularly affected by the availability and accessibility of quality health care. Without families to adequately protect and care for them, they are more likely to be excluded from health care; yet they frequently present health problems related to abuse, neglect or poverty. A 2011 study of children without parental care shows that these children suffer trauma that goes beyond the loss of their parents, including physical and mental abuse, and the effects of armed conflict or natural disasters.¹⁷ Furthermore, children living in institutional care arrangements are very likely to suffer from poor health, developmental delays and emotional attachment disorders resulting from sub-standard living conditions.¹⁸

Additionally, children and young people without parental care often lack access to good nutrition. Research conducted by SOS Children's Villages shows that in Sierra Leone children who have lost both parents are 32% less likely to eat three meals a day than their peers who are growing up with their parents.¹⁹

Children and young people's health is also intimately related to the health of their mothers. When mothers are healthy – physically, mentally, and socially – they are better equipped to provide quality care and enable children to access health care services. When a mother dies, the level of care is reduced dramatically; children have less access to health care and become more susceptible to illness and malnutrition.²⁰

There is much consensus across the post-2015 debates that the new framework needs to build on the successes of the MDGs in fighting child and maternal mortality, and combating the spread of infectious diseases. However, in order to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, the post-2015 framework must go further by recognizing the importance of universal health care that elevates the importance of health services that are too often neglected, such as mental health, psycho-social well-being and sexual and reproductive health services, particularly for young people.

HEALTH		
Goal	Targets	Proposed Indicators
Good health for the best possible physical, mental and social well-being ²¹	Ensure universal access to primary and preventive health care that includes routine immunizations, the prevention and treatment of communicable and non-communicable diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Percentage of children covered by universal health care ● Life expectancy at birth ● Infant mortality ratio ● Percentage of children who live within: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 25km of emergency medicine ● 50km of community medicine ● Percentage of children under 5 who are underweight for their age²² ● Rates of drug, alcohol and tobacco use among children and young people
	Reduce maternal mortality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Percentage of people with access to integrated sexual and reproductive health information and services²³ ● Availability and access to emergency obstetrics
	Increase access to psycho-social services, mental health and trauma care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Percentage of people with access to psycho-social well-being and mental health services ● Percentage of people reporting improvement in health and mental condition

5. FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE

Violence is one of the most pressing issues facing children in both developed and developing countries. Whether perpetrated by caregivers, other adults or children, the effects of violence on a child can be devastating. For example, a study on violence in schools in the UK showed that 16-year-olds bullied at school were twice as likely to be without education, employment or training, and to have lower wage levels at the age of 23 and 33, than those who were not bullied.²⁴

Violence can take place in many settings, including those that are meant to provide children with care and protection, like the home. For example, a study of SOS Children’s Villages found that in Uruguay an estimated 55% of children enter alternative care as a result of domestic violence; in Lithuania 72% of children are

placed in alternative care due to neglect or use of physical or psychological violence. Another setting where violence and abuse are often rife is care institutions, where about 8 million children around the world live.²⁵

With up to 1.5 billion children subject to violence each year,²⁶ we have an obligation to take up the commitment to eliminate violence against all children in all settings (including in alternative care). In particular, the post-2015 framework must galvanize progress on legal frameworks and the creation of conducive policy environments for the prosecution of violent offenders. But it must also consider the breadth of services that victims, including children, require to be protected from and to fully recover from violence.

FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE		
Goal	Targets	Proposed Indicators
Freedom from all forms of violence, in all settings	Prevent violence against children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Existence of national preventive measures such as training programmes ● Existence of national legislation that bans all forms of violence
	Establish child-friendly counselling, reporting and complaints mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Existence of child-friendly counselling, reporting and complaint mechanisms ● Number of children reporting violence, abuse or neglect (disaggregated by gender and setting in which violence is experienced, e.g. home, school, alternative care settings) ● Number of children subjected to any form of violence ● Number of children who are separated from their families because of violence, abuse or neglect ● Percentage of children killed by violent death per 100,000²⁷ ● Number of children that have experienced any form of violence receiving appropriate response (e.g. medical, psycho-social, legal)

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ABOUT SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES

SOS Children's Villages is a non-governmental and non-denominational child-focused organisation that provides direct services in the areas of care, education and health for children at risk of losing, or who have already lost, parental care. The organisation also builds the capacity of the children's

caregivers, their families and communities to provide quality care. Finally, SOS Children's Villages also advocates for the rights of children without parental care. Founded in 1949, it operates in the spirit of the UNCRC and the *Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children* in over 130 countries.