

**Consultation Conducted with Children in Residential  
Care in Austria, Ethiopia, Greece, Kenya, Nigeria,  
Palestine, Philippines, Romania and Sri Lanka**

**November 2020**

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## Acknowledgments

First and foremost, our immense thanks go to all the children who participated in this study and shared with us with a wealth of information about their lives, their views, and their wishes. Thanks also go to the staff of SOS Children's Villages National Associations in Austria, Ethiopia, Greece, Kenya, Nigeria, Palestine, the Philippines, Romania and Sri Lanka who also made this survey possible, particularly during an already challenging time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate the dedication of the teams and the manner in which they were committed to realising this study by actively working to meet deadlines, ensuring the safe participation of children, and contributing to the design and implementation of the study. We would particularly like to thank those who contributed to the translation of the surveys utilised in this study.

Thanks are also due Rosalind Willi, Research and Learning Advisor at SOS Children's Villages (CV) for the highly efficient coordination of the project.

We would like to share our deep appreciation and thanks to the Principal Researcher, Dr Chrissie Gale for carrying out this research in an extremely careful, sensitive and diligent way, managing to deliver a wealth of insightful findings in a very short amount of time and to the highest of ethical standards, and for preparing this report. Grateful thanks are also offered for the professional advice provided by the Research Associate, Dr Nadine Fowler.

## 1. Introduction

The current state of research highlights a lack of evidence drawn directly from the experiences of children and young people receiving family support services or living in alternative care across different regions of the world.

The European Commission is taking steps to prioritise child rights through two key initiatives:

- A child rights strategy, which will define the global EU policy directions and framework to advance child rights inside the EU and worldwide.
- A child guarantee that will focus on supporting and funding responses to increase the access to basic services for the most vulnerable children living in countries of the European Union (EU), including children without or at risk of losing parental care.

In addition, the European Commission and Parliament will continue supporting and increasing meaningful child participation in EU policy-making.

The EU child rights strategy should be finalised during the first quarter of 2021. In order to ensure children inform this important initiative, the European Commission has engaged with a number of children's rights organisations, including SOS Children Villages (SOS CV), to consult children on their views and recommendations for change. In particular, the Commission is interested in the input of children in programmes provided by SOS CV and to better understand the situation of children deprived, or at risk, of losing parental care both in the EU and worldwide. This input will inform actions to prevent separation of children from parental care and, promote suitable, quality alternative care when needed.

## 2. Objectives of the research

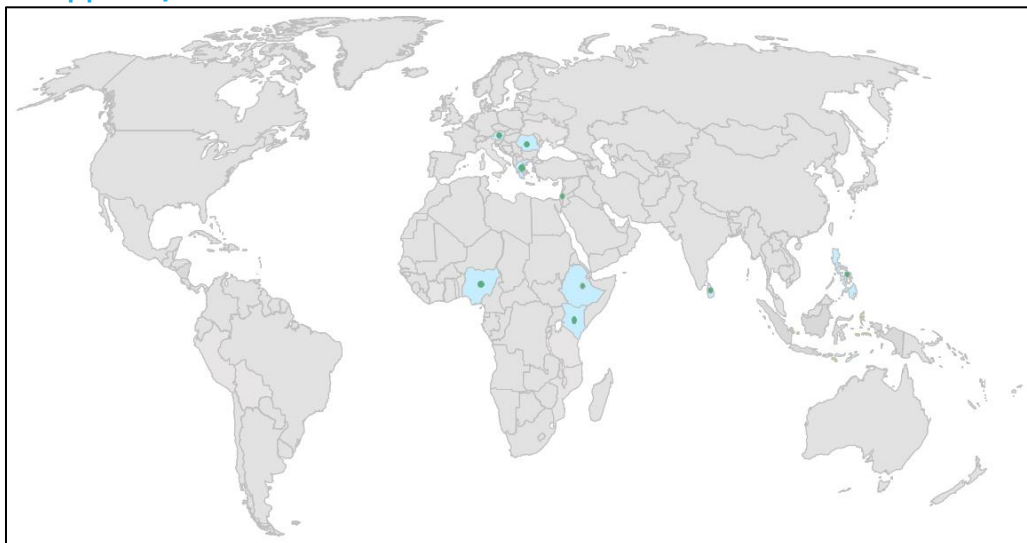
SOS CV has undertaken this research project with children living in residential care provided by SOS Children's Villages. The aim of the study was to gather the perspectives and ideas of children that would help answer the following questions:

- What are the main challenges that children without parental care are confronted with today?
- What does quality in their experience of alternative care mean for children and what are their main recommendations to improve these services?

## 3. Children participating in the survey

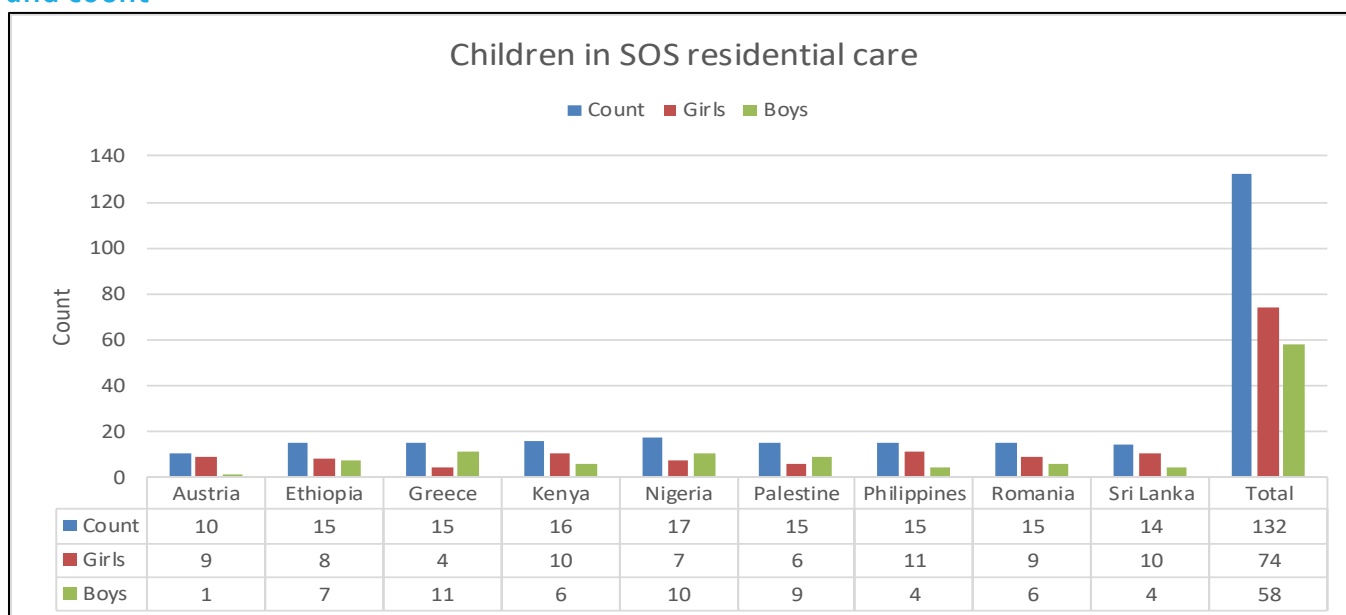
A survey was developed for children who are participants, along with their families, in residential care in nine countries: Austria, Ethiopia, Greece, Kenya, Nigeria, Palestine, Philippines, Romania and Sri Lanka (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Participation of children from Austria, Ethiopia, Greece, Kenya, Nigeria, Palestine, Philippines, Romania and Sri Lanka**



The survey for children in residential care was completed by 132 children from the nine countries (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Children who completed the survey for children in SOS residential care by country and count**



## 4. Background

### 4.1. Residential care provided by SOS Children's Villages

The children that participated in this study are without parental care and are living in a range of residential care settings provided by SOS Children's Villages. This includes those living in an SOS family together with other SOS families in a Children's Village, those living in an SOS family in the community alongside other families, those in a small group home and those in a youth home. The definitions used to describe the different residential care settings in the actual survey were based on information provided by staff of National Associations in the participating countries. All alternative care services provided by SOS Children's Villages follow a developmental, child-centred and strengths-based approach, using case management. The



primary aim is for children to grow in a safe and caring family-like environment, until they are able to be reintegrated with their family of origin or to step out into independent life as an adult.

## 5. Research Methodology

### 5.1. The research process

The research process involved ongoing consultation between the Research and Learning team at SOS CV, the principal researcher, Dr Chrissie Gale, and nine SOS National Associations: Austria, Ethiopia, Greece, Kenya, Nigeria, Palestine, Philippines, Romania and Sri Lanka. Due to certain restrictions on international travel due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was decided to undertake the research through an online survey. A copy of the survey questions can be found in Annex 1. It was agreed that 15 children from each country engaged in the Family Strengthening Service along with their families, would be selected, through purposive sampling. Each country was encouraged to seek a balanced number of girls and boys aged between 12 and 17 years old in their sampling.

### 5.2. Piloting and administering the final surveys

COVID-19 guidelines at the time of the survey, enabled participating countries, to bring children safely into SOS Children's Villages offices so that they could access computers and complete the surveys. The data software package Qualtrics was used to administer the surveys. The software is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) governing data collection and processing in European countries.

A draft set of questions was developed for the survey. Due consideration was given to the fact the survey would be administered online, and careful thought was put into developing a range of questions that it would be appropriate to ask children in this way. In total, the survey for children in SOS residential care consisted of 62 questions. Children were offered a series of multiple choice questions as well the opportunities to provide qualitative information which they could write into text boxes.

A pilot of the survey was conducted in the Philippines participated The completed pilot surveys were analysed and checked for quality of responses and any indications that changes were necessary. A short evaluation sheet was also sent to the National Association seeking feedback on the process. A final set of questions was developed in English and translated into five other languages. The survey was uploaded into Qualtrics and accessed by children via a link sent to participating countries.

### 5.3. Research tools

Information sheets were developed for members of participating National Associations containing guidance on research methodology including how to support children whilst using Qualtrics, research ethics and child safeguarding protocols. Guidance was also provided on ways staff could offer appropriate support to children in a manner that would not interfere with their independent completion of the surveys.

Age appropriate information sheets were developed for children, providing them with information about the purpose of the study, what their involvement would entail, and issues of

confidentiality, consent and assent. An information sheet and consent form were also prepared for responsible adults of children who would be invited to participate in the research. Additionally, the consent form for children was built into the Qualtrics survey, with safeguards in place to prevent children from proceeding with the survey unless they provided their consent. All information sheets and consent forms were translated into relevant languages. All consent forms were returned to the principal researcher through a secure online application.

#### 5.4. Ethical considerations

Careful consideration was given to safeguarding children and maintaining the dignity of those involved at all stages of the research process. All data has been collected and stored securely and only the researcher has access to the completed surveys. Great care has been taken to anonymise the dataset for analysis and reporting. All consent forms have been stored securely and separately from the completed surveys and results.

The research protocol followed SOS CV guidance on safeguarding. Should there have been any protection concerns for a child, or of anyone else the children mentioned, the researcher would have contacted the nominated child safeguarding officer from SOS CV who in turn would have investigated any disclosed information. In addition, preparations were made to provide support to children by staff should they experience any distress whilst completing the survey.

#### 5.5. Analysis and reporting findings

Analysis of the data has been run in Qualtrics and consideration was given to differences between age, gender and countries. All percentages have been rounded up to the nearest decimal point by 0.5% meaning that some of the percentages will not equal 100%. Where questions provided participants the opportunity to select more than one answer, these percentages will also not equal 100%.

#### 5.6. Challenges

The global COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on research and evaluation worldwide. As a result, the research could only be pursued through the use of online surveys, meaning that there was no additional scope to gain any deeper insight into children's experiences through more qualitative methods. Overall, the types of questions that could sensitively be asked were limited. Further considerations in terms of conducting the survey in challenging circumstances, including time to reach out to families and children and organising children to come to the SOS CV offices safely. These challenges mean that the size of the cohort was relatively small. It is acknowledged that this may impact the findings, which mostly reveal no strong statistically significant relationship in responses when analysed by age, sex and country.

Children were also purposively selected by staff of National Associations which may have unconsciously caused an unknown bias. Whilst care was taken to encourage the staff of National Associations not to prompt children when answering their questions, and to make sure they did not feel they were being scrutinised, it is not possible to validate whether there was any impact of staff presence on children or, on their completing the survey in SOS premises.

### 6. Key Findings: Responses from children in residential care

The survey was designed with different sections, to make it easier for children to navigate:

- About you
- Before I came to SOS residential care

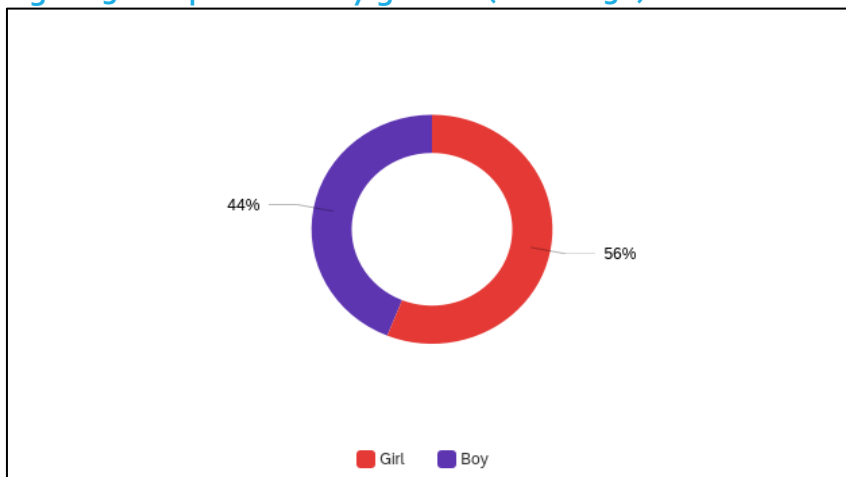
- My feelings
- Remaining in contact with my birth family
- Living in SOS residential care
- Being cared for
- Having friends
- Going to school
- Taking part in activities in my local community
- Preparing for leaving care
- Changing things

## 6.1. About you

### 6.1.1. Girls and boys

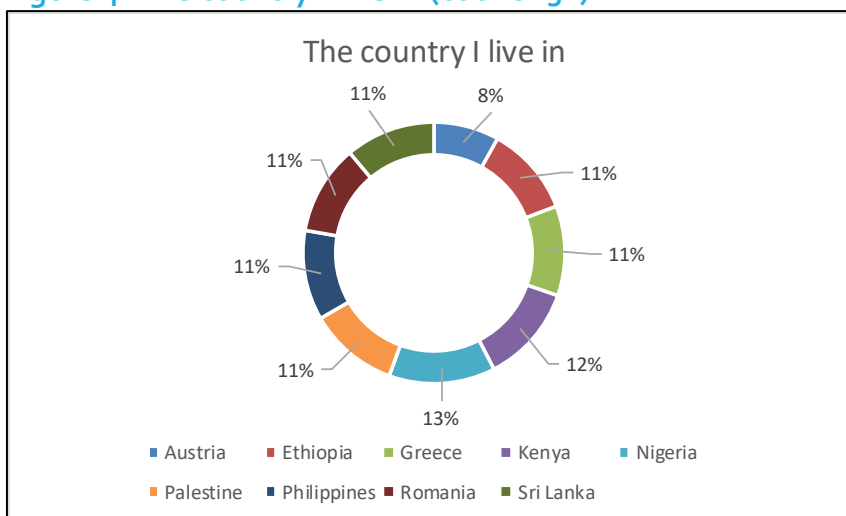
There were slightly more boys (56%) than girls (44%) who completed the survey (Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Respondents by gender (count 132)**



The percentage of children from each country that participated in the study varied slightly, although not significantly, as illustrated in Figure 4.

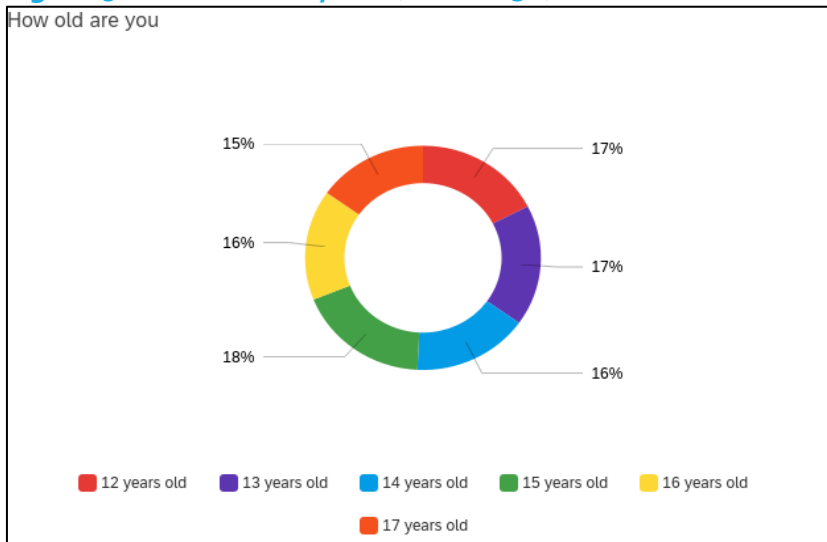
**Figure 4. The country I live in (count 132)**



### 6.1.2. Age of participants

In an effort to ensure children could complete the survey unaided, we purposively selected children aged between 12 and 17 years old. Each country was encouraged to evenly select children from across the age-span, as illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5. How old are you? (count 132)



### 6.1.3. Where I live now

We asked children about the form of residential care they are living in. The definitions used to describe the different residential care settings were based on advice provided by staff of National Associations in the participating countries. Almost three-quarters of children (73%) indicated they are living in an SOS family together with other SOS families in a children's village (Figure 6). A further 7% are living in an SOS family in the community alongside other families, 6% live in a small group home and 14% in a Youth Home.

Figure 6. Where I live now (count 132)

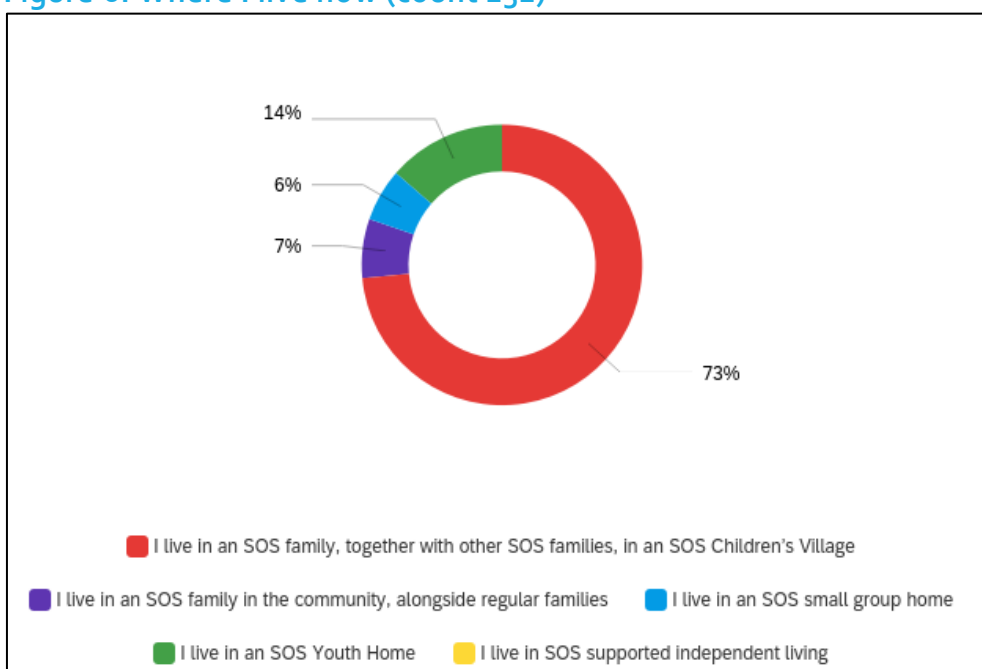
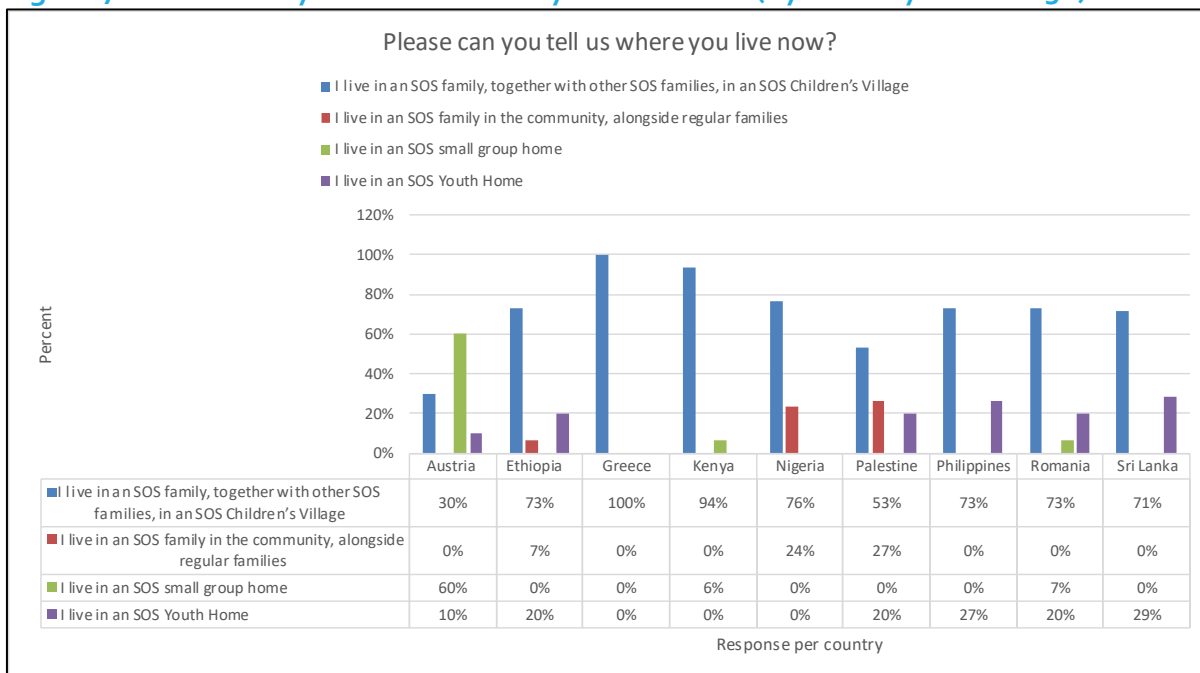


Figure 7 illustrates that a larger percentage of children in Austria are living in accommodation not situated within a children’s village in comparison to other countries

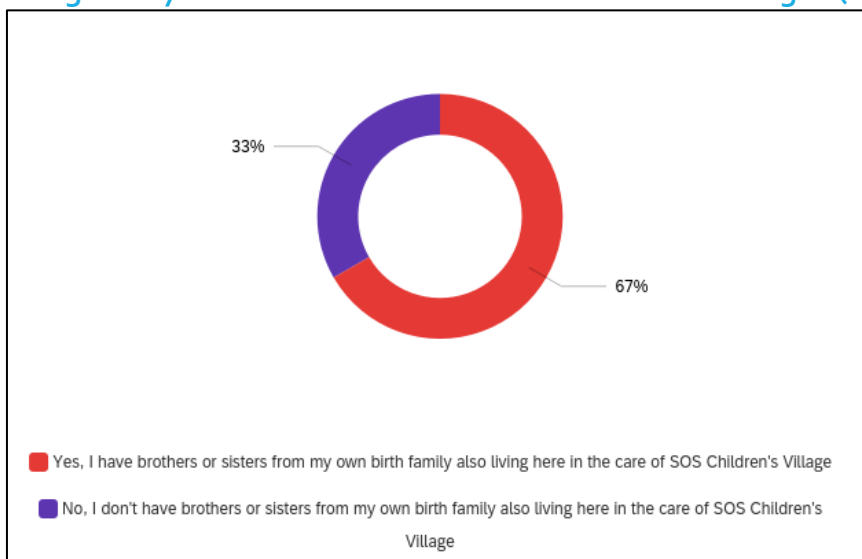
**Figure 7. Please can you tell us where you live now? (by country: count 132)**



#### 6.1.4. Living in care with brothers or sisters from my birth family<sup>1</sup>

Two-thirds of children (67%) who completed the survey have brothers or sisters from their birth family also living with them in residential care (Figure 8). This is significant, as children wrote in the survey that being with their siblings is something important to them, especially when they first arrived in residential care.

**Figure 8. If you have brothers or sisters from your own birth family, are any of them living with you here in the care of SOS Children’s Village? (count 132)**

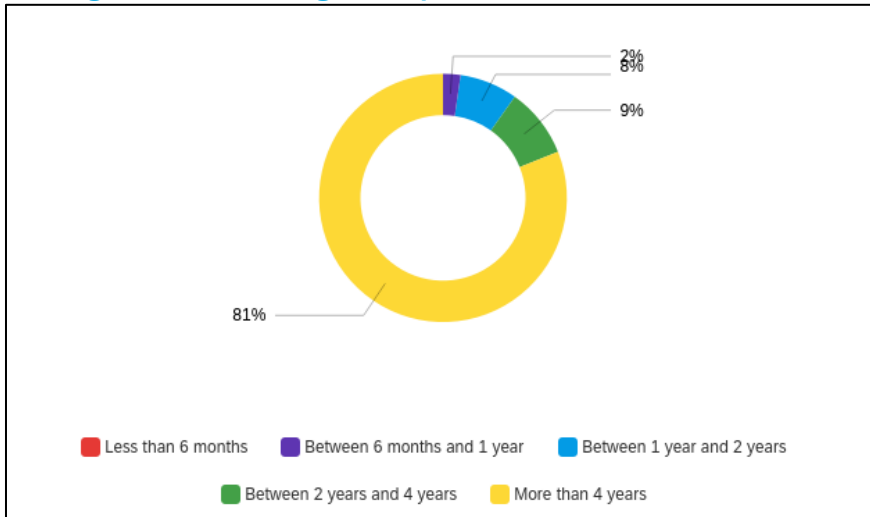


<sup>1</sup> For ease of understanding for the children and translating into other languages, we used the term 'birth family'. We recognise that families and what is understood as 'family' comes in different shapes and forms, and recognise that 'birth family' comprises 'family of origin' more broadly.

### 6.1.5. How long I have lived in residential care provided by SOS CV

The majority of children (81%) who completed the survey have been living in residential care for more than 4 years (Figure 9). Only 2% of children had been in residential care between 6 months and 1 year, 8% between 1 and 2 years, and 9% between 2 and 4 years at the time of participating in the survey.

Figure 9. How long have you lived in the care of SOS Children’s Villages? (count 132)



### 6.2. Before I came to residential care provided by SOS CV

To discover more about the children who participated in the survey, we were particularly interested in learning more about who children were living with before coming into residential care provided by SOS CV.

#### 6.2.1. Who I lived with before coming into residential care provided by SOS CV

We invited children to list all of the people they were living with before they came into residential care. We disaggregated their answers to provide a clearer understanding of the different settings they came from (Error! Reference source not found.1). Of the 123 children who responded to this question, only 9 wrote about living with both parents before they came into care. Many children provided responses indicating they were living in a household with only their mother (19), only with fathers (10), or only grandparents (19). Notably, 29 children came from other alternative care settings. Four children in Austria told us they had been in emergency foster care before coming to residential care provided by SOS CV, and over half of the children who responded from Romania and Palestine said they had come from another residential placement.

Table 1. Before you came to live here in SOS Care, who was the person you lived with who looked after you?

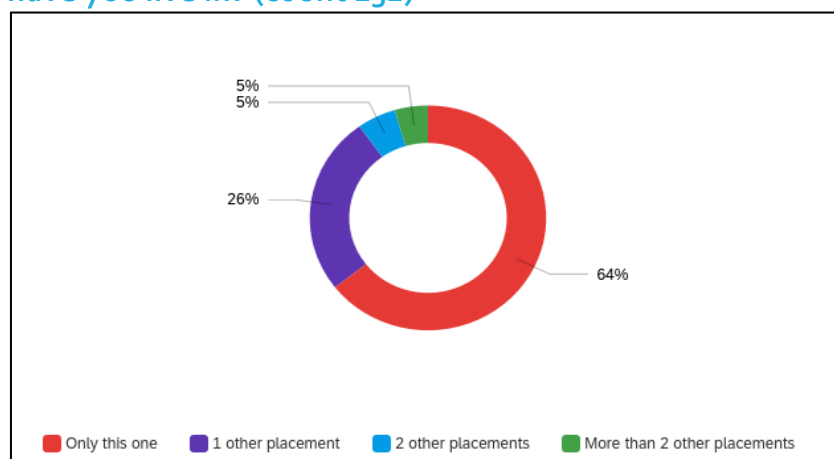
Who child lived with before coming into SOS care	Count
Only their mother was mentioned	19
Only their father mentioned	10
With both parents	9
Father and step mother	1
With their mother and grandparent/s only	7
With their father and grandparent/s	2
Only with grandparent/s	19

Only sibling/s mentioned	5
With an aunt and/or uncles	10
Another alternative care placement	29
Don't know or cannot remember	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>

### 6.2.2. How many difference places of alternative care have you lived in?

Of those children who were in other alternative care placements before arriving in residential care, 20% indicated they had been in one previous placement (Figure 10). Very few children had been in two previous placements (5%) or in more than two (5%).

**Figure 10. Since you left your birth family, how many different places of alternative care have you live in? (count 132)**



We also invited children who had lived in more than one other alternative care placement to tell us how being in, or moving between, these placements had made them feel. They told us that their lives had lacked stability and felt disorientated by the change(s). Some children wrote about feeling 'good' when arriving at residential care provided by SOS CV, as it was a 'better' place than their previous placement(s). We have included so many quotations throughout the report because we believe it is important for us to 'hear' what children themselves have told us

#### **Question: How did you feel moving between care placements?**

##### Unpleasant feelings about the move to residential care

*'It was all new to me and I was scared' (a child in Austria)*

*'I felt disoriented in my brain and this made me feel psychologically uncomfortable as I had been through more than one caregiver' (a child in Palestine)*

*'Unpleasant feeling the many changes' (a child in Greece)*

*'Neglected, unloved' (a child in Romania)*

*'I felt lonely, restless and carrying a rather heavy fog' (a child in Romania)*

##### Positive feelings about the move to residential care

*'I felt good because in the biological family I would live worse' (a child in Greece)*

*'I felt good because this village seemed to be more developed and more loving than the other one' (a child in Kenya)*

*'I feel that I need to live in an institution under the current circumstances' (a child in Palestine)*

*'I felt more comfortable living here than living at XXX' (a child in the Philippines) (NOTE: the name of the previous alternative care setting has been removed to protect the identity of the child)*

*'Living in more than one institution makes me feel unstable, but for four years I have been living in the village and I feel stable as my brothers are with me and I go to visit my family on official occasions' (a child from Palestine)*

#### Being unable to remember previous placement(s)

*'When I was in the previous institution, I was very young and could not remember anything' (a child in Palestine)*

*'I was small, I don't remember' (a child in Romania)*

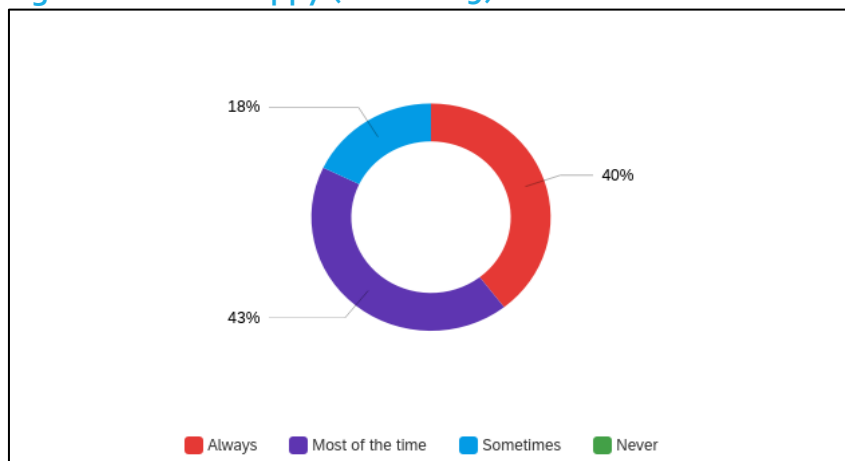
### 6.3. My feelings

A principal aim of the study was to listen to children and gain a better understanding of issues that impact their lives, including their feelings and wishes. To this end, children were asked about feeling happy and sad, and what factors influence these feelings.

#### 6.3.1. Feeling happy

When asked how often they feel happy, 40% of children answered 'always' and 43% responded 'most of the time' (Figure 11). Eighteen percent responded that they feel happy 'sometimes'. No child answered that they 'never' felt happy. We did not find any significant difference in the responses from girls and boys or between age groups. Children in Nigeria and Sri Lanka indicated they feel happy a lot in comparison to children in Greece, Austria and Palestine.

Figure 11. I feel happy (count 129)



#### 6.3.2. What makes you feel happy?

We invited children to write about things that make them feel happy. Overwhelmingly, the responses indicated that being with their birth family is important for children's happiness: both visiting and having visits with members of their birth family, especially parents. Children also wrote about being happy being with other children they live with in residential care. A few children mentioned that having siblings with them in residential care made them happy, and many wrote that having friends is important. A couple of children identified feeling 'supported' makes them happy and others about their enjoyment they get when participating in recreational



activities. Furthermore, children wrote about the importance of the care offered to them by SOS mothers.

### **Question: What makes you feel happy?**

#### Visits and contact with parents and family members

*'When my parents visit' (a child in Austria)*

*'When I can visit my mother and when I do something with my sister' (a child in Austria)*

*'When I see the people I love. When I can visit my mother. When I do something with my sister' (a child in Greece)*

*'When I can visit my mother and some aunts' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'The relationship I have with my biological brother. I have the opportunity to live life having my needs met. I am healthy, I have friends and family' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'My family makes me happy whenever I am with them, whenever we are together' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'When I visit my natural family. When I sit with my surrogate mom, and the educational team that support us. When I get high marks on tests' (a child in Palestine)*

*'When visiting my natural family' (a child in Palestine)*

*'Family bonding, playing together with my friends and siblings and when my father visited us here in SOS' (a child in the Philippines)*

*'When I go home to nana and nanu, when I go out with friends in the city and when I win competitions' (a child in Romania)*

*'Phone calls and text messages with my brother' (a child in Romania)*

*'Good Mother. Good Friends' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

#### Seeing and speaking with friends

*'My friends' (a child in Austria)*

*'My friends' (a child in Greece)*

*'Being with my friends' (a child in Kenya)*

*'Playing with my friends' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'Socializing with friends, being with my SOS mother' (a child in Romania)*

*'Playing with my friends. Studying' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

#### Living with their SOS Family, People they Love and Care About

*'Living with my sister and my SOS mother' (a child in Greece)*

*'I feel happy because I am always surrounded with love' (a child in Kenya)*

*'Someone caring about me' (a child in Palestine)*

*'My SOS family, my friends in the village and school, and my achievements make me happy' (a child in the Philippines)*

#### Receiving support and feeling supported

*'I have someone to support me' (a child in Greece)*

*'The care I am given and the support' (a child in Kenya)*

Being allowed to participate in sports and social activities

'Activities, parties' (a child in Palestine)

'That I play football' (a child in Romania)

Being successful and achieving goals

'When I achieve a goal I set I become happy' (a child in Nigeria)

Having their needs met

'If I get what I need. When I help others. If I achieve my aim' (a child in Ethiopia)

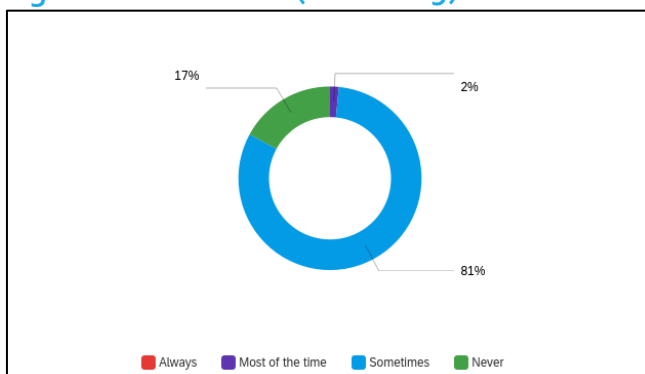
Celebrating milestones, like birthdays and religious holidays

'Celebrating milestones like birthdays, recognition, outings and other special occasions' (a child in the Philippines)

### 6.3.3. Feeling sad

We asked children what makes them feel sad. No child answered that they 'always' feel sad (Figure 12). Only 2% of children answered they feel sad 'most of the time', whilst 17% indicated that they 'never' feel sad. The vast majority of children (81%) only feel sad 'sometimes'. We did not find any significant difference in the responses from girls and boys or between different age groups.

**Figure 12. I Feel sad (count 129)**



### 6.3.4. What makes you feel sad?

In our wish to continue finding ways to better support children, we asked them to tell us what makes them feel sad. A number of themes emerged across the responses children provided. For example, one-third of the answers children provided signified they are sad when they cannot see the people they love, with many referring to not being able to see and/or spend sufficient time with members of their birth family. Having arguments and disagreements, particularly with friends, was another answer provided by just over one-third of children. A few children also wrote of feeling stigmatised or teased because they live in alternative care, or, as one child mentioned, because of their 'social status'. Not feeling loved and cared was also included in children's answers, as well as a few children feeling sad due to a lack of stability in their lives. Some children related this feeling of instability to changes in the person tasked with their care as well as having friends that 'leave'. Being sad when they feel they are misunderstood was something a few children also wrote about.

**Question: What makes you sad?**

Not being with or having contact with parents or family members

*'When I can't see my parents' (a child in Austria)*

*'Many things. Sometimes I remember my parents, when I feel lonely. When one of my friends is not happy. When I am stressed' (a child in Kenya)*

*'My father did not visit me in the village and I did not go to visit my family' (a child in Palestine)*

*'Missing my mother' (a child in Palestine)*

*'My emotional feelings about where I came from which is unknown' (a child in Kenya)*

*'I am sad when I see how some people deal with me because I live in an institution and that my family left me and each of them went to his own life' (a child in Palestine)*

*'I feel sad when I see my friends with their parents... even the village children have a mum and a dad they can spend holidays with' (a child in Palestine)*

*'When I see my classmates with their parents and when their parents get their report card at school. I feel sad that my mother cannot see my progress in school and awards. I want to see my mother to be proud of me in every little success I have' (a child in the Philippines)*

#### Being discriminated against, bullied or having arguments

*'When I am sick. If somebody insults me with bad insult. I miss my biological family. If I can't get what I need' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'When I get teased' (a child in Kenya)*

*'When someone insults me about my parents' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'When children make fun of me' (a child in Palestine)*

*'When one of the children makes fun of me. When my visit to my family is interrupted' (a child in Palestine)*

*'When I argue with someone' (a child in Romania)*

*'When I have a fight with my siblings' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

#### Experiencing grief, bereavement or loss

*'Death of friends, families/relatives. Friends/siblings leaving' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'Fear to lose those people whom I trust. When I think about my biological mother. Had she been with me, I would have been with her' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'When people I value leave' (a child in Greece)*

*'It makes me sad when I remember my late-mother who left us when we were still young and our youngest sister who died at an early age' (a child in the Philippines)*

#### Not achieving goals or school related worries

*'When I make a mistake and low score in tests in school' (a child in the Philippines)*

*'When I get low grades. When I argue with someone' (a child in Romania)*

*'Homework. When others at school criticize me for my social status and make fun of me' (a child in Romania)*

#### Feeling misunderstood

*'When they don't understand me' (a child in Greece)*

*'When I am not understood' (a child in Kenya)*

#### Being unable to see or have contact with people the children love or care about

*'When I can't see the people I love' (a child in Austria)*

*Being worried about covid-19 and other health concerns*

*'I do not live with my parents. I'm afraid of COVID' (a child in Greece)*

*Looking to the future*

*'Making decisions about my future' (a child in Greece)*

*Missing access to practical necessities*

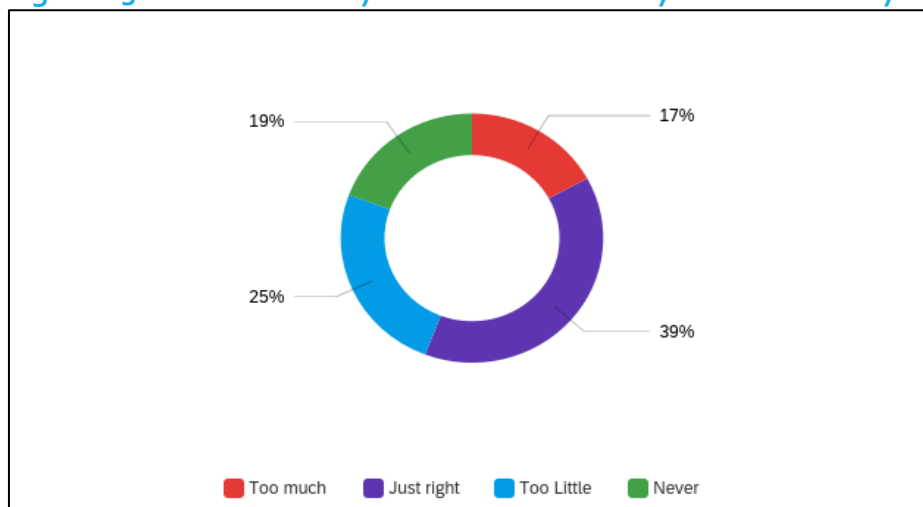
*'That I do not have a birth certificate' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

## 6.4. Remaining in contact with my birth family

### 6.4.1. How much contact do you have with your birth family?

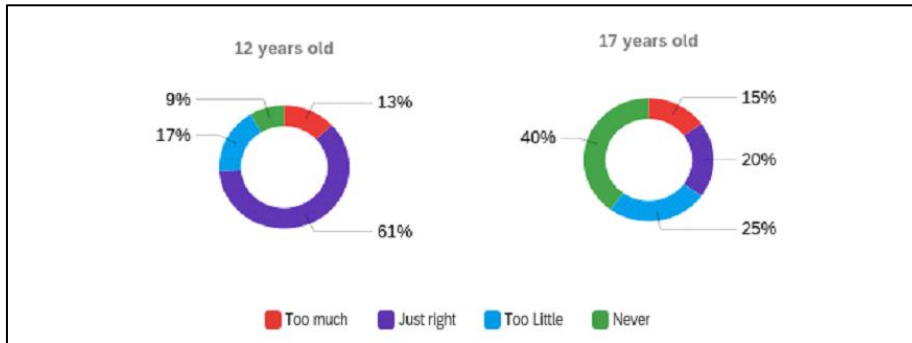
We see in the previous section that children's lack of being with, or being in contact with, their birth family is something that impacts their happiness. To hear more from children on this issue, we asked them a series of questions about contact with their birth families, and whether they felt the amount of contact was sufficient. Nineteen percent of the children answered that they never see their birth family (Figure 13). One-quarter of children (25%) indicated they see their birth family 'too little'. Over one-third of children (39%) answered that the time they spend seeing their birth family is 'just right', whilst 17% said that they see their birth family 'too much'.

**Figure 13. How often do you see members of your birth family? (count 129)**



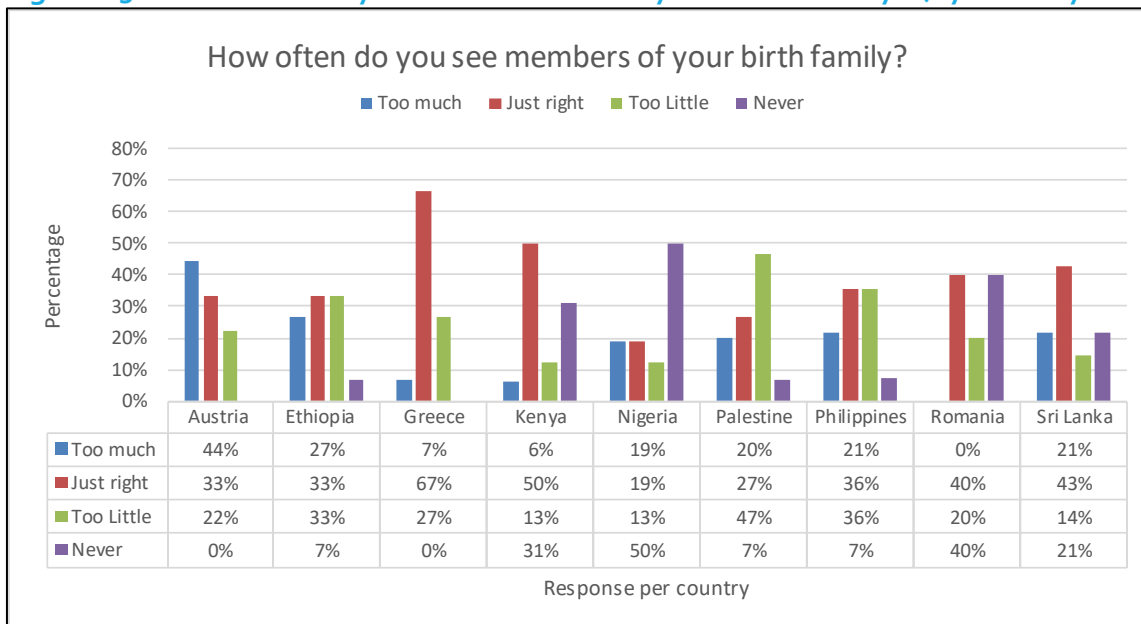
Our findings indicate a possibility that as children get older, they may spend less time seeing their birth family. As can be seen in Figure 14, 40% of 17 year olds answered that they 'never' see their birth family, whereas 9% of 12 year olds gave this answer. Furthermore, children aged 12 years old indicated the time spent seeing their birth family is 'just right' (61%) in comparison to 20% of 17 year olds.

**Figure 14. How often do you see members of your birth family? (12 year olds and 17 year olds)**



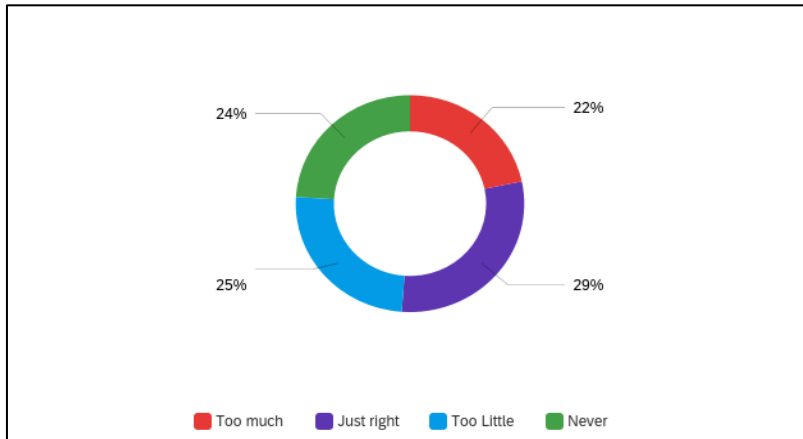
The amount of time children spend seeing their birth families also varies from country to country. For example children in Nigeria (50%) are more likely to ‘never’ to see their family members than children in other countries (Figure 15). We found that how children feel about the amount of time they spend seeing their birth families also differs. More children in Palestine than in other countries answered that they see their family ‘too little’ (47%), whereas more children in Austria (44%) answered that they see their family ‘too much’. We do not have evidence in this study to explain the reasons why. However, one assumption might be that children in Austria are more likely to be separated from parental care due to protection risks and other situations that placed them at harm, as suggested by the several children in Austria who told us they had moved to residential care from emergency foster care (see section 6.2.2.).

**Figure 15. How often do you see members of your birth family? (by country: count 129)**



We were interested to know if children also stay in contact with their birth family through other means, such as phone calls or emails, and how they felt about the amount of contact they have in these ways. Almost one-quarter of children (24%) answered they ‘never’ had other forms of contact, and another one-quarter (25%) indicated the other forms of contact they had were not frequent enough, choosing ‘too little’ (Figure 16). Almost one-third (29%) responded that the frequency of other forms of contact was ‘just right’, and 22% said the frequency was ‘too much’.

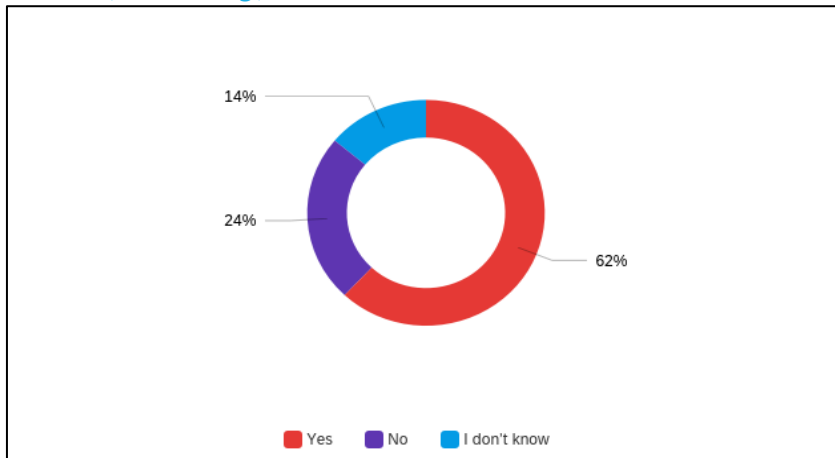
**Figure 16. How often do you have other forms of contact with your birth family? (count 129)**



### 6.4.2. Would you like to see or have more contact with your family more often?

Most importantly we were interested to ask children if they would like to see, or have other types of contact, with their birth families more often. Significantly, almost two-thirds of children (62%) responded 'yes', they would like more contact (Figure 17). A further 24% however, answered 'no', and 14% indicated they 'don't know' if they would like to have contact with their families more often.

**Figure 17. Would you like to see or have other types of contact with your family more often? (count 129)**



### 6.4.3. Having the best relationship I can with my birth family

We wanted to hear children's own ideas about what would help them attain the best relationship possible with their birth family. It was noted that no children in Austria provided any response to this question, and those children in Sri Lanka that did respond told us they 'didn't know' what would help. Overwhelmingly, children indicated that having more contact with their family would help: both in relation to seeing their family as well as making contact in other ways, such as being able to make phone calls. Furthermore, a number of children let us know that having a greater understanding of the reasons why their family 'allows' them to be in residential care would help.

**Question: Is there anything else that could be done to help you to have the best relationship possible with your birth family?**

Seeing or having more contact with parents or family members

*'Increasing opportunity for more contact' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'If my family could come and visit me whenever they want' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'Anyone from my family being able visit me anytime and any day' (a child in Kenya)*

*'By allowing me to visit and spend time with them more often' (a child in Kenya)*

*'Visiting and telephone calls' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'Having their contact so I can talk to them' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'Continuous weekly visits to them' (a child in Palestine)*

*'Regular family visits to my natural family. My family's participation in the events that concern me inside the village' (a child in Palestine)*

*'If they come' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'To be able to meet them more often and spend more time with them' (a child in Greece)*

*'I don't want anything to help me because I don't want this. But I want the rest of the children to make a good relationship through contacts and visits, however if a child refuses, the child's opinion should be taken seriously. I am with the idea of integrating children but properly. I do not want the child to be integrated if he does not want or it is not correct. I want the reality of the child's living with his family and the family situation to be studied in all respects. The opinion of the child and the parents must be taken as well. So that one child does not fall victim to this act if the child is integrated into a situation that does not allow for their integration, he will be affected psychologically, and this...will affect his life and his future as well' (a child in Palestine)*

*'I want to have a talk face to face with my Aunties and Uncles, especially my father' (a child in the Philippines)*

*'Yes, there is, by the means of communication through telephone/mobiles' (a child in the Philippines)*

*'I would like to have a home visit or vacation with my birth family so that I can be updated about their lives and strengthen our relationship' (a child in the Philippines)*

*'To see my family more often' (a child in Romania)*

*Knowing more about their background and family*

*'Looking for my biological background' (a child in Kenya)*

*'Understanding my family background' (a child in Kenya)*

*Having more information about the rules and expectations of SOS Care*

*'Giving them [family] proper information about the rules and regulations of SOS, their responsibility to support me after I leave care from SOS' (a child in Ethiopia)*

## 6.5. Living in Residential care

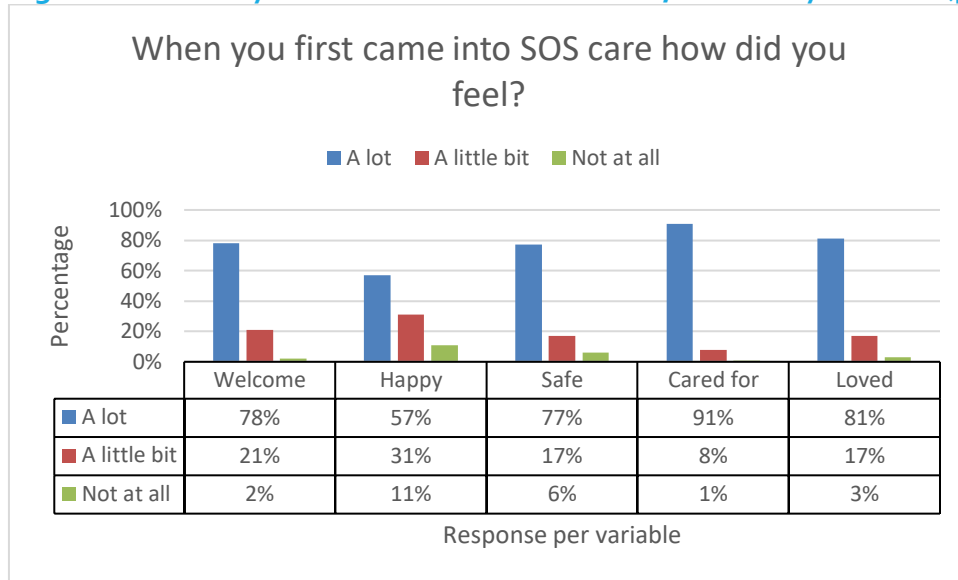
### 6.5.1. What happened when you first arrived in residential care?

We were interested in the views of children whether or not there are changes that should be made in order to improve their experience when they first arrive at their care placement. To this end, we asked a range of questions about their own experience when they first arrived in residential care provided by SOS CV.

### 6.5.2. How I felt when I first arrived in residential care

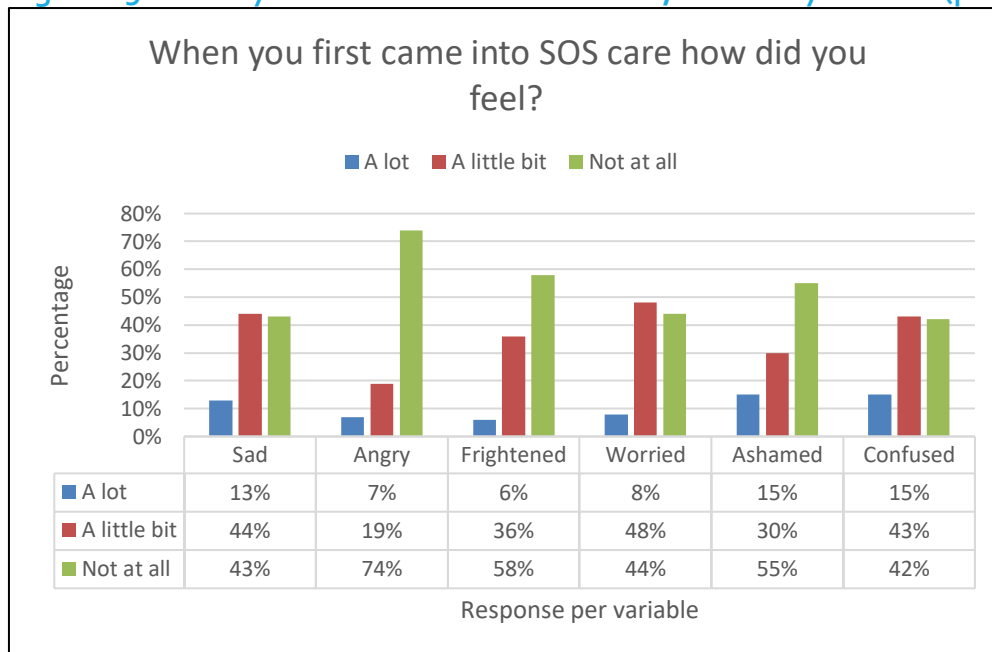
We provided children with a multiple-choice question so they could indicate the degree to which they had experienced different feelings upon arriving in residential care provided by SOS CV. There were some very positive findings. For instance, almost all children (91%) answered 'a lot' when asked if they felt 'cared for' and 81% said they felt 'loved' 'a lot' (Figure 18). Over three-quarters (78%) of children also chose the option of 'a lot' when asked if they had felt 'welcome', 77% said the same with regards to feeling 'safe' and 57% said responded likewise when asked about feeling 'happy'.

Figure 18. When you first came into SOS care, how did you feel? (part 1)



Children who chose the response 'a lot' in relation to less positive feelings included: 15% who answered they felt 'ashamed'; 15% who said they felt 'confused'; 13% reported feeling 'sad'; 8% 'worried'; 7% 'angry'; and 6% were 'frightened' (Figure 19).

Figure 19. When you first came into SOS care, how did you feel? (part 2)

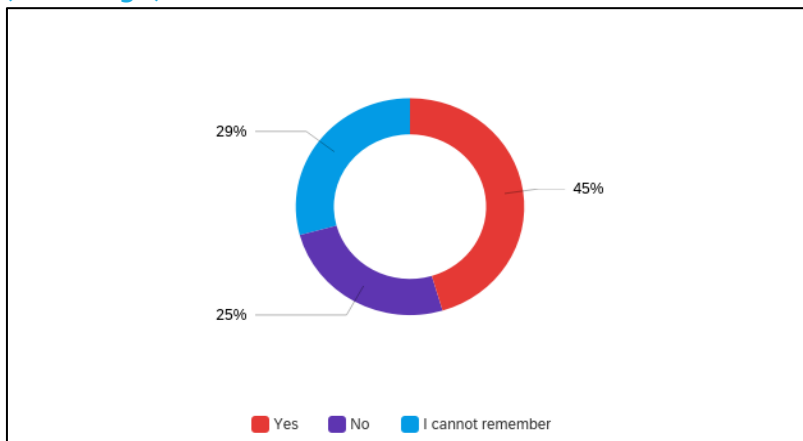




### 6.5.3. Being told why I was in care

Some children have told us elsewhere in the survey that having information and being kept informed in decisions that affect their lives is important to them. This issue was explored further by asking children if someone had told them why they were in care when they first arrived at SOS Children's Villages. In total, 45% of children answered 'yes' and 25% 'no' (Figure 20). Almost one-third (29%) of children 'cannot remember'. Later questions in the survey provide an insight into why some children might have selected 'cannot remember'; it may in part be attributed to some children explaining that they have been in SOS care for four years or more, or some who mentioned entering care at a very young age.

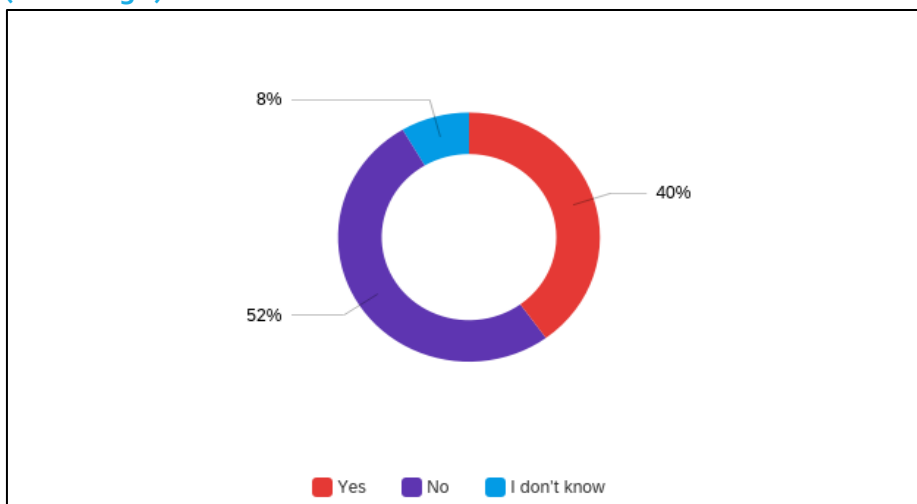
**Figure 20. When you first arrived did someone tell you why you were placed in SOS care? (count 130)**



### 6.5.4. Wanting to know more about why I am in care provided by SOS CV

We were interested in understanding if children would have liked more information about why they came into residential care and, if so, what sort of information would have been important to them. When asked if they would have liked more information, 40% of children answered 'yes' and 52% 'no' (Figure 21).

**Figure 21. Would you have liked more information about why you came into SOS care? (count 130)**



We sought children's ideas regarding the type of additional information they would have liked to have received about why they came into residential care provided by SOS CV. They wrote about

the importance of knowing more about why they were in care, and, in particular, the reason why their family 'allowed' to be brought there. They also wanted a clearer understanding about what would happen to them whilst in care, and more clarity on how often their family could visit them. A significant issue for a number of children was also having a better understanding about how long they would be in care. They mentioned wanting to have received additional information about what their life would be like in residential care, any specific expectations of them, and what was going to happen to them. For example, they would have liked to know more when they first arrived about who they would be living with and how things 'work' in residential care provided by SOS CV. In summary, they wanted more reassurance about what was happening to them and what their lives would now be like.

**Question: If you would have liked more information, what sort of information would you have liked someone to give you?**

Knowing why they lived in SOS Care

*'All about the reason I came here' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'I would like to know why I came and who brought me' (a child in Greece)*

*'I would like to have more information about the reasons I came and how my daily life will be' (a child in Greece)*

*'How it came about for me to be in SOS' (a child in Kenya)*

*'I would like to know why and where my parents had to abandon me and where they are right now' (a child in Kenya)*

*'How the SOS care knew about my birth family and my siblings' (a child in Kenya)*

*'I would have been loved to be told why I was brought to SOS children's village and about my family' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'I wanted to know the situation and family circumstances of each child in the village. And when would I return to live with a normal family?' (a child in Palestine)*

*'All the information about my biological family and why I was put in SOS Children's Villages' (a child in Palestine)*

*'Why and how I was referred to the care of the organization?' (a child in the Philippines)*

*'The sort of information that I would like to know: why did my biological mother agreed to transfer here in SOS' (a child in the Philippines)*

*'Why I was placed here in SOS and why is it that my mother could not take care of us anymore' (a child in the Philippines)*

*'For what reason did I arrive' (a child in Romania)*

*'Well, why did I get here and how did it get here?' (a child in Romania)*

*'What was the problem with my family' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

*'The reason why my mother left me' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

*'I would like to know about the place I lived before' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

Knowing more about the rules and expectations in SOS Care

*'I needed to know about the village more. Also, I needed to know who I would live with' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'I should have been given information about the SOS family, how life goes on in this family, why I am here' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'I only want to know the whole history about SOS and no information should be hidden from me, and I mean no information should be hidden that is all' (a child in Kenya)*

*'How everything works' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'Maybe, the clear vision of what SOS really is (before) but now I already know about SOS' (a child in the Philippines)*

Knowing more about their family or seeing and contacting their family more often

*'I would like to know my biological father and mother' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'To know about my family background' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'I would have like it if someone had told me about my family background from the start' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'About my mother and father' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

Understanding what will happen in the future

*'What I will become in future and I should not miss my opportunity' (a child in Nigeria)*

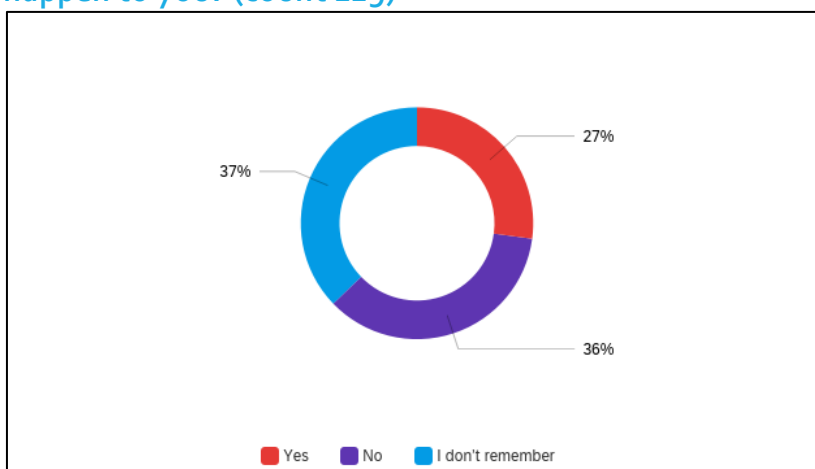
*'How long I will be in the village' (a child in Palestine)*

*'I wanted to learn if we can finish our studies and if we can stay here forever in SOS' (a child in the Philippines)*

### 6.5.6. Being asked what I wanted to happen when I first arrived in care provided by SOS CV

As well as information about why they were in care, we wanted to find out whether children had participated in decisions being made about their lives. We therefore queried whether or not someone had asked them what they wanted to happen when they first arrived in residential care provided by SOS CV. A total of 27% of children responded that 'yes' they had been asked, 36% answered 'no', and 37% that they did not remember (Figure 22).

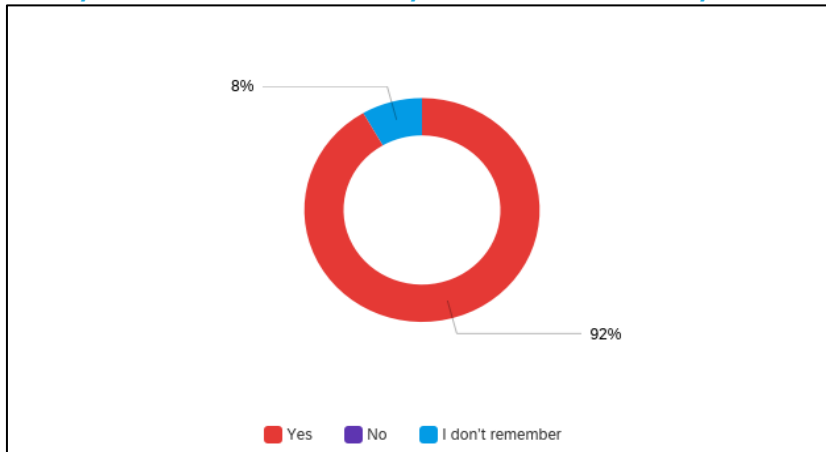
**Figure 22. When you first came into SOS care did anyone ask you what you wanted to happen to you? (count 129)**



### 6.5.7. Do you think your ideas about what you wanted to happen to you were taken seriously?

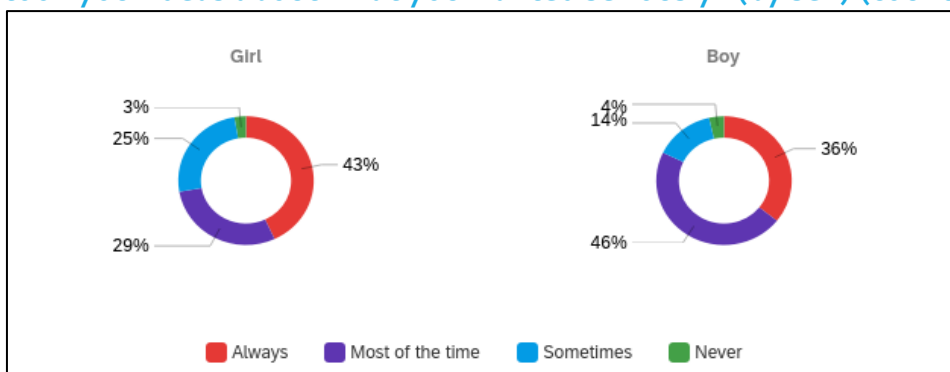
Even if children had been asked what they wanted to happen, it was important to know whether they felt the answers they had offered had been taken seriously. Of the few children (36 in total) that did respond to this question, they overwhelmingly (92%) answered 'yes' (Figure 23).

**Figure 23. If you were asked what you wanted to happen, do you think they listened and took your ideas about what you wanted seriously? (count 128)**



There were some differences in the answers provided by girls and boys. Thirty-six percent of boys think they are 'always' listened to and their ideas taken seriously in comparison to 43% of girls (Figure 24). Forty-six percent of boys think they are listened to and their ideas taken seriously 'most of the time' in comparison to 29% of girls.

**Figure 24. If you were asked what you wanted to happen, do you think they listened and took your ideas about what you wanted seriously? (by sex) (count 128)**



### 6.5.8. What additional information would you have liked someone to give you?

Seeking children's views on ways to improve their experience of alternative care, we also asked for their ideas about anything that would have helped them feel happier when first arriving in SOS care. Once again, they explained that being offered some reassurance including, what it was like to live in residential care, knowing what was expected of them, and what their life be like in the future, would have made them happier. Some children also told us they would have felt happier if their siblings could have been with them. A number of children said they would have felt happier if someone they knew had been with them when they were first brought to residential care at SOS CV, for example, a parent or another family member.

**Question: Is there anything you think should have happened when you first came into SOS care that would have made you feel happier?**

Being with or supported by family members and parents

*'If I came with mum' (a child from Ethiopia)*

*'Yes, if I come with my biological family I would have been very happy' (a child from Ethiopia)*

*'I would be happy if my older brother had come with me' (a child from Ethiopia)*

*'I wanted my brother to be admitted too' (a child from Kenya)*

*'I would have been happier to have stayed with my family' (a child from Nigeria)*

*'I wanted my natural parents to stay with me for a full day on the first day of enrolment, in order to adapt to the new situation more quickly' (a child from Palestine)*

*'The thing I was hoping was to bring my brothers and be together, and it really happened' (a child from Palestine)*

*'If only my grandfather's family took me instead of putting me in an institution' (a child from Palestine)*

*'To have my original mom present' (a child from Palestine)*

*'If my other brothers were with us' (a child from Palestine)*

*'My sister being with me' (a child from Sri Lanka)*

*'Yes my brother being with me' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

Knowing why they were living in sos care

*'I think they should have told me the reason as to why they brought me here and my background story' (a child from Kenya)*

*'I thought they would help me trace where I came from or where my family are' (a child from Nigeria)*

*'I was quite small, so I was confused and I think that even if someone explained it to me, I didn't have the ability to put my feelings together' (a child from Romania)*

Having the rules and expectations of sos care explained

*'I would have thought if they had explained to me about the nature of life in the village and the nature of the care provided, I would have been happy from the first time I entered and I would not feel anxious and afraid' (a child from Palestine)*

*'All things when I came to live in the village' (a child from Palestine)*

*'I wanted a welcome that would help me understand and accept the new situation quickly' (a child from Palestine)*

Support and guidance to understand the changes

*'It wasn't because of the supervisors that I was so introverted and confused. But I felt like I was in another world and had to adapt to it. It was a long process to get used to the new situation. Me I don't know how to solve such problems now' (a child from Austria)*

Arriving was a positive experience

*'Everything that happened at that time was a pleasure for me, as it was important to move from the institution I was in previously' (a child from Palestine)*

*'I was welcomed well' (a child from Kenya)*

'They welcomed us with love and respect' (a child from the Philippines)

### Having friends in SOS Care

'If all my friends were with me. At the time of my admission, the SOS mother was on leave it was the SOS aunt who received us and it was good if the SOS mother was there and hugged me and my brother. I was with my elder at the time of my admission and he was supporting and comforting me. I think it would be more challenging for children coming alone' (a child from Ethiopia)

'Good friends' (a child from Sri Lanka)

### Feeling Free and able to Make Decisions

'Yes, at the beginning I wanted to have my freedom' (a child from Austria)

### Unable to make recommendations because they cannot remember arriving

'No, nothing should have happened because I was 3 years old and I couldn't remember but now they is nothing that made me happier but I was just happy when I came thank you' (a child from Nigeria)

'I can't tell because I was only three years old' (a child from Kenya)

'I was too young that time and I cannot remember so well what happened' (a child from the Philippines)

### Ensuring significant moments are not missed because of the move to care

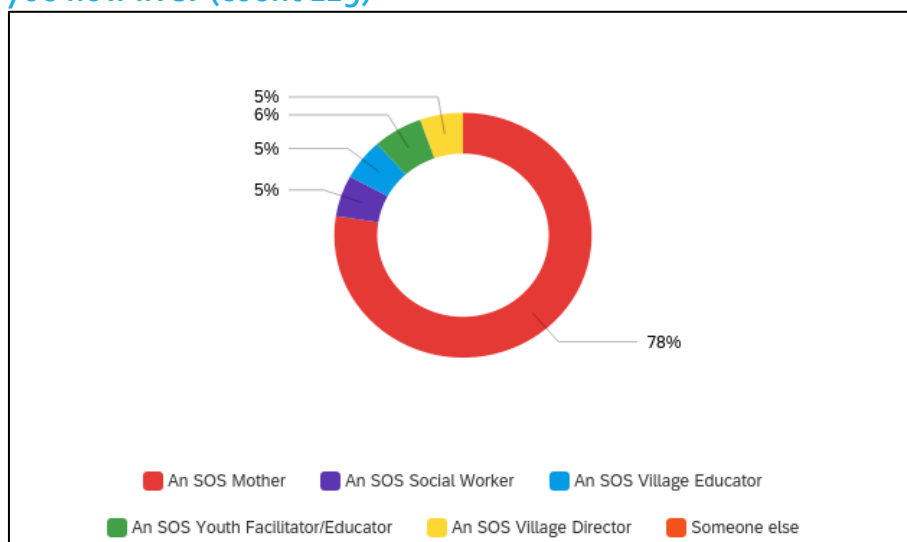
'I remember I was in a Grade 1 pupil before I first came to SOS, and that time it was our recognition day. I didn't go to the stage to receive my special award since it was a preparation for my departure to SOS' (a child from Palestine)

## 6.6. Being cared for

### 6.6.1. The person who provides me with the most care

We asked children if they would identify the person that provides them with the most care where they presently live. The vast majority of children indicated this is an SOS mother (Figure 25). Children identified other main carers as being SOS social workers (5%), village educators (5%), youth facilitators/educators (6%) and village directors (5%). No children selected 'someone else' as their main carer.

**Figure 25. Who is the main person that that provides you with the most care in the place you now live? (count 129)**



### 6.6.2. How this person makes me feel

Continuing to explore and understand what impacts on children’s feelings, we asked them how the person they identified as providing them with the most care, makes them feel. Almost all children (95%) indicated they ‘always’ feel cared for by this person (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Likewise, 90% answered this person ‘always’ makes them feel safe and 78% said they ‘always’ felt loved by this main carer.

As can be seen from the responses, very few children answered ‘always’ when asked if this person makes them feel worried, frightened, angry, ashamed and confused. They did answer, however, that this person made them feel this way ‘sometimes’ to a greater degree than they ‘sometimes’ felt ‘cared for’, ‘safe’ or ‘loved’: 53% for ‘angry’, 22% for ‘ashamed’, 27% for ‘frightened’ and 37% for ‘confused’.

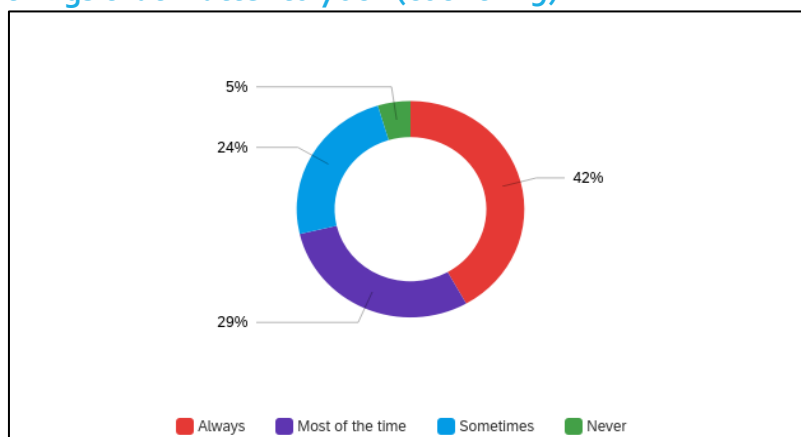
**Table 2. How does this person make you feel...?**

How often does this person make you feel...?	Always	Sometimes	Never	Count
Cared for	95%	5%	0%	122
Safe	90%	10%	1%	126
Loved	78%	21%	1%	125
Worried	4%	32%	64%	118
Frightened	1%	28%	71%	119
Angry	1%	53%	46%	120
Ashamed	1%	22%	77%	117
Confused	0%	37%	63%	115

### 6.6.3. Being able to talk more often about things that matter to me

Elsewhere in the survey, children wrote about the importance of being able to talk to someone about their problems, with mention of wanting ‘guidance’ and ‘counselling’. In this next question, children told us how often they feel able to talk about things that matter to them with the person they identified as being their main carer. In total, 42% of children indicated they can ‘always’ talk to this person, whilst 29% responded they can talk to this person ‘most of the time’, 24% ‘sometimes’, and only 5% as ‘never’ (Figure 26). There was no significant difference across the different age groups and the way they answered this question.

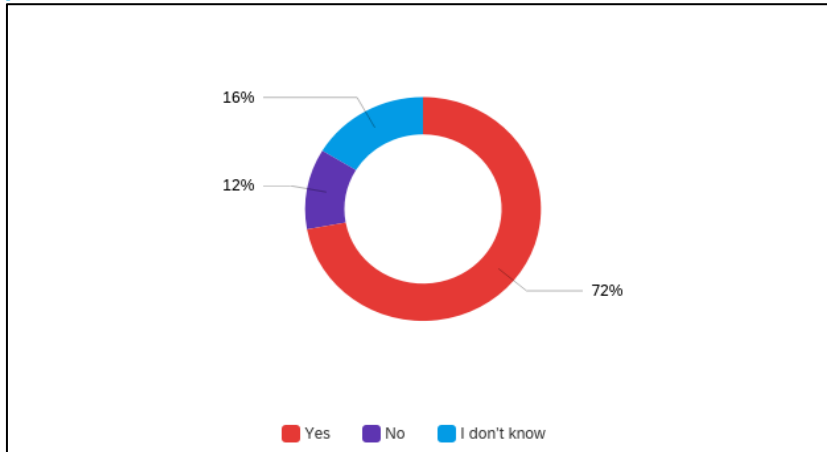
**Figure 26. How often do you feel you can talk to the person who is your main carer about things that matter to you? (count 129)**



#### 6.6.4. Would you like to talk to this person more?

Being able to talk about things that matter to them with their main carer is something children most definitely indicated they would like to be able to do more often, as illustrated by the three-quarters of children (72%) who answered 'yes' to this question (Figure 27).

**Figure 27. Would you like to be able to talk to this person about things that matter to you more often? (count 129)**



#### 6.6.4. If you would like to be able to talk to this person about things that matter to you more often, what things would you like to be able to talk to them about?

When asked what else they would like to be able to speak to their main carer about, children's feedback signalled they would like more reassurance about their future and, what one child referred to as, their 'life expectations'. For example, they would like to be able to talk more about their education and future prospects for gaining employment. A number of children mentioned wanting to talk more about 'personal' and 'serious' things. As with answers children provided to other questions in the survey, they also want to talk more about their birth family.

#### **Question: What other things would you like to be able to talk about more often?**

Being able to talk about 'everything'

*'About everything' (a child in Austria)*

*'I would like to talk to my mom about serious issues more often' (a child in Greece)*

*'About school, future, boys, jobs' (a child in Austria)*

*'Education. Life goals. Socialization. Spirituality' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'About my future, my career, moral development' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'My Family. Life goals. Education. Future fate' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'About my life. About my education. About my talent. About my behaviour. About my age. About my relationship with others' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'About my relationship with my siblings' (a child in Greece)*

*'About life' (a child in Kenya)*

*'My performance. My sexuality. My talent and my emotions' (a child in Kenya)*

*'I would like to tell her about my personal life, my studies and also ask for advice in any way' (a child in Nigeria)*



*'Probably anything that is bothering me or of if I have a challenge with something' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'Difficult problems in life and hope she could advice me on what to do' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'I want to talk about the things and events that happen to me at home, at school, and with my normal family, and I want to talk about my aspirations, hopes, my future and my future plans' (a child in Palestine)*

*'I want to talk to her about my future, my family, and my childhood memories before I joined the village' (a child in Palestine)*

*'About my future. About my biological family. About my problems. About my grief. About my happiness' (a child in Palestine)*

*'About her experience, about me, about what can happen to me negatively' (a child in Romania)*

#### Being able to talk about Personal Issues

*'My personal problems and hope she could advise me on certain issues' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'My personal issues' (a child in Kenya)*

*'I would like to share to her about my own struggles if we have misunderstandings' (a child in the Philippines)*

*'About personal things' (a child in Romania)*

*'Personal details' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

#### Being able to talk about friends, school or education

*'About school and my friends' (a child in Greece)*

*'About school and my daily life more' (a child in Greece)*

*'Life in school . My best and worst subjects. My friends' (a child in Kenya)*

*'Education' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'School activities, health matters, security, and things I do with my friends' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'About my education because that is what matters to me most' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'I would like to talk about what career path I should take. And also about my studies' (a child in the Philippines)*

*'About school, courses to take up in college. About cooking and baking skills. Friends' (a child in the Philippines)*

*'About how stressed at school' (a child in the Philippines)*

*'Education' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

*'About my education. About my problems' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

*'Talk about my future education' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

#### Being able to talk about the future

*'My future life and how to be independent' (a child in Kenya)*

*'About the plan for the next year and the accompanying arrangement' (a child in Palestine)*

*'The future' (a child in Palestine)*

#### Being able to talk more about parents and birth family

*'Knowing about the identity of my real family' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'I would like to talk to her more about my relatives' (a child in Greece)*

*'I want to talk to her about my family' (a child in Palestine)*

*'I always want to talk to her about my life with the original family' (a child in Palestine)*

*'About my family. Personal problems. Advice for my future' (a child in the Philippines)*

*'Family matters, friends, school concerns' (a child in the Philippines)*

*'About my biological parents' (a child in the Philippines)*

**Being able to share emotions and talk about love**

*'About love' (a child in Austria)*

*'Like when I am scared and worried' (a child in Kenya)*

*'My fears' (a child in Kenya)*

**Being able to talk about immediate concerns**

*'About our current situation, for example, health education' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'The things that bother me at the moment' (a child in Kenya)*

**Being able to talk about ambitions or goals**

*'I want to share with him my ambitions and...and a place in society' (a child in Palestine)*

### 6.6.5. Do you think there is something different that this person could do to make you feel happier

Continuing to seek children's ideas about how to improve the quality of their care experience, we asked them to tell us what else their main carer could do to make them feel happier. Children wrote about wanting to feel loved and cared for as well as respected and being treated fairly. A few children wrote about wanting to feeling listened to in an open and honest way. Once again, they would also welcome the opportunity to talk more about their birth families. They would also like to be able to have 'open' and 'honest' discussions about their problems, their feelings and their lives.

#### **Questions: What else your main carer could do to make you feel happier?**

**Feeling loved and cared for**

*'Providing love' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'More love' (a child in Kenya)*

*'Giving me more love and affection' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

*'Love and caring' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

*'Understanding and loving care' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

**Feeling respected and treated fairly**

*'Asking me politely' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'To stop comparing me with other people when it comes to education and character wise, because I hate being compared with others. It makes me feel that I am not important' (a child in Kenya)*

*'When our SOS mother is always present, and gives consistent guidance to us even we have different backgrounds and stories' (a child in the Philippines)*

### Feeling able to be open and honest

'A nice approach. Honesty. Being able to openly telling him /her everything' (a child in Ethiopia)

'Open discussion. A good approach' (a child in Ethiopia)

'To be able to speak more openly, to remain confidential about what we are talking about, not to tell everyone' (a child in Romania)

### Feeling listened to

'Yes like listening to me. Understanding me more. Helping me more' (a child in Ethiopia)

'To listen to me when I'm sad and explaining my side, and not easily get angry' (a child in the Philippines)

'It would be much better if she would also listen to me and not push her own side of the story' (a child in the Philippines)

### Feeling understood

'Understanding my feelings' (a child in Ethiopia)

'Just to be understood' (a child in Kenya)

### Feeling protected

'To be my shield whenever I am in deep troubles with the care givers' (a child in Kenya)

### Being helped with practical necessities

'Preparation of my birth certificate' (a child in Sri Lanka)

### Feeling that the main carer is attentive

'They have to pay attention' (a child in Ethiopia)

'To always stay with me only' (a child in Palestine)

'Sitting with me and sharing all the moments of joy, fear and help always' (a child in Palestine)

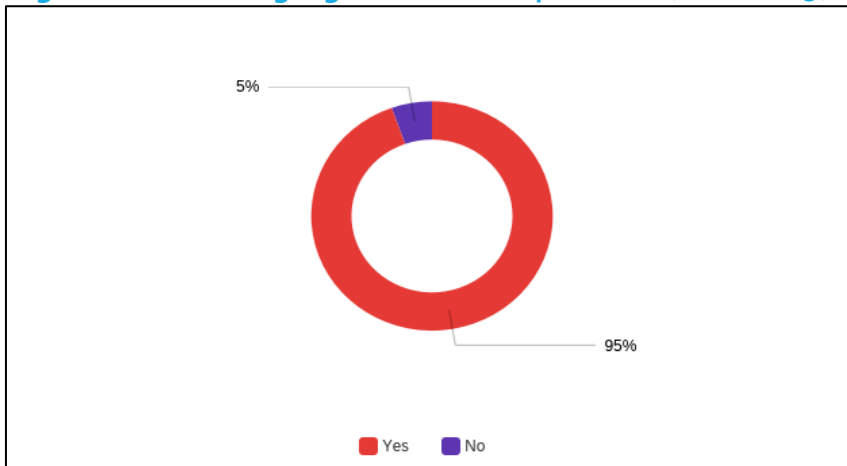
'I would like you to stay by my side always' (a child in Palestine)

## 6.7. Having friends

### 13.1 Is having a good friend important?

Throughout the survey children indicated just how important friendships are to them. When directly asked if having a good friend is important, children again signified friendship is indeed important. As illustrated in Figure 28, almost all children (95%) responded 'yes' to this question. There was no difference in the responses from girls and boys and the majority of children across all age groups signalled they have at least one really good friend.

Figure 28. Is having a good friend important? (count 129)

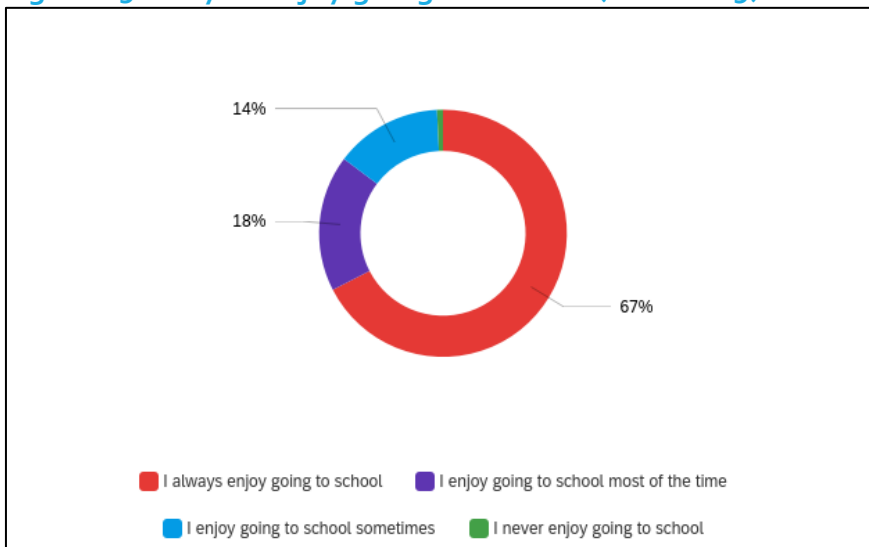


## 6.8. Going to school

### 6.8.1. Enjoying school

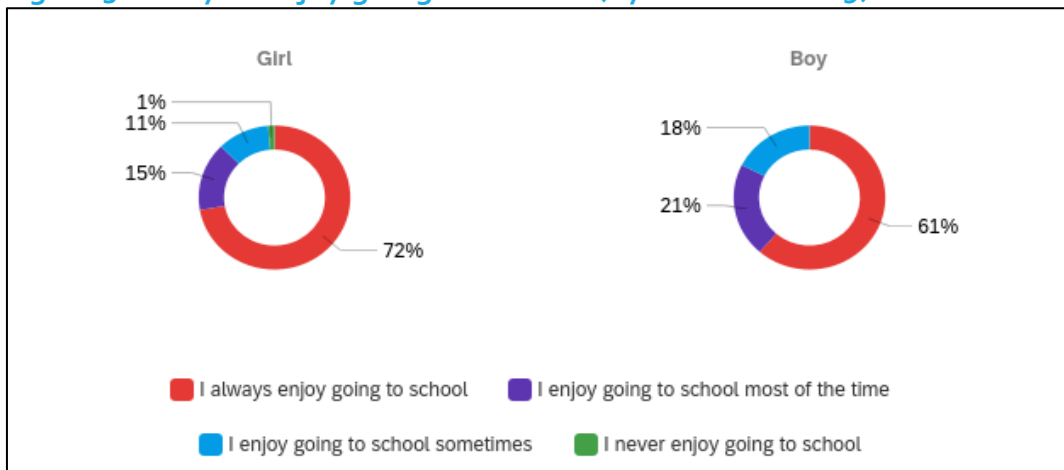
In other sections of the survey, children have already noted the significance of education. We wanted to know more about children's experience of going to school and what they think influences whether or not this is positive experience for them. Almost two-thirds (69%) of children indicated they 'always' enjoy going to school and 18% said they enjoy going to school 'most of the time' (Figure 29). A further 16% answered that they enjoyed going to school 'sometimes', with no children choosing the option of 'never'.

Figure 29. Do you enjoy going to school? (count 129)



There was only a slight variation in the different responses from girls and boys, as can be seen in Figure 30, with slightly more girls (72%) saying they 'always' enjoy going to school than boys (61%).

Figure 30. Do you enjoy going to school? (by sex: count 129)



### 13.3. What things do you like about going to school?

We then sought children's views on what influenced their enjoyment of school. Two topics were uppermost in their responses. One is the opportunity to make and be with friends at school. The second is children's enjoyment of learning which, for some, is also a recognition that education will help them with their future. Having teachers that they like also contributes to their enjoyment of school, as well as being able to participate in sporting and social activities. Some children also wrote about the opportunity this affords them time and socialising with children who do not live in residential care.

#### **Question: What do you like about going to school?**

##### Learning and achieving goals

*'I have a lot of fun learning there and have made many friends' (a child in Austria)*

*'When I gain knowledge from my teachers' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'I want know new thing or I want add and learn new thing in my life. Also I have an aim so I must learn. I have this thinking in my life' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'Knowing something new' (a child in Greece)*

*'This is where your life gets sharpened' (a child in Kenya)*

*'I like going to school because I learn as many new things as possible' (a child in Romania)*

*'Good friends, learning' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

*'Developing my knowledge' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

*'Being able to get an education' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

*'Learning, playing, the teachers loves and care about you. And the fun activities' (a child in Kenya)*

*'To learn new things to get new friends. As I am now in high school to get to know how to live independently without being told to do something. How life is outside in comparison at SOS. Some of the teachers are friendly in comparison to at home we have someone to talk with' (a child in Kenya)*

*'I enjoy going to school because I am provided with education' (a child in Kenya)*

*'I like the way we were taught, because we learn new things everyday, and its fun and lively' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'Keenness to observe every ounce of knowledge they give to me in school' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'I like going to school, because I want to learn, and I also want to have wisdom and knowledge and understanding how to succeed in life' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'Friends and learning something new' (a child in Palestine)*

*'I love to study and follow up on homework and interest in obtaining excellence' (a child in Palestine)*

*'So I study and become an important person' (a child in Palestine)*

*'Learning something new, meeting new people and bonding with my friends' (a child in the Philippines)*

*'You learn new things' (a child in Romania)*

#### Spending time with or making friends

*'My friends' (a child in Austria)*

*'I make a strong relationship with my friends' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'Break time because I meet my friends' (a child in Greece)*

*'I like painting and playing with my friends' (a child in Greece)*

*'The lesson from some teachers and the time with my friends' (a child in Greece)*

*'Making new friends and learning' (a child in Kenya)*

*'Having good friends' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

*'I like the teaching at school and the friends who are lovely and helpful' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'Learning and meeting new friends' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'I like to see my friends in school and participate in school activities' (a child in Palestine)*

*'I like going to school because I feel a belonging and make more friends' (a child in the Philippines)*

#### Taking part in sports or social activities

*'Being involved in clubs like football' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'I like the clubs in my school that involve other schools and places' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'That I exercise in sports activities' (a child in Greece)*

*'Participating in games, music competitions, drama and maths contests' (a child in Kenya)*

*'Sports, my friends, dancing' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

*'Sports such as football' (a child in Kenya)*

*'The various recreational activities that are carried out in the school' (a child in Palestine)*

#### Spending time with people who do not live in residential care

*'The fact of meeting other new faces rather than the ones we are used to in the village and the bond with the teachers' (a child in Kenya)*

*'I get to interact with other children from different backgrounds' (a child in Kenya)*

*'I get to know how people from the community behave and live' (a child in Kenya)*

*'Change of atmosphere, play and be happy because I went outside the village walls' (a child in Palestine)*

*'Social interaction' (a child in the Philippines)*

*'Like on the way I meet children and talk. we all laugh, we make jokes' (a child in Romania)*

### Spending time with classmates and teachers

*'The classmates and the teachers' (a child in Austria)*

*'I like it because my class colleagues have become better to me and have given me the chance to show that I can be different' (a child in Austria)*

*'I've always been that weird dude next door, but my schoolmates didn't mind, so this was such a place for me to express myself' (a child in Austria)*

*'Because the teachers are kind' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

### 6.8.2. Is there anything you do you not like about going to school?

Children also told us about the things they do not like about going to school. As highlighted in other sections of the survey, a few children wrote about the stigmatisation they experience attributed to them living in care. The presence of disruption in class, with the occasional mention of bullying and fights between children, is something else that contributes to children not enjoying school. Additionally, some children refer to their teachers as being the reason they do not like school. A few children also mentioned the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Question: Is there anything you do not like about going to school?**

#### Feeling stigmatised

*'Other's negative perceptions of charitable organizations' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'The system does not favour everyone' (a child in Kenya)*

*'Children from S.O.S being called CV children or S.O.S children at school. whenever something bad happens us being taken as first suspects' (a child in Kenya)*

*'Yes, being looked down upon by my fellow students' (a child in Kenya)*

*'The atmosphere and students despising' (a child in Kenya)*

#### Fighting and bullying

*'Students fighting' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'Quarrelling of students (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'Fights between student and teachers' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'I don't like the school due to the challenges we have in the school. There are some students who misbehave... there is also bullying' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'When there is a conflict at school' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'Violence between children' (a child in Palestine)*

*'Sometimes I am exposed to violence and bullying at school because I live in an institution far from my original family' (a child in Palestine)*

*'I don't like bullying classmates' (a child in the Philippines)*

*'The misbehaviour of some student in the other class when they noticed and picked me, sometimes it bothers me' (a child in the Philippines)*

#### Teachers behaving negatively

*'Teacher's behaviour' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'The behaviour of my teachers and classmates' (a child in Greece)*



*'My teachers' (a child in Greece)*

*'Sometimes the treatment from teachers and the principle' (a child in Palestine)*

*'I don't like certain teachers' (a child in Romania)*

#### The Impact of COVID-19

*'Life with COVID at school' (a child in Greece)*

*'I am wearing a mask' (a child in Greece)*

*'I do not like the relationship between the teacher and the students (and the relationship of the teacher and the students became worse when the corona came and there were internal crises)... Also, because of the (Corona), education has become remote and this is something I do not like at all' (a child in Palestine)*

#### Other children

*'Some children' (a child in Austria)*

*'Only that sometimes the students annoy me' (a child in Nigeria)*

#### Facing punishment

*'Being given punishment' (a child in Kenya)*

*'That there are many hours' (a child in Romania)*

#### Not being understood

*'When the teachers do not understand you' (a child in Kenya)*

### 6.8.3. Is there anything that would help you enjoy school more?

To improve children's experience of school, it is important we understand what they would like to see change. Although there was less information provided in answers to this question than previous questions, children did tell us about wanting to be more involved in recreational activities. A few children also wrote about wanting bullying in school to be stopped, and a number of children said that improving the quality of their education would help them to enjoy school more.

#### **Question: Is there anything that would help you to enjoy school more?**

##### Being able to take part in sports and social activities

*'To play football with friends' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'If there are certain things in school (football handball)' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'More learning and more outdoor activities' (a child in Kenya)*

*'Maybe if we have fun clubs like debate drama and swimming' (a child in Kenya)*

*'Yes like doing dancing and music' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'Excursions and football competitions' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'Participation in school activities' (a child in the Philippines)*

*'I would like to engage more in cultural subjects and sports' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

##### Preventing bullying and stigmatisation

*'If there is no bullying in the school. teachers treat all the students equally. Identify misbehaving students and take action' (a child in Ethiopia)*



*'Us to be treated equally' (a child in Kenya)*

*'The community children should stop looking down on us' (a child in Kenya)*

#### *Being able to make and spend time with friends*

*'Finding friends' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'Yes more friends' (a child in the Philippines)*

*'If I had someone to talk to in class' (a child in Romania)*

*'Yes, friends' (a child in Romania)*

#### *Clear and consistent rules and expectations*

*'I would like the rules to be followed more' (a child in Greece)*

*'There should be a better explanation from the teachers in the subject of the lessons' (a child in Greece)*

#### *Higher quality education*

*'Better quality of education' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'If it focuses on someone's career' (a child in Kenya)*

*'Obtaining academic distinction' (a child in Palestine)*

#### *Support and understanding from teachers*

*'Teachers support' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'Feeling loved by the teachers as well as my participation in school activities and school radio' (a child in Palestine)*

*'I want my teacher to encourage me a lot and never bring me down' (a child in the Philippines)*

#### *Having different teachers*

*'I would like to have different teachers' (a child in Greece)*

*'Having good teachers' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

#### *Being ambitious and having goals keeps children focused*

*'My ambition helps me to study more' (a child in Palestine)*

*'Yes, because I want to be a successful some-day I want to learn more about everything that would help me become a better person in the near future' (a child in the Philippines)*

#### *Reduced homework*

*'Not to give so much homework, to focus more on the team learning style than competition, to be more practical than theory' (a child in Romania)*

#### *Creating suitable environments*

*'Having a good environment created' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

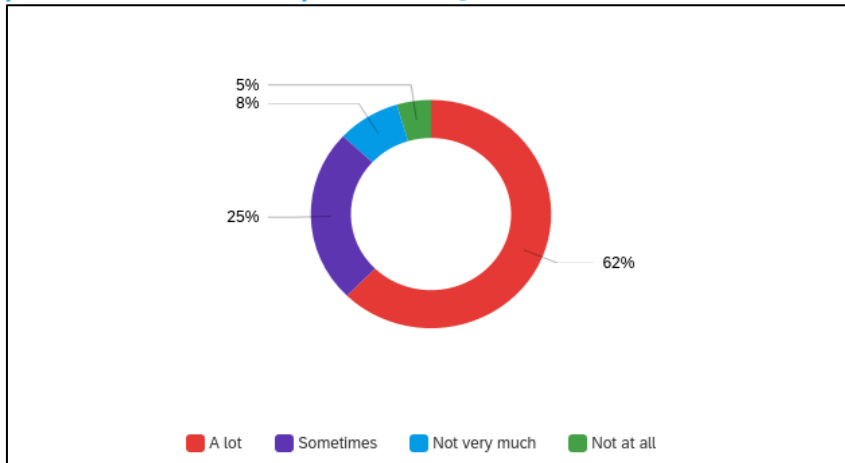
## **6.9. Taking part in activities in my local community**

Children have indicated elsewhere in the survey how much they enjoy going out of their places of residence to participate in education and other activities. We asked children about their opportunities to participate in recreational activities in their local community and whether or not they felt they participated in the same way as children not living in residential care.

### 6.9.1. How often do you attend activities in the community?

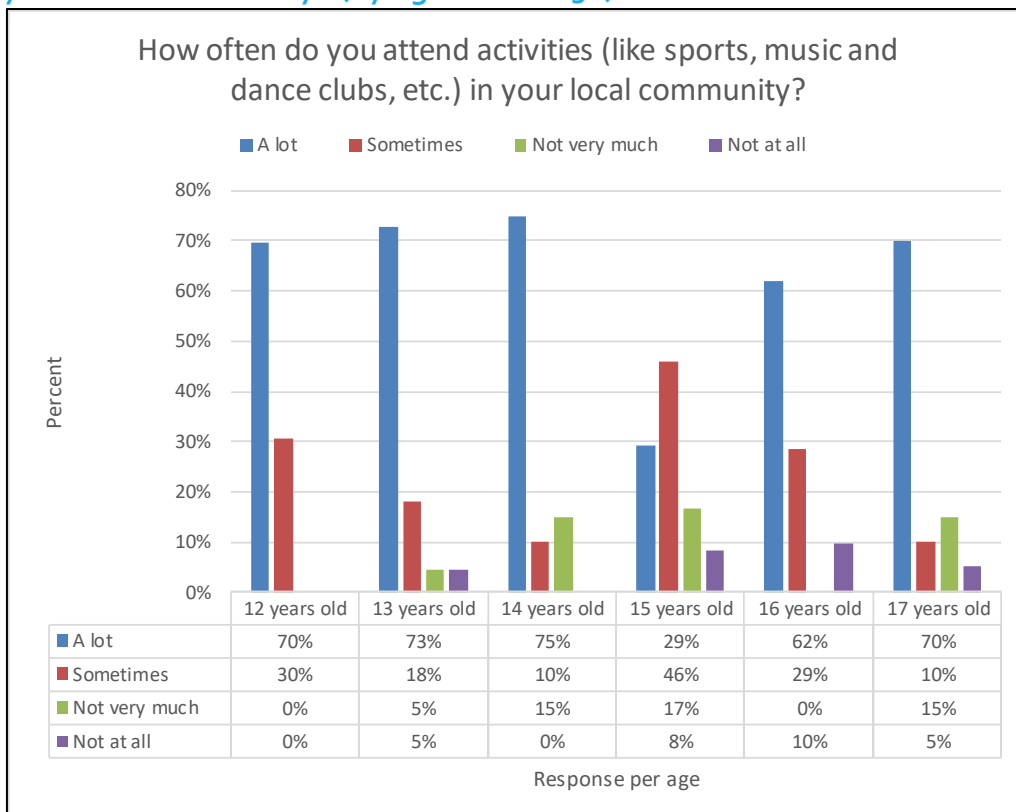
In total, almost two-thirds of children told us that they do attend activities in their local community 'a lot' (62%) or 'sometimes' (25%) (Figure 31). Only 8% of children chose the answer 'not very much' and 5% said 'not at all'.

**Figure 31. How often do you attend activities (like sports, music and dance clubs, etc.) in your local community? (count 130)**



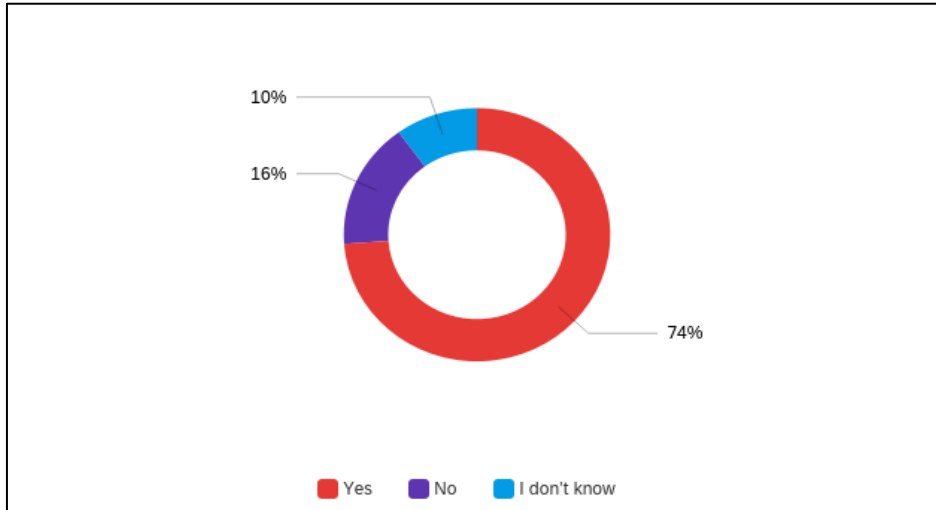
Responses from 15 year olds indicate they feel that they do not attend activities in their local community as much as children in other age groups, although we have no explanation for this (Figure 32). Overall, children aged between 12 years and 14 years old indicated they are more likely to attend these activities than those in other age groups.

**Figure 32. How often do you attend activities (like sports, music and dance clubs, etc.) in your local community? (by age: count 130)**



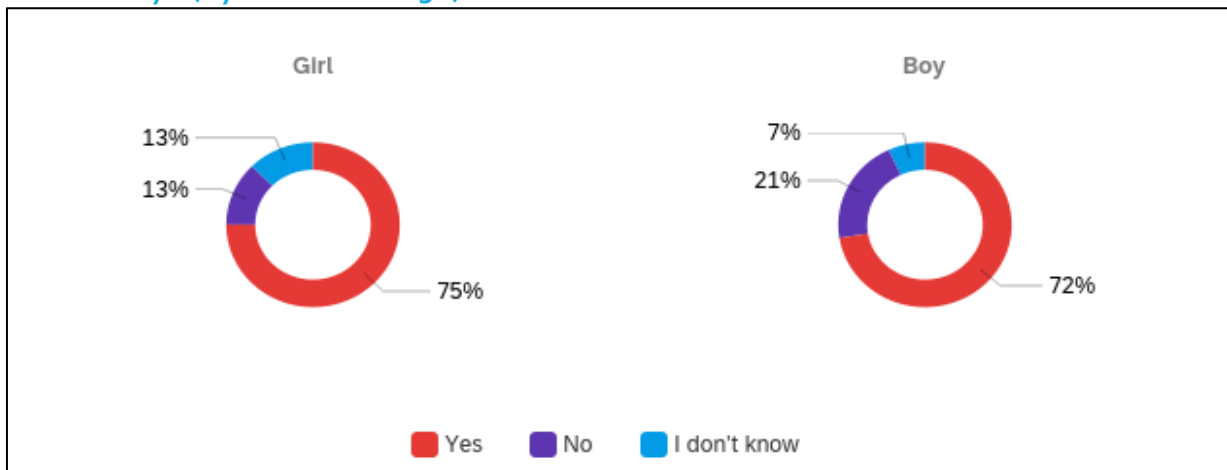
6.9.2. Having more opportunity to attend more activities in your local community  
 When we asked children if they would like the opportunity to attend more activities in their local community, they overwhelmingly answered 'yes' (74%) (Figure 33).

**Figure 33. Would you like the opportunity to attend more activities more in your local community? (count 130)**



There was no significant differences in the responses from girls and from boys (Figure 34).

**Figure 34. Would you like the opportunity to attend more activities more in your local community? (by sex: count 130)**



6.9.3. Activities I would like to have more opportunity to attend

When invited to tell us what other activities they would like to attend, children wrote about such sporting activities as football, basket-ball and swimming. Children would also like the opportunity to attend more social activities such as dancing classes and other arts events.

**Question: What kind of activities would you like more opportunities to attend in your local community?**

Sports and social activities

*'Martial arts, swimming, singing, dancing...'* (a child in Austria)

*'Dance. Fitness' (a child in Austria)*

*'Cultural, dance, music' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'Basketball clubs and social gatherings' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'I would love if we attend more sport activities' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'Basketball clubs, and engaging in bands and social clubs' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'I like participating in football games in a specialized club, participating in a cultural centre, joining a centre to strengthen English language skills' (a child in Palestine)*

*'Sports , Writing sessions I'd love to have more opportunities those I mentioned. Especially in writing because I want to learn more and I wanted to boost my capabilities in writing' (a child in the Philippines)*

*'Mainly I would like to have more time to be able to do more sports :)' (a child in Romania)*

*'Football, swimming, boxing and other sports activities' (a child in Romania)*

*'I want to participate more on dancing, football and charity activities' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'Latin dance' (a child in Greece)*

*'Swimming, arts and crafts' (a child in Kenya)*

*'Ballet classes, dancing classes, playing instruments classes, skating and drama classes' (a child in Kenya)*

*'Sports. Musical programmes' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

#### Participating in music

*'Music. I really love music at all. When sad music always makes me happy. I could love to get someone to help me achieve my dream of being a musician in life' (a child in Kenya)*

*'More music sessions' (a child in Palestine)*

#### Attending youth clubs

*'I want participate on youth club in the town' (a child in Ethiopia)*

#### Training and education

*'Leadership training. Skills training. Job preparedness training' (a child in the Philippines)*

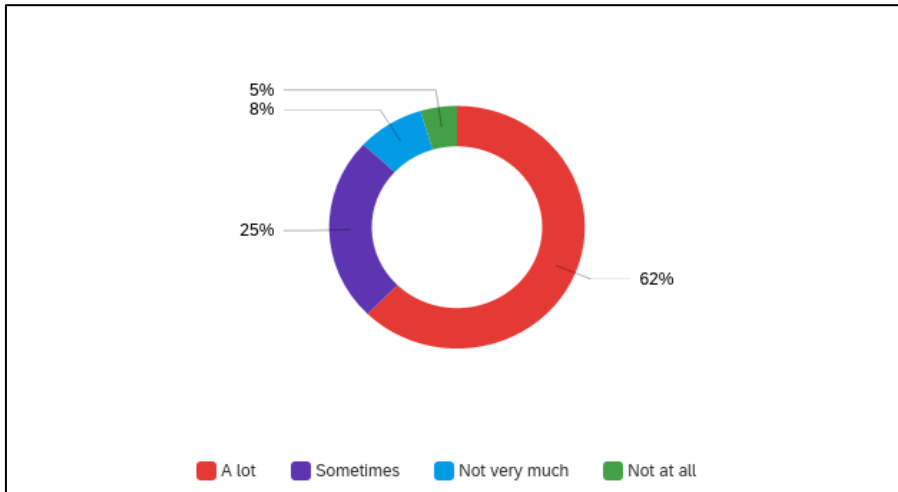
#### playing with friends

*'Playing with friends' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

### 6.9.4. Being able to do the same things as children who do not live in residential care

In other parts of the survey, some children wrote about feeling different from children they know who are not living in alternative care. We explored a number of different questions that also related to this issue. When asked how often they do the same things as other children who do not live in residential care, almost two-thirds answered this happens 'very often', and 25% this happens 'sometimes' (Figure 35). Only 5% responded that this happens 'not at all' and 8% 'not very much'.

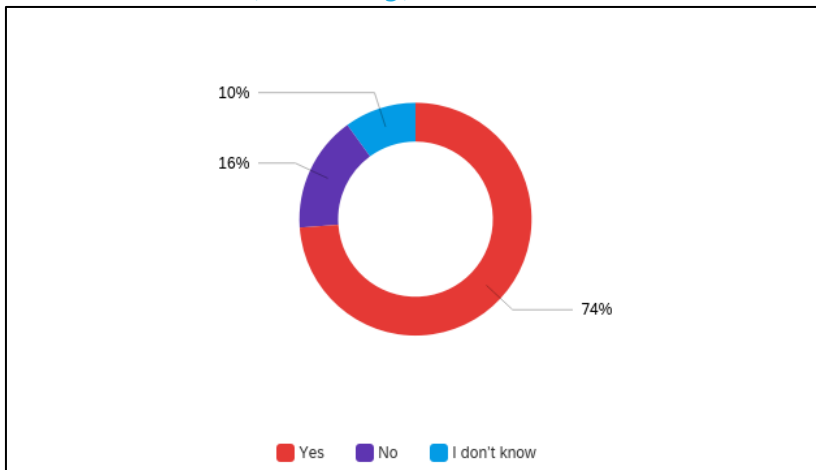
**Figure 35. How often can you do the same things as other children who do not live in SOS care? (count 129)**



### 6.9.5. Wanting to do the same things as children not living in residential care

When asked if they would like to be able to do the same things as other children who do not live in residential care provided by SOS CV, approximately three-quarters of children answered 'yes' (Figure 36). The responses were similar between girls (75%) and boys (72%).

**Figure 36. Would you like to be able to do the same things as other children who do not live in SOS care? (count 129)**



### 6.9.6. Would you like to be able to do the same things as children who do not live in SOS care?

We invited children to tell us what kinds of things they would like to do that are the same as children who do not live in residential care provided by SOS CV. Their answers included going out of the SOS children's village more often and taking part in local recreational activities. Children told us they would like to be able to go out more to meet friends. This includes visiting their homes and being with the families of their friends. Some children wrote about wanting their life to be more like their friends' who do not live in residential care but are able to live with their own families. We were also told by some children that being like other children meant being with their own families.

**Question: What kind of activities would you like more opportunities to attend in your local community?**

Visiting the homes of children not living in SOS care

*'Spending the night at a friends house' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'When I can go to other places like visiting my classmates' house outside SOS' (a child in the Philippines)*

*'I would like to spend more time with friends who are with their biological families' (a child in Romania)*

#### *Being outside the SOS village*

*'Just to go out of the village more often' (a child in Greece) 'Everything' (a child in Austria)*

*'Being with my school friends. Enjoying being out of the village' (a child in Ethiopia)*

#### *The opportunity to be with friends more often*

*'To go out to meet my friends more often' (a child in Greece)*

*'Given the opportunity to go to our friends and visit some good places' (a child in Kenya)*

*'At least sometimes being able to visit my friends' (a child in Kenya)*

#### *Being able to play, take part in events and socialise*

*'To play, to have fun (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'Playing in the street' (a child in Palestine)*

*'I want to socialize by attending events and attending funerals so that children are not ignorant of these simple things when they grow up' (a child in Palestine)*

*'Social events that we do not participate in' (a child in Palestine).*

*'Participation in community activities, as the village is isolated from the community, so all activities take place inside the village' (a child in Palestine)*

#### *Being with my family*

*'Spending most of the time with my parents discussing issues concerning me and the full percentage of love that I deserve from a parent' (a child in Kenya)*

*'I want to go out with my family and relatives and not live in an institution' (a child in Palestine)*

*'Just like my friends who are not living in SOS, I would also like to attend occasions outside and meet my other relatives' (a child in the Philippines)*

*'I want to go out of my home to school and back, not from an institution' (a child in Palestine)*

#### *Everything*

*'To do everything' (a child in Palestine)*

*'What other children do outside SOS we can also do it' (a child in the Philippines)*

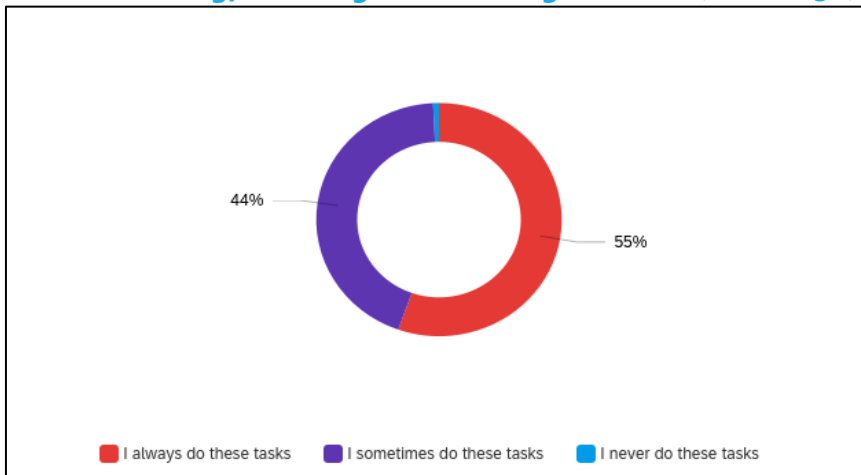
## 7. Preparing for leaving care

Preparing for leaving their residential care placement is a further topic we explored with children. In particular, we asked questions about activities that would prepare them for independent living.

### 7.1. Sharing in household tasks such as cooking and cleaning

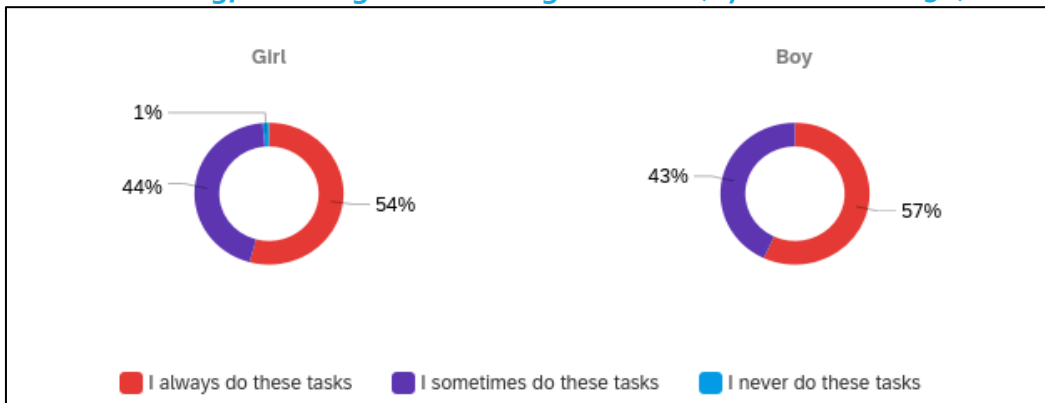
Fifty-five per cent of children answered that they 'always' share in household tasks such as cooking, cleaning and washing clothes, with 44% of children saying that they 'sometimes' share these responsibilities (Figure 37).

**Figure 37. Where you live now, how often do you share the responsibilities of things such as cooking, cleaning and washing clothes? (count 130)**



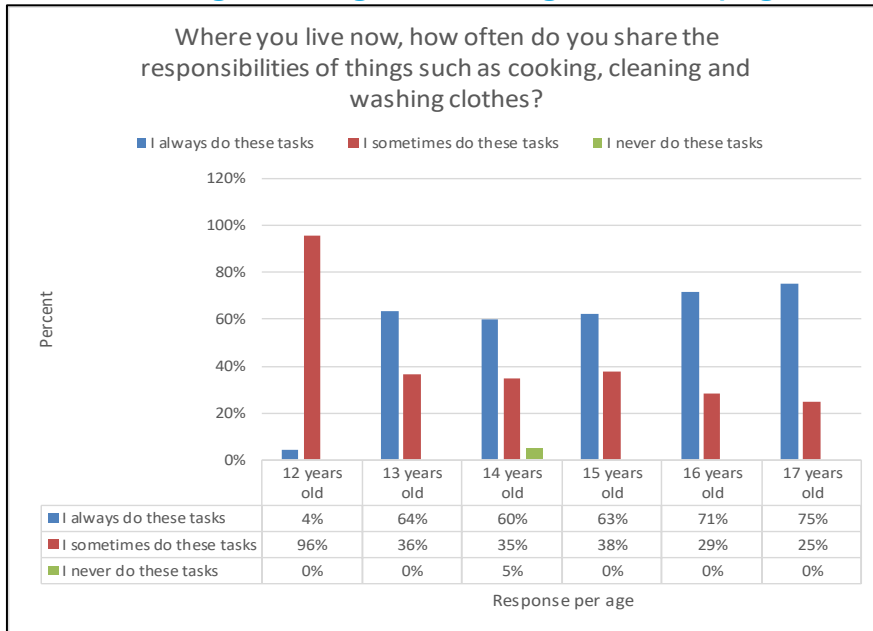
Girls and boys share in these responsibilities to almost the same degree (Figure 38).

**Figure 38. Where you live now, how often do you share the responsibilities of things such as cooking, cleaning and washing clothes? (by sex: count 130)**



Furthermore, this participation is almost equally realised across the age groups except for 12 year olds (Figure 39).

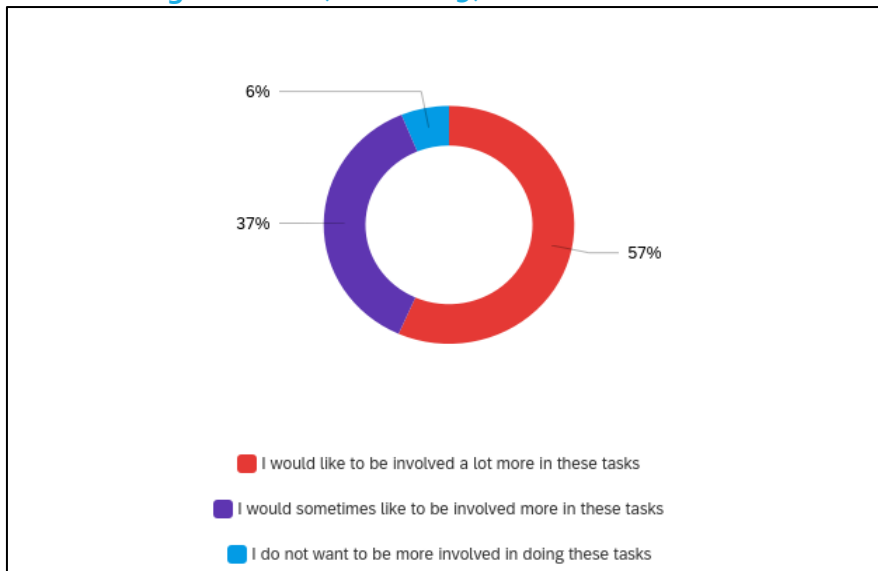
**Figure 39. Where you live now, how often do you share the responsibilities of things such as cooking, cleaning and washing clothes ( by age: count 130)**



### 7.2 . Having more involvement in household tasks

When asked, a total of 57% children indicated they would like to be involved in household tasks 'a lot more' and 37% answered they would 'sometimes' like to be involved more often (Figure 40).

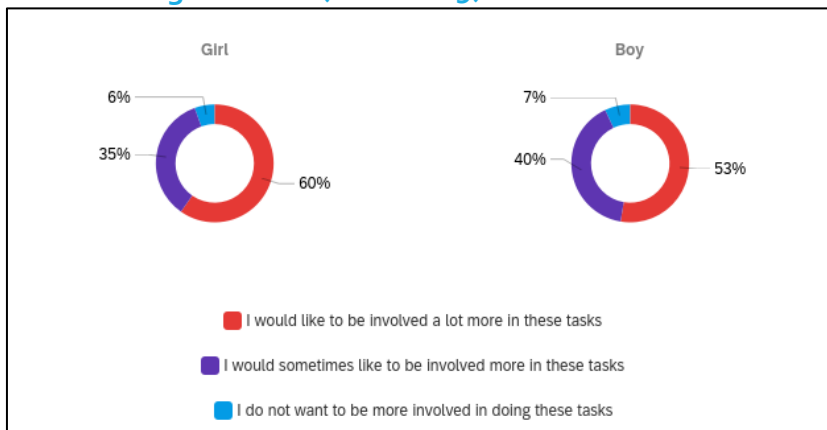
**Figure 40. Would you like to be involved more often in doing tasks like cooking, cleaning and washing clothes? (count 129)**



Analysis of the data found very little difference in responses between girls and boys ( Figure 41).



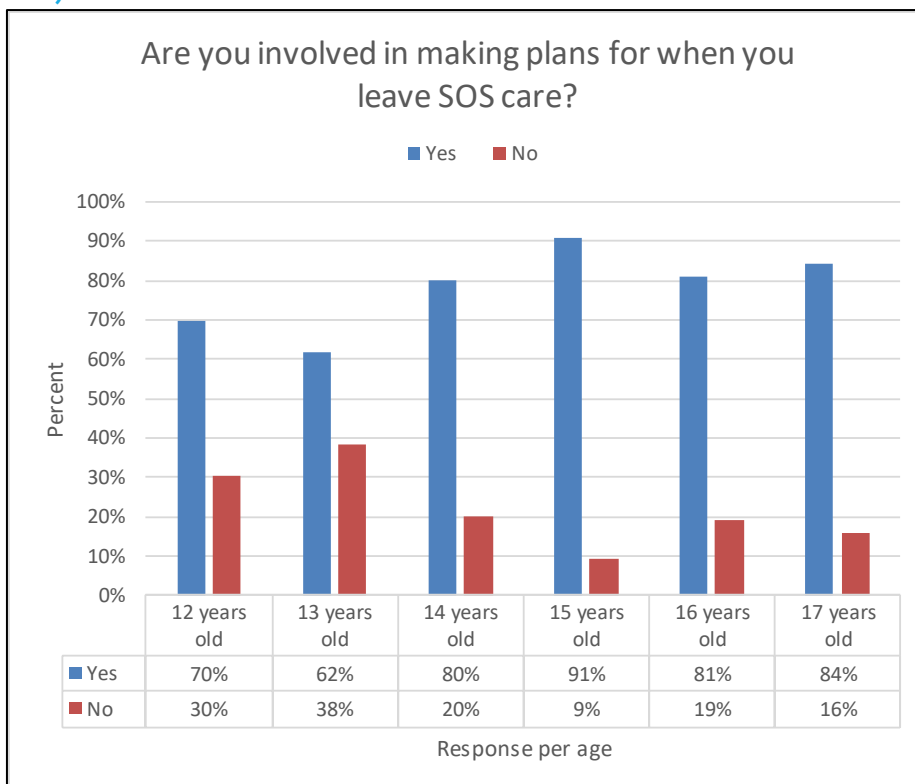
**Figure 41. Would you like to be involved more often in doing tasks like cooking, cleaning and washing clothes? (count 129)**



### 7.3. Making plans for when I leave care

Children of all ages indicated they are involved in making plans for when they leave SOS care including younger children (Figure 42).

**Figure 42. Are you involved in making plans for when you leave SOS care? (by age: count 126)**



### 7.4. Ways I can be more involved in making plans for when I leave care

We wanted to consult with children about ways they could be more involved in making preparation plans to leave SOS care. What is notable is that many children answered 'I don't know'. Of the few responses we received, children wrote about the general principal of being more involved in making plans, as well as more information about practical matters, such as financial support and finding employment. A few children also wrote of their wish to remain in contact with their carers from SOS and others they had lived with.

**Question: Are there ways your involvement in making plans for when you leave SOS care could be improved?**

Being Involved in plans and given information about moving on from SOS Care

'Yes by being informed in advance' (a child in Kenya)

'I would like to have an exit plan done in my presence and know all the details' (a child in Palestine)

'I think, I could be more involved in making plans when I leave in SOS care' (a child in the Philippines)

Support to have a fulfilling career and future

'A future career and possibilities' (a child in Kenya)

'If I would leave in SOS Care I want to have support in finding jobs' (a child in the Philippines)

Financial support

'Financial support' (a child in Nigeria)

'All round support e.g. financial support' (a child in Nigeria)

Maintaining connections with SOS Care

'I want to maintain my good relationship with the surrogate mother when I leave the village, and I also want to share all the details of my future' (a child in Palestine)

Being given the opportunity to explore life outside of SOS care

'If a variety of things are done to get used to the community' (a child in Ethiopia)

## 7.5. What is important for me to know as I prepare for leaving care

We sought children's views on what things they would like to know about and what skills they would like to acquire as they prepare for leaving care. Children said they would like reassurance they will have ongoing support once they leave, as well as being able to maintain relationships with SOS mothers or other carers, siblings and friends. They would particularly like more information about how they will settle into, and live as part of, a community. Children also highlighted the need for more information about how to handle money, get a job, continue their education and gain the practical skills they need like cooking and maintaining a home. Some children wrote that having more knowledge about their family background would help them.

**Question: What things do you think will be important for you to know about when you get ready to leave SOS care?**

Staying in contact

'Contact with some of my supervisors' (a child in Austria)

'That I continue to have good contact with my children's village mom and with my siblings and house siblings' (a child in Austria)

'Will Mama stay with me and who will follow my life with me?' (a child in Palestine)

Fitting into society and having friends

'The challenging of the social step of choosing friends' (a child in Ethiopia)

'Knowledge of how to live in the community' (a child in Ethiopia)

*'I should be given orientation on how to live, manage and live amongst the community anywhere I find myself' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'How to cope with life and living with others' (a child in Kenya)*

*'About society and relationships' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

#### Ongoing support

*'The next step in my life and if there is still any support in future ' A child in Nigeria)*

*'If I will be supported at crucial times' (a child in Kenya)*

*'I would like to know if I can still be supported by SOS for my after care placement' (a child in the Philippines)*

*'Knowing who will take care of me' (a child in Palestine)*

#### Knowing as much as possible about the process and ongoing support

*'Having proper information about the procedure, the support that I get from SOS and the time' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'To know the process' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'I want to know what will happen clearly' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'As much as possible so I am ready to live outside the Village' (a child in Greece)*

*'The type of support you will be given' (a child in Kenya)*

*'That I know the living arrangements after I leave the village and who is responsible for managing everything related to me' ( a child in Palestine)*

#### Having money and employment

*'That I have saved money ( a child in Austria)*

*'How to take care of my financial status and myself' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'About society, proper money management and work' (a child in Greece)*

*'To know how to divide my money by utilities, to divide my time between work and other activities' (a child in Romania)*

*'To know how to spend money, to know how to take care of myself, to take an apartment' (a child in Romania)*

#### Continuing with education

*'That I can do an apprenticeship' (a child in Austria)*

*'I would like to continue with my studies' (a child in Kenya)*

*'I would like to know further details of my higher education and job' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

#### Somewhere to live

*'A safe living environment' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*' It would be important for me to have a house, work and to complete my education' ( a child in Nigeria)*

*'I would like to know the different living arrangements that I will move to, and what kinds of support can be provided to me by the village' (a child in Palestine)*

#### Knowing about my own family

*'It would be important for me to know about my family background' (a child in Nigeria)*

*'To know the person who took care of me before I came to SOS village' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

*'More specific information about my family and ways to do better in my life' (a child in Greece)*

#### Having practical skills

*'Household chores, budgeting ,planning, organizing, and finishing my studies and have work '(a child in the Philippines)*

*'It would be important to know how to cook '( a child in Romania)*

## 7.6. Who I would like to live with when I leave care

We asked children who they would like to live with when they leave SOS care. Overwhelmingly, the children who responded to this question told us they want to live with their family, specifically their mothers, fathers, grandparents and siblings: 84 children from the 124 who answered the question identified living with family members as their main goal. Some children specified their SOS mothers as being the person they wanted to remain with. Some children also want to live with friends, and a small number said they wanted to live 'alone'. A few indicated they 'do not know' yet.

## 8. Changing things

A principal aim of this study was to understand more about ways we might improve the experiences of children in alternative care. The final questions in the survey sought children's views on what changes could be made that would improve the lives of other children living in alternative care.

### 8.1. Things I would like to change to make my life better

We asked children to share their ideas about anything they think could bring about positive changes in their lives. Again, some answers related directly to practical issues, such as making sure they had a good education, building life skills and other opportunities that would help them with their future. Children were keen once again, to highlight the importance of returning to live with members of their birth family. This is what they told us:

#### **Question: Is there anything you would like to change to make your life better?**

##### Providing opportunities to build life skills, take part in training and education

*'Building my life skills' (a child in Austria)*

*'Getting different trainings' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'Being able to get professional support to achieve my life goals' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'Develop self-confidence' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'To be more sociable and more confident in general' (a child in Romania)*

*'Teaching me more about society' (a child in Sri Lanka)*

*'I would like to change my behaviour of being stubborn to make my life better' (a child in the Philippines)*

##### Being able to return to the birth family

*'My father marries and brings a mother who is able to provide us with safe care' (a child in Palestine)*

*'I would like to live at the end of my biological family' (a child in Palestine)*

*'For my father to return to live with my grandmother and to go to social affairs and ask us to return to live with them' (a child in Palestine)*

*'My mother returns' (a child in Palestine)*

*'That my brother and I have a separate house on our own' (a child in Palestine)*

*'I would love there to be reconciliation between my mother's family and my father's family' (a child in Palestine)*

#### *Being able to complete studies and achieve goals*

*'Complete my studies, enrol in university, and return to my family' (a child in Palestine)*

*'Improving the academic level in the school' (a child in Palestine)*

*'Studying well and finishing my schooling so that I can find better job in the future' (a child in the Philippines)*

#### *Having a plan for the future that is open for discussion*

*'Telling me about my future' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'Being guided by a plan' (a child in Ethiopia)*

*'Yes, having a positive attitude towards life and erasing the past' (a child in Kenya)*

#### *Being cared for*

*'I would like to be loved and given more attention from caregivers' (a child in Kenya)*

*'I want to always feel safe and find someone to care about me, listen to my problems, and help me solve them' (a child in Palestine)*

#### *Having a suitable place to live*

*'A house for my natural mother' (a child in Palestine)*

*'A rented house for me and my sisters' (a child in Palestine)*

## 9. Support for other children living residential care

We asked children who participated in the survey whether they could tell us about the things they think are difficult for other children living in alternative care. Once again, they reiterated many of the issues they had highlighted throughout the survey. Not being part of their birth family is something they identifies as being one of the most difficult things children in alternative care face. Not having love or feeling cared for is also something that makes children unhappy. In addition, they identified a lack of stability as being a concern, particularly when those with the role of caring for them changes, or friends leave. Furthermore, not feeling fully part of their local society was identified as something that can be difficult for children living in alternative care.

Finally, we invited children to tell us about things that do work best for children who live in alternative care and what should be drawn from this that will inform us about ways to improve their experience of children in residential care. Answers included being able to have contact with their birth families. They also identified the role of the SOS mother as being someone to care for them and the importance of receiving love and being happy. Children wrote that being able to

access good education and acquiring skills that would help them in the future is another important consideration. Furthermore, they stress that being able to feel part of the local community is a good thing and something that children should have support achieving. We will end by letting the children's words speak for themselves:

**Question: What do you think works best for children who are in living in alternative care?**

Providing an Environment that Makes Children Feel Happy, Loved and Cared For

'Making them happy' (a child in Ethiopia)

'Giving family love' (a child in Ethiopia)

'When you don't make them feel like they are not with their biological family, when you treat them like your biological child' (a child in Nigeria)

'A good lifestyle' (a child in Nigeria)

'Genuine love of family' (a child in the Philippines)

'Openness' (a child in Philippines)

'All children should live in a supportive, protective and caring environment' (a child in the Philippines)

'That people who take care of them' (a child in Romania)

'Offering love, attention' (a child in Romania)

'Paying attention more often, more love and attachment to children' (a child in Romania)

'Love and affection. Security' (a child in Sri Lanka)

'Kindness' (a child in Sri Lanka)

Having Relationships with Parents and family Members

'A mom' (a child in Austria)

'Helping them to live with families in the community' (a child in Nigeria)

'Constant contact with their biological families' (a child in Palestine)

'Weekly visits to their biological families' (a child in Palestine)

'It is better for there to be permanent and continuous contact with our families and for the Foundation to work with our people so that we can return to live with them in safety and peace' (a child in Palestine)

'That the relationship with the original family is always improved' (a child in Palestine)

'To know that their biological family is close and that they have not forgotten that person and to get along with those from the centre where that person lives' (a child in Ethiopia)

Prioritising Children's Education and Ambitions

'By being serious about their studies' (a child in Nigeria)

'Educational opportunities' (a child in Nigeria)

'To focus on education because it is the basis for everything' (a child in the Philippines)

Providing Opportunities to Integrate into the Local Community

'It is better for them to get involved in the outside community and not to stay active in the village' (a child in Palestine)



## Annexe 1. Survey for children in residential care provided by SOS CV

### Consent

1. Welcome to the survey for children in SOS residential care. Thank you so much for taking part.

We need your permission to use any information you give us. We also want to make sure that you have been able to read an information sheet about the survey and agree with the following:

- I have been given an information sheet about the survey and I understand why it is being done and how my answers will be used.
- I can ask any of the SOS staff any questions I want about the survey.
- I am allowed to stop doing the survey at any time.
- Only the two researchers, Chrissie Gale and Nadine Fowler, will read my answers.
- If the researchers think that someone may be at risk of being harmed, they have to tell someone who can help.
- All of my answers will be kept safe and secure and only the researchers will have access to my personal information.
- I am happy to complete the survey.

Please use the arrow at the bottom of the page to move through the survey and answer our questions.

2. If you agree, select 'yes' below:

Yes, I agree to take part in this survey

No, I do not agree to take part in this survey

### About you

3. My name is... (please write your first name and family name)

4. I am a...

Girl

Boy

5. How old are you?

12 years old

13 years old

14 years old

15 years old

16 years old

17 years old

6. The country I live in is...

Austria

Ethiopia



Finland  
Greece  
Kenya  
Nigeria  
Palestine  
Philippines  
Romania  
Sri Lanka

7. Please can you tell us where you live now? Please only choose one answer.

I live in an SOS family, together with other SOS families, in an SOS Children's Village

I live in an SOS family in the community, alongside regular families

I live in an SOS small group home

I live in an SOS Youth Home

I live in SOS supported independent living

8. How long have you lived in the care of SOS Children's Villages?

Less than 6 months

Between 6 months and 1 year

Between 1 year and 2 years

Between 2 years and 4 years

More than 4 years

9. If you have brothers or sisters from your own birth family, are any of them living with you here in the care of SOS Children's Village?

Yes, I have brothers or sisters from my own birth family also living here in the care of SOS Children's Village

No, I don't have brothers or sisters from my own birth family also living here in the care of SOS Children's Village

10. Is there anything you would like to see improved about the space you live in now? You can write as much or as little as you want.

**Before I came to SOS residential care**

11. Before you came to live here in SOS care, who was the person you lived with who looked after you the most? For example: mother, uncle, grandmother, neighbour, alternative care giver etc.

12. Since you left your birth family, how many different places of alternative care have you lived in?

Only this one

1 other placement

2 other placements

More than 2 other placements

13. If you lived in more than one other alternative care placement before you came to the SOS Children's Village, how did this make you feel? You can write as much or as little as you want.

**Living in SOS residential care**

14. When you first arrived did someone tell you why you were placed in SOS care?

Yes

No  
I cannot remember

15. If someone did tell you, how well did they explain it?

Very well  
Not very well  
Not at all

16. Would you have liked more information about why you came into SOS care?

Yes  
No  
I don't know

17. If you would have liked more information, what sort of information would you have liked someone to give you? You can write as much or as little as you want.

18. When you first came into SOS care how did you feel? You can select as many of the answers you want.

	A lot	A little bit	Not at all
Welcome			
Happy			
Sad			
Safe			
Angry			
Cared for			
Loved			
Frightened			
Worried			
Ashamed			
Confused			

19. Is there anything you think should have happened when you first came into SOS care that would have made you feel happier? You can write as much or as little as you want.

20. When you first came into SOS care did anyone ask you what you wanted to happen?

Yes  
No  
I don't remember

21. If you were asked what you wanted to happen, do you think they listened to you and took your ideas about what you wanted seriously?

Yes  
No  
I don't remember

22. Where you live now, how often do you share the responsibilities of things such as cooking, cleaning and washing clothes?

I always do these tasks  
I sometimes do these tasks  
I never do these tasks

23. Would you like to be involved more often in doing tasks like cooking, cleaning and washing clothes?  
I would like to be involved a lot more in these tasks  
I would sometimes like to be involved more in these tasks  
I do not want to be more involved in doing these tasks

### **Being part of my local community**

24. How often do you attend activities (like sports, music and dance clubs, etc.) in your local community?  
A lot  
Sometimes  
Not very much  
Not at all

25. Would you like the opportunity to attend more activities in your local community?  
Yes  
No  
I don't know

26. If you would like to attend more activities in your local community, what activities would you choose?  
You can write as much or as little as you want.

### **Going to school**

27. Do you go to the same school as other children who do not live in SOS family care?  
Yes  
No

28. Do you enjoy going to school?  
I always enjoy going to school  
I enjoy going to school most of the time  
I enjoy going to school sometimes  
I never enjoy going to school

29. What things do you like about going to school? You can write as much or as little as you want.

30. Is there anything you do not like about going to school? You can write as much or as little as you want.

31. Is there anything that would help you enjoy school more? You can write as much or as little as you want.

### **My feelings**

32. I feel happy...

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Never

33. What makes you feel happy? You can write as much or as little as you want.

34. I feel sad...

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Never

35. What makes you feel sad? You can write as much or as little as you want.

36. What do you think would help you most when you feel sad? You can write as much or as little as you want.

**Being cared for**

37. Who is the main person that that provides you with the most care in the place you now live? Please only choose one answer.

- An SOS Mother
- An SOS Social Worker
- An SOS Village Educator
- An SOS Youth Facilitator/Educator
- An SOS Village Director
- Someone else

38. How often does this person make you feel...?

Please select as many of the answers as you want.

	Always	sometimes	never
Safe			
Angry			
Cared for			
Loved			
Frightened			
Worried			
Ashamed			
Confused			

39. Do you think there is something different that this person could do to make you feel happier? You can write as much or as little as you want.

40. How often do you feel you can talk to this person about things that matter to you?

- Always

Most of the time  
Sometimes  
Never

41. Would you like to be able to talk to this person about things that matter to you more often?

Yes

No

I don't know

42. If you would like to be able to talk to this person about things that matter to you more often, what things would you like to be able to talk to them about? You can write as much or as little as you want

43. How often is there someone else, other than this main person, who you can talk to if you are having problems?

Always

Most of the time

Sometimes

Never

44. How often do you think your ideas are carefully listened to and that your ideas matter?

Always

Most of the time

Sometimes

Never

45. Would you like to be more involved in decisions that are made about your life?

Yes

No

I don't know

**Remaining in contact with my birth family**

46. How often do you see members of your birth family?

Too much

Just right

Too Little

Never

47. How often do you have other types of contact, such as telephone calls or emails or phone messaging, with members of your birth family?

Too much

Just right

Too Little

Never

48. Would you like to see or have other types of contact with members of your birth family more often?

Yes

No

I don't know

49. Is there anything else that could be done to help you to have the best relationship you can with your birth family? You can write as much or as little as you want.

### **Having friends**

50. How would you describe the friendships you have where you live now?

I have at least one really good friend

I have some friends, but none that I would say are really good friends

I don't have any friends

51. Is having good friends important to you?

Yes

No

52. How often can you do the same things as other children who do not live in SOS care?

Very often

Sometimes

Never

53. Would you like to be able to do the same things as other children who do not live in SOS care?

Yes

No

54. If you would like to be able to do the same things as other children who do not live in SOS care, what things would you like to do? You can write as much or as little as you want.

### **Preparing for leaving care**

55. Are you involved in making plans for when you leave SOS care?

Yes

No

56. Are there ways your involvement in making plans for when you leave SOS care could be improved? You can write as much or as little as you want.

57. What things do you think will be important for you to know about when you get ready to leave SOS care? You can write as much or as little as you want.

58. Who would you like to live with when you leave SOS care? For example, friends, members of your family, etc.

### **Changing things**

59. Is there anything you would like to happen to make your life better? You can write as much or as little as you want.

60. What do you think works best for children who are in living in alternative care? You can write as much or as little as you want.

61. What do you think are the most difficult things for children living in alternative care? You can write as much or as little as you want.

62. What do you think should change so that children could be happier whilst living in alternative care? You can write as much or as little as you want.

**Thank you very much for taking part in this survey!**