

SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES INTERNATIONAL

REQUEST FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS:

**THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN AFFECTED
BY CHILD-FAMILY SEPARATION: DRIVERS
AND RESPONSES IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE,
KENYA, EL SALVADOR AND SRI LANKA**

JUNE 2022

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1 Background information

1.1 About SOS Children's Villages

SOS Children's Villages, founded in 1949, is the world's largest non-governmental organisation focused on supporting children and young people without parental care, or at risk of losing it.

Child neglect, abuse and abandonment is everywhere. Families are at risk of separation. Locally led, we work in more than 130 countries and territories to strengthen families who are under pressure so they can stay together. When this is not in a child or young person's best interests, we provide quality care according to their unique needs.

SOS Children's Villages provides a range of family strengthening services. In 2020, the organisation reached just under 350.000 children, young people and their families through 620 family strengthening services worldwide. The organisation also provides a range of alternative care responses, including residential care and foster care for children who have been separated from their families of origin for various reasons. The ultimate goal is for children to be reintegrated into their families of origin, as per their best interest, or to leave care as self-reliant, independent adults. In 2020, 65.000 children were cared for through alternative care provided by SOS Children's Villages (SOS Children's Villages, 2021).

Together with partners, donors, communities, children, young people and families, we enable children to grow up with the bonds they need to develop and become their strongest selves. We speak up for each child's rights and advocate for change so all children can grow up in a supportive environment.

Our work is guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children.

1.2 Motivation for the research

It is widely recognised that child-family separation or child abandonment can have detrimental long-term effects on child development and wellbeing (e.g. Bowlby 1973; Bouza et al. 2018; Otto & Keller 2014). The right of children to grow up in their family environment¹ is clearly enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (2009). However, globally families are under pressure through economic, political and social inequality and instability, migration, climate change, poverty, conflict, disasters, as well as the spread of disease. The separation of children from their family environment can occur for many different reasons. These can include voluntary and involuntary reasons as well as a combination of factors, including contextual factors and internal family dynamics, such as physical or mental illness, health of caregivers or children, death of a caregiver, child or caregiver disability, unwanted pregnancies, children born out of wedlock, remarriage, or drug and alcohol abuse (SOS Children's Villages 2016; Csáky 2014).

Children can be separated from their family environments for days, months or even years, in repeated patterns (e.g. seasonal migration) or may experience placements in different care arrangements over the course of their lives. In this research project, child-family separation is defined broadly to account for the range of experiences of children affected by it – this can include children who are at risk of child-family separation while also those who are separated from their family environments, for example children living in alternative care arrangements.

While in recent years there is a growing body of literature on the situation of children separated from their family environment as a result of war, conflict and displacement in humanitarian settings (Waddoupt et al. 2019; Mann 2004; Mansourian 2020), there *“continues to be a large gap in the existing research on the factors that cause children to be separated from their families, the characteristics of such children and the experiences they have under different care arrangements.”* (Petrowski et al. 2017). This especially holds true for low- and middle-income country contexts. Singular research projects indicate that children can be affected differently by child-family separation depending on gender, age, ethnicity, class, economic status, or other factors.

¹ Family environments can mean very different things for children in different contexts, ranging from sibling caregivers, community members, extended family members to (biological) parents and other caregivers. The research thus should be sensitive to cultural differences on the ground, in terms of what constitutes “family” for children (Mann 2014).

“What is known about separation tends to be general in nature, referring mostly to the vulnerability of children of different ages while failing to account for the differences in experience between boys and girls, and children in different cultural and family contexts.” (Mann 2004: 4).

In other words, the locally-specific factors contributing to child-family separation particularly from the perspective of children, as well as related patterns and trends across countries and regions represent a significant gap in the body of research.

More recently, efforts have been devoted to estimating the number of children in institutional or alternative care and highlighting related data gaps related to children without parental care or those at risk of losing it (e.g. Desmond et al. 2020; Martin & Zulaika 2016; Petrowski et al. 2017). However, while there are estimates as to how many children are without parental care, we do not know how many actually live in a vulnerable situation. It is also widely recognised that these children often remain invisible in national and international data collection systems. For instance, children living outside of families tend not to be living in a household, and are therefore normally excluded by national household surveys (Petrowski et al. 2017; Arisi & Christensen, 2015; Martin & Zulaika 2016).

As a result, emergency as well as longer-term social services may not be specifically tailored to the specific root causes of child-family separation in a given context as well as to the situation of children affected by it. Research has shown that it is critical that social services are informed by the dynamic and diverse situation of children in various family environments and arrangements (e.g. Hosegood 2008; Beegle et al. 2009, Martin & Zulaika 2016).

In a nutshell, this means that the situation and experiences of children who are at risk or who have been separated is often not known, especially their care situation, where they have ended up, and the support they receive. This especially holds true for the locally-specific life situations and experiences of children affected by child-family separation, which have received less scholarly attention through qualitative research. This research project aims to contribute to addressing these evidence gaps. It aims to explore the diverse reasons for child-family separation, the situation of children affected by it, the types of responses available to children, as well as trends and patterns in this regard across different countries of the world.

1.3 Context and background information

Knowledge on the situation of children affected by child-family separation in different ways is of crucial importance to social service providers like SOS Children’s Villages, in order to deliver a range of responses tailored to the specific needs of children and their families in different contexts. While the findings of previous research and evaluations carried out by the organisation, including social impact assessments (Willi et al. 2019), a continental study on children without parental care in Africa (forthcoming), and various service evaluations across the globe briefly describe some of the drivers of child-family separation, a comprehensive picture is not known in most national contexts. Moreover, the findings on the situation and responses are also quite ‘thin’ and there is need for deeper research of these aspects to inform service planning and adaptation on the ground. Where there is existing data, it is often not adequately mined and analysed.

In 2021 SOS Children’s Villages launched the “*Evidence4Change*” project, which aims to enhance the generation and use of evidence for its work and to invest in building a stronger evidence base through research for programme management. In the frame of the project, Côte d’Ivoire, Kenya, El Salvador and Sri Lanka were chosen to participate in this global research project based on their interest, willingness and capacity to participate.

This research project is part of a broader initiative to develop a global status report on children affected by the issue of child-family separation. Therefore, the intention is to scale-up the research project through additional country case studies in 2023, with a view to consolidating the results at global level.

2 Instruction to bidders

2.1 General

The bidders are welcome to compete for the given research project.

This bid is open to all national and international suppliers (independent researchers, universities or research companies) who are legally constituted and can provide the requested services. The bidder shall bear all costs of the bid; costs of a proposal cannot be included as a direct cost of the assignment.

2.1.1 Language of the bid

The proposal and all supplementary documents have to be submitted in English. In addition, the bidder has to cover all translation costs related to field interviews.

2.1.2 Bid currency

The financial bid needs to be stated in Euros.

2.2 Process of Submission of Bids

Proposals should be sent to:

To facilitate the submission of proposals, the submission can be done electronically in PDF format and sent to Germain Houedenou at Germain.houedenou@sos-kd.org (cc. to Rosalind Willi at Rosalind.willi@sos-kd.org).

The titles of submitted documents should clearly state “Technical proposal for research with children affected by child-family separation by the company/consultant title” and “Financial Proposal for research with children affected by child-family separation the company/consultant title”. Please make sure that the technical and financial proposals are handed in separately (financial proposal to be in a separate PDF file in case of electronic submission. During the process of evaluation, technical bids would be opened and evaluated first. The financial part of those proposals, which are shortlisted after evaluation of the technical proposal, will then be opened in a second step.

Documents to submit

- Bid submission / identification form
- Previous experience format
- Price schedule form
- Technical proposal
- CVs of the research team member(s) including current geographical location(s)
- 2-3 references
- An example of a recent/relevant research report (if available for public use)

Deadline for submission

The proposal has to be received by latest on **Monday, 25th July, 2022**, by the end of the day. Proposals received after the deadline will be not be considered.

Modification and withdrawal of bids

Proposals may be withdrawn on written request prior to the closing date of this invitation. Any corrections or changes must be received prior to the closing date. Changes must be clearly stated in comparison with the original proposal. Failure to do so will be at the bidder's own risk and disadvantage.

Signing of the contract

SOS Children's Villages International will inform the successful bidder electronically and will send the contract form within 3 weeks after closure of the bid submission deadline. The successful bidder shall sign and date the contract, and return it to SOS Children's Villages within seven calendar days of receipt of the contract. After the contract is signed by the parties, the successful bidder shall deliver the services in accordance with the delivery schedule outlined in the bid.

Rights of SOS Children’s Villages:

- contact any or all references supplied by the bidder(s);
- request additional supporting or supplementary data (from the bidder(s));
- arrange interviews with the bidder(s);
- reject any or all proposals submitted;
- accept any proposals in whole or in part;
- negotiate with the service provider(s) who has/have attained the best rating/ranking, i.e. the one(s) providing the overall best value proposal(s);
- contract any number of candidates as required to achieve the overall research objectives

2.3 Evaluation of proposals

After the opening, each proposal will be assessed first on its technical quality and compliance and subsequently on its price. The proposal with the best overall value, composed of technical merit and price, will be considered for approval.

2.3.1 Technical Evaluation

The technical proposal is evaluated on the basis of its responsiveness to the Terms of Reference (ToR) as per the evaluation criteria below. The obtainable number of points specified for each evaluation criterion indicates the relative significance or weight of the item in the overall evaluation process.

Bidders may additionally be requested to provide additional information (virtual presentation or phone interview) to SOS Children’s Villages International on the proposed services.

1	Quality and Relevance of Technical Proposal	Maximum obtainable points
1.1	Overall quality and relevance of proposal to ToR	100
1.2	Existence of effective and realistic work plan in accordance with ToR	60
1.3	Sufficiency of resources (e.g. human resources) and their proper allocation for timely provision of project deliverables	50
1.4	Detailed quality assurance process for all deliverables (e.g. ethical standards when conducting research with children)	40
	TOTAL	250

2	Qualification and expertise of or organisation/team of consultants/consultant submitting proposal	Maximum obtainable points
2.1	Reputation of university/organisation and researcher(s) (competence and reliability) in carrying out such types of research	35
2.2	Relevance of: - Specialized knowledge - Proven expertise in carrying out such type of research	80
2.3	Team leader Qualifications Relevant professional experience as required by the ToR and the requirements in chapter (3.5)	50
2.4	Team members Qualifications Relevant professional experience as required by the ToR and the requirements in chapter (3.5)	35
	TOTAL	200

2.3.2 Price Proposal

50

The total amount of points allocated for the price component is [50]. The maximum number of points will be allotted to the lowest price proposal that is opened and compared among those invited universities/consultants who obtain the threshold points in the evaluation of the technical proposal. All other price proposals will receive points in inverse proportion to the lowest price; e.g.:

$$\text{Points for price proposal: } X = \frac{(\text{Max. score for the price of bid}) * (\text{Lowest price})}{\text{Price of bid}}$$

3 Terms of Reference

3.1 Aim and objective of the research

This multi-country research project aims to address evidence gaps in relation to patterns and trends in and across countries with regard to:

- **Key drivers of child-family separation**
- **Issues faced by children affected by child-family separation** and their life situation
- **How they are recognised** (e.g. in official data)
- **Service gaps** across the range of care and prevention options in order to meet their needs

3.1.1 Research questions

What is the situation of children affected by the issue of child-family separation in and across Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, El Salvador and Sri Lanka?

- What are the main drivers of child-family separation, and how are these influenced by various factors, e.g. gender, age, awareness of the issue, and service availability, other?
- How are these children recognised (e.g. in official data)?
- Which child protection and social protection services are available to children affected by the issue of child-family separation? Where are the shortfalls?
- What are the ideas and proposals of children and key stakeholders about responses to the issue of child-family separation and how they could be improved?

3.2 Methodology and scope

The proposed research design is a comparative mixed-methods case study (mixed methods = primary qualitative data collection and secondary quantitative data and literature through the desk review) that gives adequate space to children's lived experiences and voices. The detailed methodology for the following is to be proposed by the researchers:

a) Desk review (including review of existing data (and gaps), academic and grey literature (incl. secondary data from NGOs, SOS Children's Villages programme database, data shared by member states, demographic institutes data), mapping of existing services addressing prevention of child-family separation and provision of alternative care, as well as scale of the issue and information on the drivers

b) Qualitative and participatory data collection with children, families and child welfare professionals

a) Reference materials for desk review

- Data related to the reasons for admission to SOS Children's Villages services from the SOS Children's Villages programme database from the four countries
- Results of *Tracking Progress Initiative* child protection system mapping in Kenya
- Continental Study on children without parental care in Africa (forthcoming)
- Related national and local (evaluation/research) reports from the four countries
- Related national and local (grey and academic) research from the four countries
- Related demographic data from across the four countries

b) Qualitative and participatory data collection with children, families and child welfare professionals

The use of participatory methodologies is strongly desired, such as engaging children and young people as co-researchers and/or as advisors in the research project (e.g. in the form of a child/youth advisory board; possibly linked to care leavers networks in the four countries or other related child and youth networks or councils). The methodology may also involve the use of creative methodologies tailored to different ages, capabilities and interests of the research participants.

Ethical principles when engaging in research with children is of paramount importance, and should take into account related barriers to participation and power dynamics. The SOS Children's Villages Code of Conduct, as well as Child Protection Policy needs to be followed during the research, as well as the code of ethics of the respective research institution.

It is desired that an international research institution works with local research institutions or researchers in each country, if possible. Local SOS Children's Villages offices may support the research together with local partners. It is also encouraged that an international advisory board composed of various experts (including children and young people) accompanies the research. The proposed methodology should also be scalable, meaning that more case study countries may be added in the coming years.

3.3 Expected deliverables

- Methodological brief for carrying out such assessments in other countries
- Access to the data, in case of any further analysis needs in years to come
- Country research reports with related findings and recommendations
- Executive summary report picking up on any comparative insights, patterns or trends and related recommendations

3.4 Timeline

Maximum end date for research: June 2023

3.5 Qualification of the researcher / research team

The researcher / team of researchers must have:

- proven competency (record of previous experiences) in related research projects (including qualitative and some quantitative analysis)
- a good understanding of child protection and social protection work, including sensitivity to different socio-cultural contexts
- a good understanding of child rights and issues affecting vulnerable children and their families
- experience of data collection with children and young people, and vulnerable groups
- good facilitation, organisational and interpersonal skills
- proven experience in participatory processes and data collection methods (including age appropriate data collection methods)
- strong skills in coordinating teamwork
- strong analytical and conceptual skills
- excellent written communication skills
- ability to transfer complex concepts and ideas into practical and simple language

Preferable:

- Researchers have existing networks/partners in the four countries, or track record of working in some of the countries

3.6 Logistical arrangements

When at the programme location, accommodation and transport to the field may be organised by the SOS Children's Villages member association.

National or location level staff (SOS) will be available to help organise any interviews including contacting SOS, announcement and local preparation of researcher, linking to community duty bearers and national authorities and other organisations if required.

3.7 Duration of the contract and terms of payment

Payment will be made only upon SOS Children's Villages acceptance of the work performed in accordance with the above described deliverables. Financial proposals should include proposed stage payments. Payment will be effected by bank transfer in the currency of billing and is due 30 days after receipt of invoice and acceptance of work.

Funding and Payment: The consultant will be paid by SOS Children's Villages as follows:

25% on the submission and approval of Technical Proposal

50% on completion of the Draft Report

25% on successful completion of the activities and delivery of the expected outputs

Duration of contract: the contract is effective from the moment it was signed until the acceptance of work by the international project team.

3.8 Notice of delay

Shall the successful bidder encounter delay in the performance of the contract which may be excusable under unavoidable circumstances; the contractor shall notify SOS Children's Villages in writing about the causes of any such delays within one (1) week from the beginning of the delay.

After receipt of the Contractor's notice of delay, SOS Children's Villages shall analyse the facts and extent of delay, and extend time for performance when in its judgment the facts justify such an extension.

3.9 Copyright and other proprietary rights

SOS Children's Villages shall be entitled to intellectual property and other proprietary rights including, but not limited to, copyrights, and trademarks, with regard to products, processes, inventions, ideas, know-how, or documents and other materials which the Contractor has developed for SOS Children's Villages under the Contract and which bear a direct relation to or are produced or prepared or collected in consequence of, or during the course of, the performance of the Contract. The Contractor acknowledges and agrees that such products, documents and other materials constitute works made for hire for SOS Children's Villages.

All materials: plans, reports, estimates, recommendations, documents, and all other data compiled by or received by the Contractor under the Contract shall be the property of SOS Children's Villages and shall be treated as confidential, and shall be delivered only to SOS Children's Villages authorized officials on completion of work under the Contract. The external consultant is obliged to hand over all raw data collected during the assessment to SOS Children's Villages.

3.10 Termination

SOS Children's Villages reserves the right to terminate without cause this Contract at any time upon forty-five (45) days prior written notice to the Contractor, in which case SOS Children's Villages shall reimburse the Contractor for all reasonable costs incurred by the Contractor prior to receipt of the notice of termination.

SOS Children's Villages reserves the right to terminate the contract without any financial obligations in case if the contractor is not meeting its obligations without any prior notice:

- agreed time schedule
- withdrawal or replacement of key personnel without obtaining written consent from SOS Children's Villages
- the deliverables do not comply with requirements of ToR.

4 Annex

4.1 References

- Arisi, C. & Christensen, Z. (2017). *The care of children in data. Evidence, Gaps, and Opportunities in the SDGs*. Vienna: SOS Children's Villages International and Development Initiatives.
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- Desmond, C., Watt, K., Saha, A., Huang, J., Lu, C. (2020). *Prevalence and number of children living in institutional care: global, regional, and country estimates*. The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health.
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- Otto, H., Keller, H. (2014). *Different faces of attachment. Cultural variations on a Universal Human Need*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Petrowski, N; Cappa, C., Gross, P (2017): *Estimating the number of children in formal alternative care: Challenges and results*. *Child Abuse & Neglect*. Volume 70, August 2017, Pages 388-398.
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- SOS Children's Villages (2015). *The world's most vulnerable children: who they are, where they live, and what puts them at risk*. [SOS-Child-at-risk-report-web.pdf \(sos-childrensvillages.org\)](#)
- Waddoups, A.B.; Yoshikawa, H.; Strouf, K. (2019): *Developmental Effects of Parent–Child Separation*. *Annu. Rev. Dev. Psychol.* 2019. 1:387–410. [Developmental Effects of Parent–Child Separation | Annual Review of Developmental Psychology \(annualreviews.org\)](#).

Willi, R., Reed, D., Houedenou, G. (2019). 70 years of impact. Improving the Lives of Children Without Adequate Parental Care. SOS Children's Villages. [SOS 70 years of impact report SPREADS-WEB.pdf \(sos-childrensvillages.org\)](#)

4.2 SOS Children's Villages International Child Protection Policy and Code of conduct

SOS Children's Villages International has a Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct that all consultants will be expected to comply with and will be required to sign a statement of commitment to the policy and Code of Conduct. The Child Protection Policy is binding for all member associations as well as the General Secretariat (GSC). The Policy is applied across the whole organisation at all levels and in all types of programmes. All employees and associates including consultants of SOS Children's Villages are obligated to report any child safeguarding concerns, suspicions or allegations of any child abuse. Types of child abuse are described in the SOS Children's Villages Child Protection Policy, along with the mandatory reporting steps to be taken by the consultant if a case of abuse is suspected. Child safeguarding concerns should be reported here. The successful bidder is required to act in accordance with SOS Children's Villages policies and guidelines.

Further ethical considerations

In addition to the above mentioned Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct, the following key areas for ethical consideration must be taken into account: <http://childethics.com/ethical%20guidance/> Graham, A., Powell, M., Taylor, N., Anderson, D. & Fitzgerald, R. (2013). Ethical Research Involving Children. Florence: UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti. The successful bidder is requested to obtain consent from all participants of the assessment and/or their official guardians/representatives (when applicable), and to comply with ethical standards related to anonymity, data protection and confidentiality. Researchers are also responsible for getting required ethical approval through their academic institutions and/or national ethics boards.

4.3 Bid submission / identification form

This bid form must be completed, signed and returned to SOS Children's Villages. Bids have to reflect the instructions described in the Request for Proposal.

Any requests for information regarding this Request for Proposal shall be send to Mr Germain Houedenou at Germain.houedenou@sos-kd.org (cc. to Rosalind Willi Rosalind.willi@sos-kd.org)
The Undersigned, having read the complete Request for Proposals including all attachments, hereby offers to supply the services specified in the schedule at the price indicated in the Price Schedule Form, in accordance with the Terms of Reference included in this document.

Offering service for:

SOS Children's Villages International

Company/Institution Name/Individual's Name _____

2. Address, Country: _____

3. Telephone: _____ Fax _____ Website _____

4. Date of establishment (for companies): _____

5. Name of Legal Representative (if applicable): _____

6. Contact Person: _____ Email: _____

7. Type of Company: Ltd. Other _____

8. Number of Staff: _____

9. Subsidiaries in the region:

Indicate name of subsidiaries and address

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

10. Commercial representative in the country (for international companies only)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

Validity of Offer: valid until: _____

Date

Signature

4.4 Previous experience form

N#	Description (services and products provided to the clients relevant to the current RFP)	Client	Contact person/phone, e- mail address	Date of assignment (from/to)

4.5 Price schedule form

The financial proposal needs to include all taxes.

	Activity	Staff involved (indicate profile)	No of persons	No of days	Daily rate	Price (all incl.)	Percenta ge of total price
			A	B	C	$D=A \times B \times C$	$E=D/F$
1	Development of data collection methodology						
2	Data collection						
3	Presentation on preliminary results						
4	First draft of the final reports						
5	Final reports and executive summary reports						
	Total Price (F)						100%

This proposal should be signed.

(Name of Organisation)

Name of representative

Address:

Telephone/Fax/Email:

4.6 Technical proposal (guideline)

Name of Organisation/University/Firm/Independent Consultant	
Name of contact person for this proposal (for organisation/firm)	
Address:	
Phone/Fax:	
E-mail:	

The technical bid should be concisely presented and structured in the following order to include, but not necessarily be limited to the following information listed below.

1. Quality and Relevance of Technical Proposal

- Describe all actions related to all required steps in the phases of the research
- Realistic work plan with time lines in accordance with ToR requirements
- Explain about your suggested use of local researchers (if propose to use)
- Detailed quality assurance process for all deliverables

2. Qualification and expertise of organisation/team of researchers/consultant submitting proposal

- Reputation of firm/organisation and staff and individual consultant/s (competence and reliability) in carrying out evaluations
- Relevance of:
 - Specialized knowledge
 - Proven expertise in carrying out such types of research
- Proposed Team Structure: The composition of the team which you would propose to provide in the country of assignment and/or at the home office, and the work tasks (including supervisory) which would be assigned to each.
- CVs for key staff