



Living Our Values



SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES

Background

The much-anticipated findings from the Independent Child Safeguarding Review, published in June 2021, created a wake-up call for our organization. Led by Keeping Children Safe, the review found substantial evidence of failures in child safeguarding at all levels of SOS Children's Villages and provided detailed recommendations for improvement in five key areas – one of them being leadership and organizational culture.

The review's findings were especially painful because it struck at the core of why we are here; SOS Children's Villages exists to make sure that all children and young people have a safe and nurturing environment where they can develop trusting relationships and become their strongest selves.

Later that month, the General Assembly responded by firmly embracing all of Keeping Children Safe's recommendations. It committed to placing safeguarding at the centre of our culture, and approved a new, third goal in our Strategy 2030: "We ensure and live safeguarding in our daily actions."

Organizational culture is a fundamental precondition for keeping children and young people safe. Each of us has a role to play, and each of us must feel safe – including staff and all people engaging with our work. It is important therefore that we define the behaviours expected of everyone in order to create a culture of safeguarding.

Introduction

The **values-based competency framework**, which is presented here in **Living Our Values**, defines the behaviours expected of everyone to create a strong safeguarding environment. It has been developed through consultations with senior leadership and through an extensive feedback process with employees from across the federation.

The behaviours described in the framework are not just words on paper. They come to life through anchoring the framework in organizational policies and processes and when leaders apply the framework in their own behaviours and decision-making.



Changing HOW we do what we do to better achieve our WHY

The values-based competency framework:

- explains what values-based conduct means in simple, action-oriented language
- supports a culture of safeguarding
- captures the most important workplace behaviours

The purpose of the values-based competency framework is to:

- define the behaviours that employees need to demonstrate to live our values and deliver with their best abilities on our mission, vision and strategy
- provide the organization and those who work with us at all levels the expected competencies for demonstrating our common values and standards of behaviours
- support the mission and values of SOS Children's Villages and foster a safeguarding environment



Stewardship

The values-based competency framework applies to all SOS Children's Villages employees (regardless of location or seniority) and to all jobs (additional technical competencies may be needed for specific roles). The stewards of the framework are our leaders and human resources staff who are responsible for applying the framework and inspiring others to do so.



Leaders – including thought leaders, informal leaders, members of supervisory bodies and representatives of SOS Children's Villages:

- **role model** values-based competencies as part of their **roles and responsibilities**, in their **decision** making and **actions** and the ways in which they work
- **support in creating a safeguarding environment** where values-based competencies are lived
- ensure that **programme participants are informed** and understand the values-based competency frame
- **advocate and demonstrate** values-based competences in their interaction with partners,



Human Resources:

The values-based competency framework should be mainstreamed into

Key human resources processes, such as:

- **safe recruitment** (such as profile design, talent search, assessments, interview questions, and leadership assessments)
- **performance management** (such as definition of expectations and goals, and performance evaluations)
- **learning and development including leadership and talent**

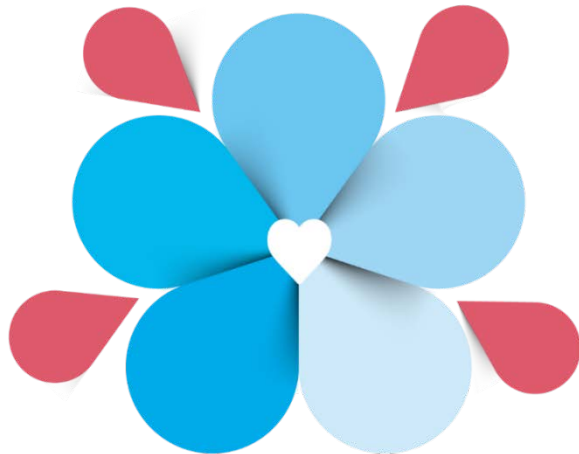
Key human resources policies, such as

- People and Culture (pending)
- Code of Conduct

Values-based competency framework

The competency framework has **three components**.

The functional and technical competencies that cover different fields of expertise and are required to perform a given job are defined in other competency models that complement this framework.



Values – shared principles and beliefs defined in the foundational document “Who We Are” that unite all employees and guide us in our actions, mission, and strategy:

Courage | Commitment | Trust | Accountability



Values-based core competencies – a set of values-based behaviours expected from everyone who works for or on behalf of SOS Children’s Villages in order to achieve a culture of safeguarding:

Kindness | Continuous learning | Inclusiveness | Initiative | Results-orientation



Values-based leadership competencies – a set of values-based behaviours expected of board members, representatives of SOS Children’s Villages and employees with a leadership role (including informal, formal and thought leadership) **in addition to** the core (non-technical) competencies:

Collaboration | Empowerment | Role model | Strategic thinking



Our values

Our values are the compass for our actions and define what we stand for. While we come from different backgrounds and cultures, our values are what we have in common.

Our core values are:



Courage – We take action

We have challenged traditional methods of care and continue to pioneer innovative child-care approaches. We help children who have no one else to turn to. With a sensitive yet confident approach, we are determined to question, learn and take action for children around the world.

Commitment – We keep our promises

We are dedicated to helping generations of children and young people have a better life. We do this by nurturing lasting relationships with our donors, our staff and the communities in which we are rooted. We believe that by making a long-term commitment we have a meaningful and sustainable impact.

Trust – We believe in each other

We believe in each other's abilities and potential. We support and respect one another, and build an environment where we can approach our responsibilities with confidence. In an atmosphere of trust, we are inspired to share our experiences and learn from each other.

Accountability – We are reliable partners

Our greatest responsibility is guaranteeing the well-being of children by ensuring high standards of care. In doing this, we are committed to using all funds and resources wisely, with respect and accountability.



Values-based core competencies

These essential behaviours are expected of everyone who works for or on behalf of SOS Children's Villages. They help us live our values and achieve a culture of safeguarding



Kindness

In my actions, I show respect and care for myself and others.

Lived

- I speak and listen to others with consideration and respect.
- I act with empathy towards everyone I work with.
- I think about how my words or actions make others feel.
- I show that I care about others' needs.
- I care for my own mental, physical, and emotional health and well-being.

Not lived

- I impose my own point of view on others.
- I ignore or brush off others when they try to speak to me.
- I am dismissive of others.
- I attack those with whom I disagree.
- I make overtly or implicitly hurtful personal comments.
- I only help others when I get something in return.



Continuous learning

I make an effort to learn, understand and grow as a person, admitting mistakes when I make them.

Lived

- I ask questions to understand things better.
- I admit mistakes.
- I try to improve myself every day.
- I am willing to try new tasks and hear new perspectives.
- I try to be intellectually curious.

Not lived

- I already know everything there is to know.
- I cover up my mistakes.
- I don't think it's worth asking for help.
- I refuse to try new tasks or new ways of doing things.
- I don't use opportunities to develop new skills.



Inclusiveness

I am mindful of diverse perspectives and experiences, and I respect and value every person equally.

Lived

- I listen actively. I pay attention, I ask questions, I don't interrupt, and I consider non-verbal cues.
- I protect other people's self-confidence and dignity.
- I work effectively with and respect people with different backgrounds, working styles or personalities.
- I value, respect and treat people equally regardless of gender, race, age, position or social status.
- I build and support diverse teams and partnerships.
- I try to recognize and correct for unconscious biases I may have towards others.

Not lived

- I don't appreciate working styles or ways of approaching situations that differ from mine.
- I harass, intimidate or threaten others to get what I want.
- I only respect those who are in leadership positions.
- I demand deference and special treatment because of my role in the organization.
- I discriminate against others who do not conform to my personal values or ideas of tradition.



Initiative

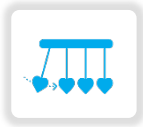
I speak up when I see things that are not right, do not hesitate to act and adapt to change when necessary.

Lived

- I recognize and speak up against any form of discrimination, harassment or abuse.
- I speak up when I see wrongdoing or something bad happening.
- I communicate problems or updates in good time, without waiting to be asked.
- I don't put off what I know needs to be done.
- I make an effort to adapt to change when necessary.
- I ask for help when I need it.

Not lived

- I spend time and energy on activities that don't add any value.
- I look the other way when I see wrongdoing.
- I am not self-motivated.
- I wait to be told what to do.



Results orientation

I prioritize safeguarding, look for solutions and focus on desired results.

Lived

- I prioritize safeguarding other people's well-being throughout my work.
- I make the best decisions I can with the information I have available.
- I am persistent when faced with challenges in achieving my goals.
- I manage pressure and setbacks with self-care and responsibility.
- I look for and suggest solutions and improvements where I can.
- I manage my tasks in the order of priority, staying focused on the main desired outcome.

Not lived

- I don't think safeguarding concerns should necessarily override other considerations.
- I don't set goals for myself.
- I don't hold myself accountable for meeting goals.
- I don't speak up when others do not meet the agreed upon goals.
- I focus on what I want to do rather than what the organization needs.



Values-based leadership competencies



In addition to the core competencies, leaders are expected to exhibit the following additional behaviours.



Role model

I act as a role model for the organization, living our values and inspiring and learning from others.

Lived

- I inspire and motivate others to perform at their best.
- I role model behaviour that is aligned with the organization's values and mission.
- I try to learn from the people I manage as much as they learn from me.
- I am honest when I do not know the answer to something.
- I keep confidentiality.

Not lived

- I don't feel I need to continuously improve and don't encourage self-improvement in others.
- I behave in ways that are inconsistent with the organization's mission and values.
- I am driven by my ego.
- I only care about how my behaviours and actions affect me.



Strategic thinking

I live the values and mission, setting realistic goals and translating them into actionable plans.

Lived

- I communicate the organization's values and mission to my team.
- I make decisions that are consistent with the organization's goals.
- I translate the organization's mission and goals into actionable plans.
- I set short- and long-term goals.
- I suggest innovative ideas or improvements.

Not lived

- I am driven by my own agenda.
- I don't think about how my team's activities fit into the organization's strategy.
- I am unable to explain the organization's strategy.
- I am unable to communicate the organization's values and mission.



Collaboration

I remove barriers to participation, share decision-making and build partnerships.

Lived

- I involve others in decision-making.
- I cooperate with my colleagues across functional areas to achieve shared goals.
- I remove barriers to solving problems with others.
- I actively support and contribute to the efforts of others where necessary.
- I facilitate strong partnerships and alliances with stakeholders.

Not lived

- I only work with others when I have no other choice.
- I'm not interested in cultivating collaborative relationships with colleagues or partners.
- I have difficulty building strong, mutually beneficial working relationships.
- I avoid or am unable to resolve or constructively manage conflicts with others.
- I disrupt team processes or jeopardize progress toward common goals.



Empowerment

I promote inclusion and equitable sharing of power.

Lived

- I proactively ask people what they need from me in order to grow and develop their potential.
- I delegate tasks to others for their development and demonstrate trust in their abilities.
- I express confidence in the ability of others to be successful and achieve results.
- I demonstrate leadership in promoting inclusion and equitable sharing of power and decision-making.

Not lived

- I do things for people rather than teaching them how to do it.
- I don't believe others can do things as well as I can.
- I control other people's actions.
- I give preferential treatment to certain people.
- I dictate to others what needs to be done.

About this document

Living Our Values was endorsed by the Leadership Selection Committee of the International Senate in May 2022 and subsequently approved by the Management Council in June 2022. It is applicable for all staff, board members and external parties engaging with the work of SOS Children's Villages. It translates our organizational values – Courage, Commitment, Trust and Accountability – into daily behaviours that are expected of all of us so we can deliver on our mission and create a strong safeguarding environment.

It is proposed that the core components of Living Our Values become part of our Who We Are foundational document, which will be updated and presented to the General Assembly in the coming years. The values-based competencies described here will be folded into other documents, such as the new People and Culture Policy as well as the updated Code of Conduct, and will become binding once these documents are approved by the respective governing bodies. It is expected that the competencies be integrated into key human resources processes and mainstreamed into leadership roles by all members of the SOS Children's Villages federation.