

SOS Children's Villages has made progress in recent years to improve its child safeguarding policies and procedures. However, some member associations, particularly in high-risk countries, face challenges to implement child safeguarding standards and procedures. SOS Children's Villages is providing immediate support in these high-risk countries to address gaps.



IMMEDIATE ACTIONS & TARGETS

- 25 SOS Children's Villages member associations (MAs) with a high-risk profile will benefit from an investment in training and capacity building to strengthen child safeguarding.
- Resources are earmarked to access risks and put activities in place that improve preventative measures, boost mental health support, build resilience, and provide healing support for children and young people who have experienced abuse.
- All 25 MAs are to complete the process and be audited by the end of 2024.



OVERVIEW

- SOS Children's Villages operates in more than 130 countries, some of which have a higher safeguarding risk profile as a result of war, weak national child protection systems, and long-standing sociocultural norms that weakens the status of children and women in society.
- SOS Children's Villages has faced challenges in these countries to fully implement its child safeguarding standards and procedures.
- In response, the organization will provide extra financial and management support to 25 member associations with a high-risk profile to strengthen their child safeguarding.
- Some key actions are:
 - ensuring a child safeguarding focal person is in place;
 - training staff and leaders on various child safeguarding topics;
 - raising awareness through workshops with children and young people;
 - implementing prevention measures such as background and criminal checks as part of recruitment;
 - clarifying safeguarding related roles and responsibilities of staff, management and boards;
 - improving incident management by introducing new reporting channels and strengthening existing ones.



IN PRACTICE

- In Eastern and Southern Africa, a number of countries have been identified for immediate support through training and capacity building.
- *"In my opinion, there is a big gap in people's understanding of what safeguarding means," says Zeru Fantaw, Regional Child Safeguarding Advisor for Eastern and Southern Africa (ESAF). "In certain societies in our region, there is a lack of sensitivity on the protection and safeguarding of children."*
- *"Childcare and safeguarding must go hand in hand, and must be mainstreamed and budgeted for as such as integral part of our work," he says.*
- In ESAF, member associations are targeted based on their number of reported incidents, their level of child safeguarding staffing, the quality of their reporting and responding procedures, and external risk factors.