



**Accountable
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SOS Children's Villages International Independent Review Panel Feedback

**Interim Accountability Report 2016
Review Round December 2017**



SOS Children's Villages International

Feedback from the Independent Review Panel

Review Round December 2017

21 December 2017

Dear Norbert Meder,

Thank you for submitting your Accountability Report. We, the Independent Review Panel of Accountable Now, appreciate your efforts to continuously strengthen accountability to communities, local partners, supporters, staff, donors, or other key constituencies. Our key focus is on accountability to those you serve. It is against this background that we critically discussed your report and came to the individual assessment below.

SOS Children's Villages International Secretariat's first interim report demonstrates continued strong **institutional commitment** to accountability and improvement in some areas. Stakeholder engagement, programmes evaluation for quality, impact and efficiency and a results-based management are some of the highlights in the CEO's opening statement.

As recommended in previous Panel feedback letters, some **evidence** is provided that policies and procedures work well in practice and in the full report the panel is looking forward to seeing further evidence of these working: for example in the analysis of stakeholder data in terms of feedback and complaints received by the GSC. The panel is also looking forward to seeing in the next full report evidence of the **new** policies eg. safeguarding being implemented and actioned by the organization. The organisation is also encouraged to share with the Panel any relevant documents which are not published online.

A large portion of the answers given in the interim report repeated the same information given in the organisation's last full report, which although useful, did not fully relate to the requested information in the improvement analysis. The next interim report would benefit from avoiding duplication and having more direct and succinct approach. However, since this is the organisation's first interim report, this is considered a **very minor area of weakness**.

The promotion of SOS Children Villages International Secretariat's membership with Accountable Now on their [website](#), especially placing Accountable Now's logo prominently in the website's footer, is commended. This visualisation clearly strengthens the organisation's public commitment to accountability - also for stakeholders to hold them directly accountable towards the commitments made. Please update this public commitment using the new [12 Accountability Commitments](#).

Our intention is that this feedback letter, and any response you may wish to provide,



is made publicly available on the Accountable Now website along with your report – as it is the case with all previously reviewed reports. However, should there be errors of fact in the feedback above or in the note below; we would of course wish to correct these before publication. Please share any comments or amendments by 15 January 2018.

If you have any other feedback or comments on our work, please share them with us by sending them to the Accountable Now Secretariat.

Yours sincerely,

Mihir Bhatt

Rhonda Chapman

John Clark

Louise James

Jane Kiragu

Nora Lester Murad

Saroeun Soeung



Cover Note on SOS Children's Villages International's Accountability Report 2016

Review Round December 2017

PROFILE DISCLOSURES

I. Strategy and Analysis

1.1	<p>Statement from the most senior decision-maker <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>SOS Children's Villages International's new CEO, Norbert Meder, opens with a strong institutional and strategic commitment towards accountability. The organisation has started a proactive programme review process in more than 80 member associations in 2016, aiming to maximise programme impact and efficiency, aligning with their Strategy 2030 committed to results-based management. The impact assessments from this review show progress achieved in children's lives and communities; a link to the result of the assessments would have been appreciated to strengthen this statement. In the full report, perhaps the key lessons learned from the review, in terms of what works well/less well and how SOS' work is being adjusted as a result, can be shared.</p> <p>It is commendable that the organisation is expanding on previous experiences with the involvement of stakeholders in decision-making processes. The development of a draft umbrella policy document with input from member associations, young people, the federation leadership team and the Management Council, is noted positively.</p> <p>Efforts to identify and track incidents of corruption, as well as measures to conduct training on corruption prevention, are recognised and strongly encouraged by the Panel.</p>
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PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

I. Programme Effectiveness

<p>NGO 2</p>	<p>Collecting and analysing feedback and complaints <i>Addressed</i></p> <p>The Panel's feedback from previous report has been taken into consideration in that the organisation lists the number of feedback and complaints received during the piloting phase, categorised by topic area. As SOS rolls this out to the other member associations the Panel would be interested to see further segmentation of this data to understand points such as whether there are many complaints coming from one specific association or whether there were cases where the resolution was not satisfactory to all parties involved and if so how that was handled. It would also be helpful to understand for the 14 cases what measures were taken to prevent such incidents in the future. The same data analysis/summary is requested for all reported allegations of child abuse/child safeguarding incidents in general.</p> <p>The good practice example from Zambia on implementing feedback from the pilots speaks for a strong commitment to using community stakeholder feedback for the establishment of a feedback mechanism.</p> <p>The Panel notes the use of the child safeguarding survey to assess the implementation of the child protection policy. In the full report it would be interesting to understand the survey results across the 5 critical areas that are mentioned.</p> <p>The launch and availability of e-learning courses on child safeguarding is further positively noted. The Panel looks forward to information on the completion rates in the next full report.</p> <p>Finally, SOS Children's Villages International is commended for being awarded Level 1 Certification by Keeping Children Safe in validation of the organisation's child safeguarding procedures.</p>
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V. Responsible Management of Impacts on Society

<p>SO4</p>	<p>Identifying and tracking incidents of corruption <i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>Whereas the information provided for this indicator is clear around the process and does outline that there were no cases for the GSC it does not provide any</p>
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	<p>data in relation to the Annual Corruption Case report. The panel therefore believes that the first question in the improvement analysis has not been directly addressed:</p> <p><i>Quarterly Corruption Case Reports are discussed among the management team and International Senate. The ICL unit will further summarise all data in an Annual Corruption Case Report which seems like a commendable approach. Since the report states that this report was published in summer 2016, the Panel would appreciate direct links in future reports.</i></p> <p>The Panel would be keen to understand the expected timeframe for the report to be available for external audiences.</p> <p>For an example of good practice in how corruption incidents can be tracked and presented, SOS might want to look at World Vision International's most recent accountability report (page 23).</p>
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VI. Ethical Fundraising and Communication

PR6	<p><i>Ethical fundraising and communications</i> <i>Addressed</i></p> <p>The Panel's request to provide information on any complaints concerning fundraising or communications activities has been responded to. Linked to the point made in NGO2 it is not entirely clear how those incidents were resolved and if/how policies and practices have changed based on the issues raised. The report would have benefited from sharing more specifics about the procedure in place.</p> <p>It is also stated that while most feedback and complaints related to international child and village sponsorships are handled by the SOS association where the sponsorship is registered, the GSC directly receives some feedback and complaints too. What determines which body deals with the feedback/complaint? Details about the number and resolution of these kinds of complaints would be appreciated in the next report.</p>
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