



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

**Interim Accountability Report 2021  
Review Round October 2022**



# SOS Children's Villages International

## Feedback from the Independent Review Panel

Review Round October 2022

October 11th 2022

Dear Ingrid Johansen,

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

Overall, the Panel found the report to be concise and informative, illustrating steady progress on the three identified areas. The examples are supported by convincing evidence, and the organisation's commitment is actioned in practice.

In addition to the progress around the identified areas, the Panel would like to acknowledge SoS Children Villages' achievements/progress. Youth participation in Management Council and International Senate meetings is much welcomed as it demonstrates the organisation's concerted efforts towards enhanced participation, inclusion, and accountability. Moreover, the recent introduction of a digital platform to manage HR resources is also appreciated as it will contribute to further advancement on AN Commitment indicators under G.

As the focus of safeguarding has been clearly highlighted in the opening statement, the Panel looks forward to reviewing progress on this particular area in the next round of reports.

We look forward to discussing our feedback with you in a follow-up call, which the Secretariat will be in touch to schedule. This conversation will form the basis for your response letter, which will be made publicly available on the Accountable Now website along with your report and this feedback letter.

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,

Accountable Now's Independent Review Panel





# SOS Children's Villages International Interim Accountability Report 2021

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## Opening Statement from the Head of Organisation

The statement by SoS Children Villages' CEO Ingrid Johansen outlines the significant changes that took place within the organisation in the last year. Among these are the completion of the Executive Board, the onboarding of a new set of Senate members, and the work that the organisation is carrying out to further embed and streamline safeguarding throughout all their work.

The opening statement addresses the findings from Independent Child Safeguarding Review in June 2021, stating that the main organisational priority has since been to learn from and redress past failures in safeguarding. Actions outlined include implementing the 24 point [Safeguarding Action Plan](#), setting up a [Safeguarding Info Hub](#) and shifting organisational culture to embrace a more holistic, expansive and caring understanding of safeguarding.

Furthermore, the organisation is working on advancing its accountability and filling in data gaps. A comprehensive results-driven management approach across programming, human resources and finance, which will help streamline data collection and resource allocation - is currently in the works. Additionally, the organisation will continue to expand opportunities for youth to be a part of programmatic development and for youth participation in meetings.

The Panel welcomes the organisation's transparency and drive for improvement, especially in addressing past safeguarding failures and shifting internal working culture. The Panel looks forwards to further updates, especially on the changes made to ensure safeguarding is at the heart of the organisation.

## Cluster A: What We Want to Achieve

### A. The Impact We Achieve

A3	<b><i>What progress has been achieved and difficulties encountered against these indicators over the reporting period?</i></b>	<b>3</b>
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Addressing the Panel's previous questions regarding quantitative indicators, the response provides a table with strategic indicators, alongside an explanation on how these will be achieved.

The response notes that under some indicators, the data that they currently hold is incomplete. The organisation states that it is committed to improving and streamlining the data collection process, and the strategic indicators are planned for discussion in the next General Meeting in 2023.

Moreover, programmes and improvement plans are said to be in place to support the indicators which are not on target, such as the SOS Care Promise and plans to remove impediments to financing family strengthening programmes.

## Cluster B: Stakeholder Involvement

### E. We listen to, involve and empower stakeholders

**E4** ***How do you know that people and partners you worked with have gained capacities, means, self-esteem or institutional strengths that last beyond your immediate intervention? (You may skip this question if you have addressed it in your response to B. 1)***

**3**

The response focuses on how SOS Children Villages' local partners gained capacity beyond their intervention, as requested by the Panel's feedback. The response also builds on a previous response from the 2019 report where the focus was largely on children and families.

The response states that SOS Children Villages' national associations cultivate partnerships and help build partners' capacities, and always under some type of formalised agreement. While SOS Children Villages do not currently have a unified and standardised approach to how associations should support capacity assessment or development, some related components are already embedded in project management guidelines. Moreover, some national associations do have toolkits in place to support this work.

Furthermore, the organisation states that it carries out social impact assessments, and indicators are available within these assessments to gauge sustainability.

The response provides reflections from collaborations between SOS Children Villages and state social services in Kyrgyzstan, where the people whom the organisation served gained capacity to start their own community organisations. While this is well noted, the response also states "activities would continue only to a limited extent if SOS Children's Villages withdrew from the communities".



Other examples from Benin, Guinea, Luxembourg, Niger and Senegal show that SOS Children Villages work with communities, local authorities and child protection bodies to support child protection systems at communal, regional, departmental and national levels.

Potential steps towards more understanding of partners' capacities beyond the exit point include implementing a clear but context-adaptable set of guidelines that can encourage national associations towards assessing/building partners' capacities, and to carry out long term impact evaluations of partners' capacity in terms of programming after SOS Children Villages/its national associations have exited.

An interesting example of how this can be applied can be seen in Sightsavers' approach to evaluating their partners' capacities and identifying areas for improvement through the [QSAT tool](#). Although this example does not fully evaluate partners past the exit point, it can be a useful tool to consider as it provides a baseline that the organisation and its partners can later evaluate from.

## Cluster C: What We Do Internally

### K. Leadership is dedicated to fulfilling the 12 Commitments

K1 ***How is the governing body and management held accountable for fulfilling their strategic promises, including accountability?***

3

The Panel is glad to see that its previous comments were formally discussed with the Office of the President. Additionally, it is well noted that the response states that plans are in place to set up a self-assessment process/system for the International Senate, as this would enhance the governing body's accountability. In terms of appraisals of the Executive Board, it is good to see that these have been reinforced and progress is being made. Once the self-assessments are agreed upon and completed, it would be good to clarify in the next report how the organisation proceeds and improves upon the results.

Similarly, in terms of appraisals of the Executive Board, it is good to see that these have been reinforced and progress is being made.

Moreover, the response outlines the committees and working groups within the International Senate that lead on specific topics.