No child should be alone in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. SOS Children's Villages launches global appeal to deliver support to those who need it most

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INNSBRUCK/VIENNA, 14 MAY 2020 – SOS Children's Villages International has launched an €85 million appeal to support families at risk of falling apart and to provide the necessary care and protection for those children who do not have parents to stand by them in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The coronavirus knows no boundaries, so we need a truly global response," said Siddhartha Kaul, President of SOS Children's Villages International.

The Global Humanitarian Appeal will deliver locally tailored support across the organization's footprint in 130+ countries and territories. The funding will be used to strengthen existing programmes in the face of the pandemic and to expand the organization's reach in response to the growing number of struggling families and children in vulnerable situations.

Children need someone on their side

With 70 years of experience, SOS Children's Villages knows that each child needs someone to be there, to care for them, to listen to and comfort them, and to support them as they grow.

"Children need someone on their side always and especially in times of crisis." said Siddhartha Kaul, President of SOS Children's Villages International. When families collapse, children risk falling through the cracks. Already, 1 in 10 children live without parents or risk losing parental care.

Families all over the world are living in a pressure cooker. In an interview with SOS Children's Villages, Susan E. Short, Professor of Sociology at Brown University, stated, "While masks, tests, support for health care workers, and efforts to mitigate transmission and treat the disease are critical, we also need targeted support for families and children. More children will experience poverty. Families may have less access to immunizations and well-child visits. Parents and other family members may lose jobs or be ill, or they may be less able to access drug or other treatment programs, which will affect children. Adolescents may be greatly affected by social distancing because peer support and relationships are especially important for adolescents. All of this will create stress and additional vulnerability for families. The work that SOS Children's Villages does with family strengthening is especially critical now."

"Children are especially vulnerable", Professor Short said. "Any family that was already struggling with access to food, education, clothing, and housing, in the context of COVID-19, we would expect, with loss of work that, that will be exacerbated."

SOS Children's Villages responds

SOS Children's Villages has already been delivering targeted support to programmes around the world, including protection, hygiene, and medical supplies. To carry on this work and support even more children and families, SOS Children's Villages is seeking €85 million to bolster its response with fast-tracked and locally targeted funds. Focus areas are:

- preparedness and preventing the spread of COVID-19
- strengthening families at risk of collapsing
- mental health and psychosocial support
- education and youth employment

Call to action

SOS Children's Villages calls on governments to prioritize children without or at risk of losing parental care in their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Child welfare and protection services and workers must be designated as essential and resourced accordingly during the lockdown and isolation measures. Social protection services that support families' income and well-being should be scaled up, and innovative outreach to reduce risks of abuse, violence, and neglect of children during lockdown should be promoted.

Media:



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SOS Children's Villages appeals to the global community to unite in its support to strengthen families and protect children without parental care.

"We're all connected in this COVID-19 crisis," Kaul said, "and future generations will judge our response according to how we treated those who are in the most vulnerable situations, especially children who are facing it alone."

For SOS Children Villages International's Global Humanitarian Appeal, click **here**

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About SOS Children's Villages

Established in 1949, SOS Children's Villages is the largest non-governmental organization supporting children and young people who have lost parental care, or are at risk of losing it. Locally led in more than 130 countries and territories, we work with children, families, communities, partners and governments to help families stay together. When this is not possible or in the child or young person's best interest, we provide quality care according to their unique needs. We speak up for children's rights and advocate for improvements in national child and family welfare systems. Our work is guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children.

SOS Children's Villages International, looking for evidence to inform policy and practice, turned to researchers at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island to conduct what is believed to be the first-ever global literature review on the reasons for child-family separation. The research is led by Susan E. Short, Professor of Sociology and Director of the Population Studies and Training Center at Brown University. Full interview with Professor Brown can be found HERE.

Relevant links:

COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Appeal

SOS Children Villages' COVID-19 positions and call to action to protect children without or at risk of losing parental care

SOS Children's Villages 70 Years of Impact Report

Additional COVID-19 related content:

Videos showing the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of children and youth

https://www.sos-childrensvillages.org/news/mental-health-impact-of-pandemic

https://www.sos-childrensvillages.org/news/life-under-quarantine-north-macedonia

https://www.sos-childrensvillages.org/news/a-doctors-view-of-corona-in-somalia

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