



# Safeguarding Action Plan

## Progress Report

March 2023 – March 2024



**SOS CHILDREN'S  
VILLAGES**



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# Foreword

Keeping children safe is an absolute prerequisite for SOS Children's Villages to deliver on our purpose – to ensure children and young people grow up with the bonds they need to become their strongest selves.

## Our commitment to continuous improvement

Safeguarding is never finished; there is always something more to do, some way to improve. This is especially true in an organization like SOS Children's Villages, which has more than 60,000 children and young people in its direct care – day and night, seven days a week. We also work directly with more than half a million children, young people and adults in our family strengthening programmes, which aim to prevent family separation. We have 40,000 employees globally, and we operate in some areas where child protection systems are weak. Given all these factors, our safeguarding risks are significant.

We are on a journey of continuous improvement. This has included commissioning reports such as the [Independent Child Safeguarding Review](#) (ICSR) and convening the [Independent Special Commission](#) to examine past organizational failures, which completed its work in June 2023.

## Progress against the Safeguarding Action Plan

Following the publication of the ICSR report in 2021, we adopted a four-year [Safeguarding Action Plan](#). Now that we are three years into the plan, this report provides an update on progress.

Overall, we continue to advance in all areas of the Safeguarding Action Plan. We are currently monitoring 32 performance indicators. We have discontinued three of the original 35 indicators and replaced one since we found them to no longer be useful as measures of our progress. Of the 32 active indicators, 25 (78%) are completed or on track, whereas 6 have an "off track" rating, which in most cases indicates more time will be required for implementation than originally planned. (For an overview, see [annex 2](#).)

Among the highlights since our last report in March 2023 are the following achievements:

- **Four major policy documents** have been approved and are currently being implemented. These documents include the *Code of Conduct Regulation*, the *Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy*, the *Programme Services Regulation* and the *Regulation on Support for Persons Affected by Child and Youth Abuse*. **Training modules** have been developed to support implementation.
- The new **Anti-Corruption Regulation** is in development and is expected to be available by mid-2024.
- **Improved incident management and investigation procedures** are being implemented throughout the organization, with incident management teams now in place at national, regional and international levels.
- A [global ombuds](#) system has been developed to ensure consistent and quality support across the whole federation. Pierre Cazenave has been appointed **Global Ombuds** for SOS Children's Villages. National ombuds are in place in 4 countries and equivalent external systems approved in another 7. Ombuds implementation or evaluation of alternative external ombuds services is in progress in 50 countries.
- To address organizational culture issues, the **Living Our Values** framework has been integrated into guidance on recruitment, onboarding, learning and development, and leadership. Safeguarding leadership awareness raising and training have achieved promising results.



## Challenges

While we are pleased to see numerous positive changes within SOS Children's Villages, we recognize that the rate of progress with some activities is slower than we had planned.

One example is the Ombuds Office for SOS Children's Villages, which is pioneering a critical innovation in international child safeguarding. Previous targets underestimated the complexity, adjustment and adaptations needed, from risk assessments and mitigation plans to legal frameworks, hiring timelines, and national, regional and global constraints. Setting up these foundations has paved the way for smoother scale-up for the next three years.

Our safeguarding work is people-driven, and we recognize there is slower than planned progress in establishing an updated human resources policy. Given the scale of work required to establish consensus on federation-wide standards, we needed to prioritize efforts, focusing first on behavioural and mindset change, for example by establishing a values-based competency framework and a new Code of Conduct. Progress to date has deepened our understanding of what an effective people and culture policy should look like for our global organization, and this will be taken forward by our new International Director for People and Culture, who joined in January 2024.

Finally, implementing the Safeguarding Incident Management System – an IT platform to optimize internal safeguarding monitoring – has had to be put on hold due to resourcing issues. However, an interim solution is currently being implemented to centralize and track all concerns and allegations reported to the General Secretariat via our whistleblowing system BKMS.

## Safeguarding Strategy

Both the lessons we have learned in implementing the plan and the findings by the Independent Special Commission have provided insights into how we can continue improving our safeguarding work beyond 2024, incorporating best practices and ensuring accountability for past failures. To guide our efforts, the General Secretariat has adopted a comprehensive Safeguarding Strategy. This strategy, combined with work led by the International Senate to review federation-wide governance arrangements, represents a holistic, integrated approach.

The integrated strategy – including child, youth and adult safeguarding, plus anti-corruption and asset protection – is designed to embed strong safeguarding in everything we do – every programme, every office and every partnership. The strategy identifies six outcomes towards which we are working, with KPIs reflecting that safeguarding must be mainstreamed into management structures and work plans.

Personal responsibility is at the strategy's core. While the creation of a Global Safeguarding Department, led by an international director reporting to the CEO, has strengthened our approach, the strategy recognizes that its execution relies on the involvement of every other functional department and individual working for SOS Children's Villages. Safeguarding is not a blanket that covers the whole organization; it is a thread that is woven into everything we do.

In recent years, much of our energy has been directed towards responding to emerging findings, including encouraging those with experiences of abuse to come forward and providing them appropriate support. There were urgent and necessary matters to be prioritized. Now that we have taken care of remedial actions, the new strategy will help us focus on refining our processes, including mitigating risks and preventing incidents through living our values and mainstreaming safe programming.



## Conclusion

We will prepare the final report on progress against the current Safeguarding Action Plan in early 2025. Any open items will be carried into the new strategy, which will guide work plans and activities that reinforce the work done thus far.

As described in this penultimate report, we have made good progress during the past three years in strengthening our safeguarding across the federation and in addressing past organizational failures. Revising, modernizing and professionalizing the policies and procedures that make up the core of our safeguarding system has provided greater clarity on how to translate our values and aspirations into practice – in both preventing and responding to incidents. Our awareness-raising efforts have been successful in ensuring safeguarding is at the front of our colleagues' minds, guided by the goal – enshrined in an update of our [Strategy 2030](#) – of ensuring we live safeguarding in our daily actions.

We remain focused on following through on past commitments, and we look forward to continuing our dialogue with partners, always with the objective of working together to deliver safe programming that ensures children and young people can grow up in the safe and nurturing environments they need to become their strongest selves.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Ma-Luschka Jean-Louis'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Ma-Luschka' written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name 'Jean-Louis'.

Ma-Luschka Jean-Louis  
International Director, Global Safeguarding  
SOS Children's Villages International





## Note on KPI target count

In November 2023, SOS Children's Villages International formally withdrew its operations in Algeria. As a result, there are currently 136 SOS Children's Villages entities operating at the national level, which is one entity fewer than in our previous reports. Of the 136 entities, 121 are formal members and 15 are legally dependent entities operated by SOS Children's Villages International.

The target count for most key performance indicators (KPIs) presented in this report is set at 136 entities (referred to as national associations); in some instances, however, this number differs due to variability in the scope of individual actions. The rationale for the reduced scope of specific actions will be explained under "Further Information."



# Progress against plan

## A. Holistic support, justice and incident management

### Action 1 (priority):

#### Immediate support for those who have experienced abuse

To ensure those affected are supported towards healing, reconciliation, and becoming self-reliant



We have continued to provide support for individuals affected by past abuse. This support, based on an individual plan, focuses both on meeting the person's urgent needs and on providing tools and resources to support the person's longer-term well-being. For more information on what an individual support plan might entail, please see our [previous report](#).

Based on our experience over the past two years, we have found that federation-wide guidelines require improvement in several areas, such as uniformity of the way the support is provided, application of a trauma-informed approach, and efficiency in decision-making and communication. To address these gaps, we have introduced a binding *Regulation on Support for Persons Affected by Child and Youth Abuse*.

A project to provide funding to national associations that don't have sufficient resources to respond to cases of past abuse closed at the end of 2023.

Support funded by the project has reached a total of 730 people, which includes people directly affected by past abuse but also those who witnessed abuse and requested specific support (primarily psychosocial support and counselling). Of the 730 people supported, 437 are current or former programme participants and 293 are staff members who have received training or support. The current and former programme participants include the following two groups:

- those who have experienced or witnessed abuse while in our care
- those who experienced abuse before entering our care and needed specialized support that could not be covered by the national association's budget

For more information on our child and youth safeguarding activities, including incident statistics, please see our [child and youth safeguarding reports](#). The 2023 statistics will be published later this year.

### Looking ahead beyond 2024

Support for people who have experienced abuse will remain a top priority beyond 2024 under the Safeguarding Strategy:

- Outcome 6: Individuals affected by misconduct receive appropriate, timely and transparent response

Subsequent work will be guided by the *Regulation on Support for Persons Affected by Child and Youth Abuse*.

An update on progress as of the end of 2024 will be provided in our final Safeguarding Action Plan progress report, which we will release in early 2025.



#### KPI

# 105

National associations implement global user guide, *Listening and Responding to Individuals Experiences of Past Child Abuse*, including minimum standards for individualized support, by December 2024

#### KPI status

**On track**

December 2023: **100**

#### Further information

No data has been received from national associations in Western Europe and North America. Hence, the region has been left out of the target count, bringing the total to 105 national associations.

#### Incident review in Ecuador



SOS Children's Villages Ecuador decided to review the files of former programme participants to look for signs of mismanagement of safeguarding incidents in the past. Where mismanagement was suspected, the national team contacted the individuals involved and asked them about their experiences while in care. If the issue of past abuse came up, the person was offered support; otherwise, the person was given contact details to use if they decided to reach out to the organization later.

To manage the process appropriately, training was provided both for the teams reviewing the files and for the person responsible for getting in touch with possible victims/survivors. To provide support for those affected by abuse, whether in the past or more recently, SOS Children's Villages Ecuador relies on community networks and alliances with specialized providers of psychological, educational, medical and entrepreneurship services.





## Action 2 (priority): Ombudsperson

To represent the rights of children, young people and others affected by abuse



Pierre Cazenave has been appointed Global Ombuds for SOS Children's Villages. He will start in his role on 1 May 2024.

The Ombuds Office currently comprises the following:

- four national ombuds (in Albania, Benin, Sierra Leone and Uruguay)
- four regional ombuds (for Asia; Eastern and Southern Africa; Latin America and the Caribbean; and West, Central and North Africa)
- the global ombuds
- the independent Ombuds Board
- three coordinators

The regional ombuds for CEE, CIS and the Middle East is being recruited.

Alternative external ombuds systems have been identified and approved for use in seven countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Georgia, Lithuania, Kosovo, and Serbia.

Ombuds implementation is in progress in 33 countries, and evaluation of alternative external ombuds services, in another 17. Based on our experience, it takes approximately a year of preparatory work before a national ombuds can be appointed. The preparatory steps include consultations with children and young people, which helps to ensure the ombuds service is both accessible and accountable to them.

Another 36 countries are expected to start setting up their ombuds systems or assessing existing alternatives before the end of 2024.

By 29 February 2024, the national ombuds in Benin, Sierra Leone and Uruguay recorded 29 inquiries, most of which (72%) are self-referrals. The average age of the inquirers is 18. The national associations have generally acted on recommendations by their ombuds in a timely way. On average, inquiries are resolved within 40 days.

For more information on the Ombuds Office, please visit the [Ombuds Office website](#).

### Looking ahead beyond 2024

Ongoing collaboration with the Ombuds Office will continue under the Safeguarding Strategy:

- Outcome 6: Individuals affected by misconduct receive appropriate, timely and transparent response

An update on progress as of the end of 2024 will be provided in our final Safeguarding Action Plan progress report, which we will release in early 2025.



## KPIs



Global ombudsperson for the federation by December 2023

## KPI status

### Completed

The global ombuds will start in his role on 1 May 2024.

# 136

national associations covered by system by December 2023

### Off track

March 2024: **11**

We estimate that 61 national associations should have an organizational ombuds or an equivalent external system by February 2025. All 136 national associations are expected to be covered by the end of 2026.

## Ombuds inquiry management: case example



An SOS Children's Villages national ombuds received an inquiry from children and young people who felt the national safeguarding team were not looking into the concerns the inquirers had reported.

After discussing the issue with the safeguarding team, the national ombuds discovered that the safeguarding team were in fact looking into the concerns but were not communicating with the inquirers.

In response, the national director asked the national ombuds to conduct a training session for ombuds staff representatives (staff volunteers who help children, young people, community members and staff navigate between safeguarding and ombuds systems) and local safeguarding focal points on proper communication with those reporting concerns. When a new safeguarding coordinator joined the national office, the national ombuds met with her to draw her attention to the issue.



### Action 3 (priority): Incident management system for persons that have experienced abuse

Consistently implemented across the entire federation



The project team has selected two candidate software solutions and developed the minimum dataset. Alternatives based on the available IT systems have also been evaluated, with a detailed analysis of costs, features, and technical and legal requirements.

Unfortunately, we have had to put implementation on hold due to financial challenges currently facing the organization.

Until a centralized IT solution becomes financially feasible, our newly established cross-functional incident management teams will continue to monitor incident management progress using the tools already available. At the General Secretariat, the whistle-blowing system BKMS will serve as the interim system to monitor all types of concerns.

In the meantime, 43 national associations are using their own IT solutions to streamline data management, while the regional offices are maintaining incident management dashboards or systems of varying complexity.

Both national associations and regional offices have made good progress in implementing improved incident management procedures, formalized in the *Misconduct Incident Management Regulation*. See also [action 18](#).

#### Looking ahead beyond 2024

Continuous improvement of incident management remains a top priority under the Safeguarding Strategy:

- Outcome 6: Individuals affected by misconduct receive appropriate, timely and transparent response

An update on progress as of the end of 2024 will be provided in our final Safeguarding Action Plan progress report, which we will release in early 2025.

#### KPIs

#### KPI status



Real-time reporting platform on child safeguarding incidents of abusive behaviour developed by the end of 2021

**Completed**

**136**

national associations implement the incident management system by December 2023

**Off track**

The status refers to implementing a centralized data management system. Implementation of incident management procedures is continuing as planned.



## Further information

The development of the real-time reporting platform was a response to the urgent gap in communication flow on and monitoring of reported child safeguarding incidents among various stakeholders in the federation.

### National and regional solutions to streamline incident management



**SOS Children's Villages India** has introduced a portal to track the status of child and youth safeguarding incidents and store related documentation. The portal enables monitoring based on turnaround time and supports analysis of root causes for future improvement. It also offers tools and learning materials for various stakeholder groups.

**SOS Children's Villages France** has developed a software solution to manage child safeguarding, adult safeguarding and asset protection incidents, factoring in issues such as conflicts of interest and relevant HR procedures. Additional features such as risk mapping and risk management are also planned.

The digital incident management system developed by the **regional office for Latin America and the Caribbean** is currently being implemented in 12 countries of the region. The system supports step-by-step reporting and responding procedures and offers customizable statistical reporting.

The **regional office for CEE, CIS and the Middle East** has developed a cross-functional incident management approach, which includes a mechanism to formally refer complaints that do not meet the criteria for misconduct to the appropriate team for management and follow-up.



## B. Participation of children and young people in shaping safeguarding measures and understanding their rights

### **Action 4 (priority): Child and youth empowerment**

Ensure children and young people are involved in decisions regarding their care, prevent peer-to-peer violence and abuse, and give them a stronger voice in safeguarding



#### **Child and youth participation in safeguarding matters**

Requirements for promoting child and youth participation in safeguarding have been defined in our new *Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy*. In various national associations throughout 2023, children and young people participated in the following ways:

- consultations and focus groups, for example during annual planning and risk assessments
- participation in developing child-friendly reporting channels
- participation in selecting national ombuds, safeguarding focal points or safeguarding teams
- meetings with the national safeguarding focal point
- thematic workshops or monthly discussions
- youth forums
- child and youth councils, parliaments or clubs

Children and young people received training on child rights and child and youth safeguarding, which included interactive sessions adapted to their particular psychological, behavioural or developmental needs.

#### **Applying Safe Behaviours**

We have concluded the [Applying Safe Behaviours](#) project (2021–2023). Co-funded by the EU and implemented in Belgium, France, Italy, Romania and Spain, the project focused on preventing and responding to peer violence.

By the end of the project, 70 young people had been trained as peer trainers, 433 children had participated in peer-to-peer workshops, and 368 professionals had completed the training programme.<sup>1</sup> In 2023, some 1705 adults completed the project's online course, and two awareness-raising videos for young people were viewed more than 64,000 times.

Final evaluation highlighted the project's approach to child and youth participation and its safeguarding measures as its particularly successful features.

#### **Strengthening child and youth participation in safeguarding**

Since our [previous Safeguarding Action Plan progress report](#), our project to assess awareness of child rights and organizational safeguarding processes has reached five additional countries: Burundi, Ghana, Guinea, India and Laos.

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<sup>1</sup> The numbers of workshop and training participants represent the children and adults who completed the training programmes in full. They do not include the participants who only registered to attend or who attended only some of the sessions.



Across Burundi, Ghana, India and Laos, 484 children and 171 staff members have participated in the assessment. In Guinea, the assessment is still in progress.

All four national associations where the assessments are complete have developed action plans to address the gaps identified. Children and young people were asked for input on both the findings and the action plans.

National associations where the assessment was completed previously (in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Senegal and Tanzania) were implementing their action plans throughout 2023. At publication of this report, they were evaluating the results.

### Looking ahead beyond 2024

Child and youth empowerment will remain an integral component of our work under the Safeguarding Strategy:

- Outcome 4: Safeguarding risks are mitigated through programme quality and child and youth participation

KPI	KPI status
<b>30</b> national associations implement Protective Behaviours by December 2023	<b>Completed</b>

### Developing a children's booklet



As part of the Applying Safe Behaviours project, children and young people in the five project countries developed a [children's booklet](#) on preventing peer violence.

A collection of short stories and activities for children aged 8 to 11, the booklet covers issues such as what peer violence is, why it is important to accept differences and respect each other's boundaries, and how to turn to adults for help when you feel unsafe.

The booklet was fully developed by children and young people from the national child and young expert groups in the project countries. The children and young people selected the topics they wanted covered, wrote and illustrated the stories, and designed the activities.





## Action 5: Youth development and participation

To ensure young people are empowered to participate in decisions affecting their care and development, and are supported in the leaving care process

In February 2024, 42 national associations were implementing locally contextualized youth development concepts, and 29 had finalized theirs and were awaiting the start of implementation. More than 3,600 young people have participated in the process so far.

Quality requirements for all work with and for young people are now defined in the binding *Programme Services Regulation*, approved in June 2023 (see also [action 23](#)).

In 2023, training on youth care and development reached almost 4,200 staff members globally. Two e-learning courses, on youth development and youth participation, have also been in active use.

Throughout last year, regional Youth Power programmes supported 172 young people in implementing local youth-led initiatives. Designed to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals, such initiatives have cumulatively benefited over 34,000 people worldwide since 2021. About half of the initiatives focus on climate and the environment.

Just under 1,500 young people have received training to support their participation in decisions that affect them. Within SOS Children's Villages, young people participate in national and regional leadership meetings and get involved in local youth-led initiatives or youth councils.

During 2023, 20 national associations worked on strengthening their services for young people leaving care. Training for youth workers and other care practitioners was co-delivered by young people who have left care, and the participating associations developed national leaving care action plans. In ten of these associations, staff and care leavers made recommendations on leaving care policies to policy makers. Virtual training sessions were held with young leaders representing care leavers' networks.

In 2023, the global youth employability initiative YouthCan! reached 17,800 young people in 49 countries.

### Looking ahead beyond 2024

Effort to facilitate child and youth participation will continue under the Safeguarding Strategy:

- Outcome 4: Safeguarding risks are mitigated through programme quality and child and youth participation

An update on progress as of the end of 2024 will be provided in our final Safeguarding Action Plan progress report, which we will release in early 2025.



KPIs	KPI status
<b>105</b> national associations implement a locally contextualized youth development concept by December 2024	<b>On track</b> February 2024: <b>42</b>
<b>20,000</b> young people reached through global youth employability initiative by 2024	<b>On track</b> December 2023: <b>17,800</b>
<b>105</b> national associations involve children and young people in training activities and shaping child safeguarding measures by December 2024	<b>On track</b> December 2023: <b>103</b>

#### Further information

No data has been received from national associations in Western Europe and North America to date, so the region has been left out of the target count, bringing the total to 105 national associations.



## C. Child and youth care practitioner working conditions, role, well-being, learning and development

### Action 6: Working conditions for child and youth care practitioners

To improve the working conditions and strengthen learning and development of child and youth care practitioners

The Management Council of SOS Children's Villages International approved a statement on remuneration for child and youth care practitioners in June 2023. The statement calls on all national associations to ensure competitive remuneration for their staff by the end of 2027. In the meantime, national associations are requested to ensure all employees are paid a living wage by the end of 2024.

An assessment of national pay has been completed for all categories of staff. Considerable gaps have been identified in about 50 national associations. A framework is being developed in order to have an aligned reward system that ensures ethical living wages. It is a planned element of the upcoming *People and Culture Policy*.

#### Looking ahead beyond 2024

The mainstreaming of safe programming via people and culture (improved conditions for care practitioners) is integrated into the Safeguarding Strategy:

- Outcome 4: Safeguarding risks are mitigated through programme quality and child and youth participation

An update on progress as of the end of 2024 will be provided in our final Safeguarding Action Plan progress report, which we will release in early 2025.

#### KPI

**101**

national associations contextualize and implement the *SOS Parent Profession User Guide*, including filling pension and compensation gaps, by December 2024

#### KPI status

**On track**

December 2023: **72**

#### Further information

No data has been received from national associations in Western Europe and North America to date, so the region has been left out of the target count. In addition, five national associations will start contextualizing the guide only in 2024 due to other project commitments. This brings the target to 101 national associations.



## Action 7: Research on gender equality

To improve understanding of attitudes and beliefs around gender and women's rights, experiences of discrimination, differentials in pay and conditions, and gender balance in leadership

### Gender research project

A scoping document and terms of reference for the gender research project have been developed by the project's steering committee. The aim is to comprehensively examine the impact of organizational culture, gender roles and power dynamics within SOS Children's Villages on the quality of care and safeguarding risks for children and young people.

The first project phase, which involves an analysis of policies, reports and other relevant organizational documents, will be completed by the end of 2024.

### Revision of the Gender Equality Policy

A project to revise the current *Gender Equality Policy* started in October 2023 and will continue until the end of 2024. The revision is necessary to address significant changes in the gender equality discourse globally and incorporate the following:

- discussion of intersectionality and power dynamics
- matters of organizational culture, leadership and accountability
- provisions on gender equality in humanitarian action
- provisions on advocacy, networking and communications to advance gender equality
- a more robust resourcing, monitoring and accountability plan to ensure the policy is implemented in practice

Consultations with staff throughout the organization but also children and young people are in progress. The consultations will be followed by a staff survey, a series of focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and co-creation and validation sessions with various groups of staff.

The outcomes of the process will also feed into the gender research project.

### Development of monitoring and accountability tools

The Gender Equality Dashboard, a tool to monitor compliance with the Gender Equality Policy at the level of a national association or General Secretariat entity, has been introduced through the global and regional gender networks. To promote gender-integrated programming and resourcing, we are also piloting the Gender Equality Marker, a self-assessment tool to be used with individual projects or initiatives. Both tools will eventually become mandatory.

### Looking ahead beyond 2024

Efforts to address gender equality will be taken up in the Safeguarding Strategy:

- Outcome 4: Safeguarding risks are mitigated through programme quality and child and youth participation

An update on progress as of the end of 2024 will be provided in our final Safeguarding Action Plan progress report, which we will release in early 2025.



## KPI



Research findings including recommendations available by December 2024

## KPI status

### Off track

We expect the first phase of the research to be completed by December 2024 and the second, by mid-2025.



## Action 8: Learning and development for care practitioners

To provide opportunities for individual, face-to-face, and digital training

Implementation of the global learning and development (L&D) framework continued throughout 2023. The framework encompasses both initial training workshops, offered to child and youth care practitioners when they join the organization, and ongoing learning opportunities.

Delivered over five weeks, initial training workshops cover 22 major competences relevant to the role of a caregiver, for example positive parenting, trauma-sensitive care, self-care, child and youth safeguarding, child and youth participation, child development, mental health, and trauma. These relational competences are crucial for preventing abuse and harm. The workshops are offered not only to practitioners working for SOS Children's Villages but also to parents receiving our family strengthening services.

So far, 110 L&D facilitators from 39 national associations have been trained to deliver the initial training workshops, and the workshops have reached around 1,100 participants, with positive feedback. In addition, 55 staff have been trained to provide one-on-one learning and development support to child and youth care practitioners.

An online orientation course on child and youth safeguarding for care practitioners has been developed. It has been completed by 649 individuals so far.

A leaving care workshop for care practitioners has been developed based on the same methodology, and multipliers have been trained in 11 national associations.

The digital care assistant Rafiki, which enables care practitioners and parents to access information and resources, has been scaled up in Ghana and implemented in two new countries, Lesotho and Zimbabwe. The tool is now available in seven countries.

Beyond the global L&D framework for child and youth care practitioners, national associations are developing and implementing their own learning and development programmes.

### Looking ahead beyond 2024

The mainstreaming of safe programming via people and culture (improved learning and development opportunities) is integrated into the Safeguarding Strategy:

- Outcome 4: Safeguarding risks are mitigated through programme quality and child and youth participation

KPI

**105**

national associations ensure access to learning and development opportunities for all child and youth care practitioners

KPI status

**Completed**

February 2024: **105**





### Further information

No data has been received from national associations in Western Europe and North America to date, so the region has been left out of the target count.



## D. People, culture and human resources practices for safeguarding

### **Action 9: Federation culture development**

To build a safeguarding environment through practical, targeted initiatives

Safeguarding leadership awareness-raising sessions were the focus of activities during 2023.

The programme consists of nine sessions delivered over several months for leaders who are interested and willing to engage with the issue. In total, 21 groups of international, regional and national leaders (about 210 participants in total) have completed the full awareness-raising programme. One-off introductory workshops have been held with another 18 diverse groups across the organization, usually as part of broader leadership or departmental meetings.

To replicate the practice, 32 trainers have been trained to deliver the sessions in English and Spanish.

The initiatives under this action underwent an evaluation by an external expert in mid-2023. The evaluation found that the approach, design and facilitation of the safeguarding leadership sessions were considered excellent both by attendees and those who had heard about them. The participants appreciated that the sessions were not delivered mechanically but rather provided many opportunities for self- and peer reflection, and some experienced them as a leadership development course.

Although it is too early to evaluate the sessions' impact on organizational culture, they should provide a good foundation for subsequent culture development work. Drawing on the pool of trained facilitators, we are working on incorporating this awareness-raising programme into the standard onboarding process for all leaders.

The Courageous Conversations pilot project, intended to provide a safe setting to discuss the steps necessary to create an organizational environment where everyone feels safe to speak up, ran between late 2022 and early 2023. The initiative has been discontinued since its overall purpose overlaps with that of the safeguarding leadership sessions and the *Code of Conduct Regulation* roll-out (see [action 10](#)).

The 2021 Safe and Caring Environment survey was designed to focus on staff perceptions of the organizational environment overall, which, while important as a measure of staff well-being, is too broad to assess the quality of safeguarding in a meaningful way. Given its limited utility as a measure of safeguarding culture, the survey will not be repeated.

### **Looking ahead beyond 2024**

The mainstreaming of safe programming via people and culture (culture development) is integrated into the Safeguarding Strategy:

- Outcome 5: Safeguarding risks are mitigated through a people and culture framework aligned with international standards

An update on progress as of the end of 2024 will be provided in our final Safeguarding Action Plan progress report, which we will release in early 2025.



## KPIs

## KPI status

**3** targeted initiatives for federation culture development on holistic safeguarding developed by December 2023

### Indicator discontinued

The objectives envisioned originally are being pursued under the safeguarding leadership sessions, values-based conduct initiatives, and ongoing human resources and safeguarding processes.

**80%** of safeguarding survey respondents at the General Secretariat evaluate work environment as positive overall by December 2024

### Indicator discontinued

**80%** of all federation leadership, including board representatives, reached with safeguarding awareness raising and training by December 2024

### On track

### Further information

In the third indicator, *federation leadership* refers to the management and boards of national associations and the management of the General Secretariat's international and regional offices.



### **Action 10 (priority): Code of Conduct / values-based conduct**

To ensure the mandatory, global code is fully embedded across the federation; it will address bullying, power imbalances, and gender disparities

The *Code of Conduct Regulation* was approved by the Management Council and endorsed by the International Senate in April 2023.

The document is binding for all SOS Children's Villages entities, including the General Secretariat and national associations. In some national legal contexts, the document requires certain adjustments to be legally enforceable, so in June 2023 national associations started analyses for conflicts with national law. By the end of the year, some 45% of national associations completed their analyses and reported the adjustments required based on national law. Where an adjustment might result in an unacceptable departure from the original document, the national association informs the General Secretariat.

Training of General Secretariat staff started in November 2023 with the publication of an e-learning course. An optional advanced training course with case scenarios has also been developed, and over 30 trainers have been trained in English, French and Spanish.

Roll-out at the national and international levels will continue in 2024, supported by a community of HR practitioners from the General Secretariat and national associations.

#### **Looking ahead beyond 2024**

The mainstreaming of safe programming via people and culture (promotion of values-based conduct) is integrated into the Safeguarding Strategy:

- Outcome 5: Safeguarding risks are mitigated through a people and culture framework aligned with international standards

An update on progress as of the end of 2024 will be provided in our final Safeguarding Action Plan progress report, which we will release in early 2025.



## KPIs

## KPI status



New Code of Conduct established by January 2023

### Completed

The document was approved in April 2023.

**100%**

of the General Secretariat staff trained on new Code of Conduct by December 2023

### Off track

February 2024: **10%**

All staff are expected to be trained by July 2024.

**3**

senior staff added to drive Code of Conduct and initiatives in support of enabling a safeguarding environment by September 2021

### Completed



## Action 11: Human resources values-based competency framework

To demonstrate how staff can live our organizational values in our day-to-day work and integrate them into recruitment, performance management, and development

The first year of roll-out focused on raising awareness of the competency framework and creating a shared understanding of the values-based competencies. This work has been supported by a workspace and a discussion community. An online toolkit, online training activities and instructor-led training programmes (for in-person or online delivery) have been developed.

More than 60 awareness and training sessions on the framework have been conducted by Human Resources and Organization Development. The framework is also being adopted as a working tool by other functional areas.

The Living Our Values framework has been integrated into guidance on recruitment, onboarding, learning and development, and leadership. For example, thematic training and a Living Our Values guide are available for leaders. The framework will be integrated into performance management processes during 2024.



The Living Our Values framework has been incorporated as a cross-cutting theme into national strategies and General Secretariat processes.

### Looking ahead beyond 2024

The mainstreaming of safe programming via people and culture (promotion of values-based conduct) is integrated into the Safeguarding Strategy:

- Outcome 5: Safeguarding risks are mitigated through a people and culture framework aligned with international standards

An update on progress as of the end of 2024 will be provided in our final Safeguarding Action Plan progress report, which we will release in early 2025.

KPIs	KPI status
 Values-based competency framework finalized by end 2021	<b>Completed</b>
 Values-based competency framework integrated into all key HR processes by December 2023	<b>Off track</b>  The framework will be integrated into the last remaining major process (performance management) by the end of 2024.





## Action 12: Review of all human resources policies

To ensure safeguarding is reflected and mandatory

An assessment of human resources policies and practices took place between April and July 2023. In addition to a review of documentation, the assessment included a survey and a series of 23 interviews with a group including regional directors, national directors, human resources and organization development managers, and directors of General Secretariat's functional areas.

The findings will serve as one of the inputs for developing the new human resources policy (see [action 15](#)).

### Looking ahead beyond 2024

This action has been completed.

KPI



A review of existing federation HR frameworks and policies by the General Secretariat completed by the first quarter of 2023

KPI status

**Completed**

The review was completed by November 2023.



### Action 13: Safe recruitment regulation

To ensure consistent and mandatory steps are taken to ensure the necessary safeguarding element in the recruitment process

Throughout 2023, the *Safe Recruitment Guideline* was piloted by the General Secretariat and ten national associations implementing the *Sexual Misconduct Regulation* (see also [action 16](#)). The project team in charge of the document has disseminated it and provided training on implementing it.

The piloting entities are currently assessing their experiences with the document to propose minimum safe recruitment requirements to be formalized in a binding document. Their findings will be available in April 2024.

A set of minimum requirements developed based on the piloting entities' experiences will be incorporated into the upcoming people and culture policy framework (see [action 15](#)) rather becoming a separate regulation.

#### Looking ahead beyond 2024

The mainstreaming of safe programming via people and culture (safe recruitment) is integrated into the Safeguarding Strategy:

- Outcome 5: Safeguarding risks are mitigated through a people and culture framework aligned with international standards

An update on progress as of the end of 2024 will be provided in our final Safeguarding Action Plan progress report, which we will release in early 2025.

#### KPI



Recruitment regulation ready for implementation in national associations by December 2024

*This indicator has been replaced with the following:*

*Safe recruitment minimum requirements defined in a binding document within the people and culture policy framework by December 2026*

#### KPI status

##### Indicator replaced

Some recruitment standards are covered in the 2023 *Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy*. Minimum requirements will be incorporated into a binding document within the people and culture framework, rather than becoming a separate regulation.



### Action 14: Strategy for safeguarding capacity building

To ensure we have the right learning and development systems to support all our people, including child and youth care practitioners, support staff, managers and leaders

Safeguarding capacity building has continued throughout initiatives to develop organizational culture ([action 9](#)), prevent sexual misconduct ([action 16](#)), promote values-based conduct ([action 11](#)), and implement the *Code of Conduct Regulation* ([action 10](#)). Training toolkits, self-assessments, and instructor-led and e-learning courses on these topics are available.

The General Secretariat's regional offices are working to integrate and streamline the training required under the different initiatives to minimize the workload at national level and make the content easier to absorb.

#### Looking ahead beyond 2024

This action has been completed. Safeguarding capacity building will continue as an integral part of preventing misconduct.

KPI

136

national associations implement continuous safeguarding capacity-building programmes by December 2024

KPI status

Completed



## Action 15: New global human resources policy with binding standards

An umbrella policy to ensure clarity and consistency across the entire federation

Work on grievance, disciplinary and appeals procedures to be covered in the upcoming policy started in the third quarter of 2023. Standards for safer recruitment (see [action 13](#)) and standards for a reward system (see [action 6](#)) are also being developed.

The new people and culture policy is expected to be finalized in 2025.

### Looking ahead beyond 2024

The mainstreaming of safe programming via people and culture (people and culture policy) is integrated into the Safeguarding Strategy:

- Outcome 5: Safeguarding risks are mitigated through a people and culture framework aligned with international standards

An update on progress as of the end of 2024 will be provided in our final Safeguarding Action Plan progress report, which we will release in early 2025.

#### KPI

**136**

national associations implement global HR policy by December 2024

#### KPI status

**Off track**

Implementation of the new policy is expected to start in 2025.



## Action 16 (priority): Prevention of Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (PSHEA) regulation implementation

To fully implement the regulation already adopted by the International Senate, to promote awareness and prevention and to implement reporting and responding

In 2023, the General Secretariat provided support to 33 national associations in rolling out the regulation. Other associations started implementation independently, using resources developed by the International Office.

Resources to support implementation, available in multiple languages, include a dedicated workspace, a guide and a toolkit, an e-learning course, training videos, a printable staff handbook and a variety of communications materials.

So far, 42 national associations report having implemented the regulation in full and another 51, in part, with a plan to achieve full implementation. A global self-audit is under way to evaluate compliance with the regulation's minimum standards, which will help assess the status of implementation at a more granular level. Its findings will be available in May.

Prevention of sexual harassment, exploitation of abuse has been or is being mainstreamed into cross-functional processes, including misconduct incident management, recruitment, implementation of the *Code of Conduct Regulation*, and work on safer programming.

### Looking ahead beyond 2024

Ongoing implementation will be managed under the Safeguarding Strategy:

- Outcome 5: Safeguarding risks are mitigated through a people and culture framework aligned with international standards

An update on progress as of the end of 2024 will be provided in our final Safeguarding Action Plan progress report, which we will release in early 2025.

#### KPI



PSHEA regulation implemented in 100% of federation (national associations, regional offices and the international office) by December 2024

#### KPI status

**On track**



## E. Oversight, leadership, governance and accountability for safeguarding

### Action 17 (priority): Independent Special Commission

To take up past and contemporary cases of failings, including child abuse, corruption, and breaches of regulations

The Independent Special Commission (ISC) was established in October 2021 with the mandate to evaluate SOS Children's Villages policies and procedures, investigate allegations and concerns where necessary, and recommend appropriate measures to the International Senate.

The commission issued its interim report on 30 June 2022 and its [final report](#) on 6 June 2023.

Based on the findings and recommendations, the International Senate adopted a [resolution](#), and the General Secretariat published a [management response](#) to the report's nine broad recommendations.

Since publication of the final report, we have brought on board our first international director of safeguarding, who is leading a new safeguarding unit at the General Secretariat and is driving progress in implementing the ISC recommendations.

The ISC's broad recommendations are consistent with the objectives pursued under the Safeguarding Action Plan. Building on the implementation of the Safeguarding Action Plan and findings by the ISC, the General Secretariat has developed a Safeguarding Strategy that lays out a longer-term vision for organization-wide safeguarding.

The extensive confidential annexes provided by the ISC are being used to guide improvements in safeguarding and to hold individuals responsible for wrongdoing accountable. All allegations of misconduct referenced in the report have been reviewed by the national associations and regional offices involved. Action plans to address misconduct incidents or gaps in safeguarding systems are either being implemented (in the majority of cases) or being finalized (in a minority of cases that are more complex).

The national associations named in the ISC report are working with their regional offices to develop concrete action plans that address the issues identified. In some of the countries, relevant investigations or audits had been conducted prior to the release of the report.

### Looking ahead beyond 2024

Findings and lessons learned will continue to be addressed under the Safeguarding Strategy. An update on responses to the recommendations will be released in mid-2024.

KPI



Commission established by end May 2021

KPI status

**Completed**



## Action 18: Alignment of integrity, compliance and safeguarding

To ensure our processes and procedures are working together effectively, including improved and integrated reporting and responding procedures

After approval of the *Misconduct Incident Management Regulation* and the *Misconduct Investigation Regulation* in early 2023, several webinars and virtual training sessions on the aligned misconduct incident management process, including investigations, were held for various groups. This includes senior management, safeguarding professionals and other staff. Face-to-face training was also offered where possible.

The General Secretariat and national associations then began establishing cross-functional misconduct incident management teams. To ensure a consistent approach, the requirements for such teams are set out in terms of reference based on the *Misconduct Incident Management Regulation*.

All incident management teams will undergo mandatory training and certification in 2024.

Since our previous policy documents guiding anti-corruption work have reached the end of their useful life, a new *Anti-Corruption Regulation* has been drafted to incorporate up-to-date processes, lessons learned and best practices. Federation-wide consultations are under way, and the final version is expected to be available by mid-2024.

### Looking ahead beyond 2024

Continuous improvement of incident management remains a top priority under the Safeguarding Strategy:

- Outcome 6: Individuals affected by misconduct receive appropriate, timely and transparent response

KPI



Aligned reporting, responding and investigation procedures implemented across the federation by December 2023

KPI status

**Completed**



## Action 19: Child safeguarding policy update

To ensure ICSR recommendations and current best practice are reflected

The new [Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy](#) was approved by the International Senate in April 2023.<sup>2</sup> An accompanying [Child and Youth Safeguarding Regulation](#), which provides detailed requirements for implementing the policy, was approved by the Management Council in June 2023.

Both documents are binding for all SOS Children's Villages offices and entities.

The updated policy incorporates developments since 2008, recommendations by the Independent Special Commission (see also [action 17](#)), and advice from specialist organizations. It defines minimum requirements in specific and explicit terms. The new policy covers safeguarding of both children under 18 and young people up to the age of 24.

A series of online and face-to-face training courses, workshops and webinars started in October 2023 and will continue until December 2024. Half-yearly reports will measure progress against training and awareness performance indicators.

The annual child and youth safeguarding survey, which is currently in progress, will help assess the status of policy implementation in 2023. Its findings will be published later this year in our next child and youth safeguarding annual report.

### Looking ahead beyond 2024

Implementation of the policy and associated regulations, both at the national and international level, will be managed under the Safeguarding Strategy:

- Outcome 2: Essential safeguarding standards are set and monitored through independent oversight, with possible external certification
- Outcome 4: Safeguarding risks are mitigated through programme quality and child and youth participation
- Outcome 6: Individuals affected by misconduct receive appropriate, timely and transparent response

An update on progress as of the end of 2024 will be provided in our final Safeguarding Action Plan progress report, which we will release in early 2025.

KPI

136

national associations achieve at least 90% compliance with child safeguarding minimum requirements by December 2024

KPI status

On track

<sup>2</sup> A new policy approval process was introduced in April 2023. The document no longer requires General Assembly approval to be mandatory, as expected originally.





## Action 20 (priority): Child safeguarding strengthening in high-risk environments

To provide extra financial and management support to 25 national associations with a high risk profile or operating in high-risk environments



The project includes the following key activities:

- child safeguarding risk assessment and development of risk mitigation plans
- staff training
- child safeguarding audits to verify the implementation of both the mitigation actions and minimum child safeguarding requirements

By the end of 2023, 25 national associations had received support and completed their final audits. Another 3 associations are finalizing implementation.

The project has helped national associations to put in place or reinforce the basic components of their safeguarding systems, such as safeguarding structures, staff capacity and risk assessments. It has also enabled progress in addressing long-standing systemic issues causing weaknesses in safeguarding. For example, awareness-raising work has resulted in growing numbers of reported safeguarding incidents where hardly any such reports used to be received, which suggests success in breaking down a culture of silence.

However, the project's relatively short time frame has not been sufficient to fully develop the national systems. This means that sustained effort will be required to build on the essential components and develop the skills, mechanisms and processes necessary for a robust, risk-responsive national safeguarding system.

For more on some of the project's findings, please see our [Child and Youth Safeguarding Annual Report 2022/2023](#).

### Looking ahead beyond 2024

This project has been closed. Ongoing risk management will remain a priority under the Safeguarding Strategy.

KPI

25

national associations implement the project process and are audited by December 2024

KPI status

Completed

February 2024: 25



## Action 21: Early warning system

To ensure safeguarding risks are monitored and escalated appropriately

This action has been completed.

KPI

**136**

national associations complete the first annual assessment of the tool to assess their risk profile and define mitigating actions to address their internal and external risks by December 2022

KPI status

**Completed**



## Action 22: Safeguarding resources in institutional donor projects

To ensure appropriate resources are in budgets

An assessment of project management practices has confirmed that all grant-funded project budgets and plans fully cover safeguarding-related activities, including safeguarding risk management. Risk management requirements are spelled out in the revised [Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy](#), article 2.2.

There is some room for improvement in increasing the efficiency of cross-functional collaboration and communication between project teams and national and regional staff who are not directly involved, to ensure resource and knowledge sharing where appropriate. Work towards these improvements will be part of overall efforts to improve organizational efficiency.

### Looking ahead beyond 2024

This action has been closed.

KPI



All institutional funding applications include child safeguarding risk analysis and budgets by December 2022

KPI status

**Indicator  
discontinued**



## F. Investment for high quality programmes across the federation

### Action 23: Increased investment in 70+ programmes to fix quality gaps

Including monitoring, ensuring the necessary financial investment is made to improve quality in 70–100 programme locations

We have introduced the binding *Programme Services Regulation*, which establishes clear minimum standards for programme quality. All national associations are expected to achieve full compliance with the standards by 2025.

We are implementing a set of organization-wide results-based project management processes, which are designed to ensure local relevance and a high standard of quality in programming. These processes enable implementing and funding associations to establish multi-year partnership agreements based on precise impact statements and funding targets, facilitating continuous programme improvement.

#### Looking ahead beyond 2024

The mainstreaming of safe programming via improvements in programme quality is integrated into the Safeguarding Strategy:

- Outcome 4: Safeguarding risks are mitigated through programme quality and child and youth participation

An update on progress as of the end of 2024 will be provided in our final Safeguarding Action Plan progress report, which we will release in early 2025.

KPI

98

subsidy-receiving national associations have a strategy to ensure relevance, efficiency and sustainability of programmes by December 2024

KPI status

**On track**

December 2023: 77



## **Action 24: Increased support for national associations to implement the SOS Care Promise**

Including regular self-assessment and continuous improvement in areas such as programme admission standards

National associations have made progress in implementing our programme policy, the *SOS Care Promise*, including in the following areas:

- By the end of 2023, about 90% of the targeted 105 national associations were implementing locally appropriate measures to enable the children and young people in their care to be better integrated into the community. This can involve, for example, making community services easier to access or having families move into community-integrated housing. Our data shows that community-integrated settings are associated with better life skills development in young people.
- Eighty-four national associations have adopted results-based management in their programmes. This helps them to ensure that their services respond to local needs and are designed to achieve specific positive outcomes for the people they serve.
- More than 90% of national associations of the targeted 105 had specific actions focused on mental health support in their 2023 national plans, which is almost 30 associations more than in 2022. National associations are participating in a range of training sessions on simple methods and techniques care practitioners, including caregivers and field social workers, can use to support their own mental health and that of the children, young people and adults they work with. Such techniques include, for example, [TeamUp](#) and [Problem Management Plus](#).

### **Looking ahead beyond 2024**

Implementation of SOS Care Promise standards will be managed as part of ongoing programme management.

An update on progress as of the end of 2024 will be provided in our final Safeguarding Action Plan progress report, which we will release in early 2025.



## KPIs

## KPI status

**91** national associations have board-approved national gatekeeping guidelines by December 2024

**On track**

December 2023: **77**

**105** national associations implement a range of locally relevant measures to improve social integration by December 2024

**On track**

December 2023: **95**

**105** national associations include specific actions in their national plans to integrate mental health and psychosocial support into their programme work by December 2024

**On track**

December 2023: **97**

### Further information

National associations operating within well-defined state gatekeeping systems are excluded from the target count. For such national associations, national legal requirements override board-approved national gatekeeping guidelines.

National associations in Western Europe and North America have been left out of the target count for social integration and mental health since they have not provided any data.



## Community-integrated alternative care in Botswana



SOS Children's Villages Botswana has implemented a project to transition to a community-integrated model of alternative care provision in Francistown.

Before the change, children and young people and their caregivers were living on a walled-off children's village compound, which somewhat limited autonomy and participation in community life. A higher standard of living at the children's village compared to that of the surrounding community led to a sense of stigma against the children and young people living there, who were perceived as spoiled.

Between 2021 and 2023, the children's village families moved to new housing in several nearby communities, where SOS Children's Villages Botswana had previously been providing family strengthening services and thus had a network of partners. The children, young people and caregivers participated in training and received counselling before the move.

Although it takes time for children and their caregivers to adjust to their new surroundings, the move has been found to improve social skills and overall emotional well-being in children, young people and caregivers and to contribute to better academic performance for some children.



## Annex 1: Key milestones since 2021

<b>June 2021</b>	Independent Child Safeguarding Review report published Safeguarding Action Plan published General Assembly adds a safeguarding goal to Strategy 2030
<b>October 2021</b>	Independent Special Commission begins work Interim progress report on Safeguarding Action Plan published
<b>March 2022</b>	Full progress report on Safeguarding Action Plan published
<b>June 2022</b>	Independent Special Commission submits interim report
<b>January 2023</b>	<a href="#">Misconduct Incident Management Regulation</a> approved <a href="#">Misconduct Investigation Regulation</a> approved
<b>March 2023</b>	Second full progress report on Safeguarding Action Plan published
<b>April 2023</b>	New <a href="#">Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy</a> approved by the International Senate
<b>June 2023</b>	Independent Special Commission publishes final report <i>Programme Services Regulation</i> approved <a href="#">Child and Youth Safeguarding Regulation</a> approved
<b>September 2023</b>	International Director for Safeguarding (Ma-Luschka Jean-Louis) begins in post General Counsel (Dominik Lentz) begins in post
<b>January 2024</b>	International Director for People and Culture (Mihaela Ionasc) begins in post
<b>March 2024</b>	<i>Regulation on Support for Persons Affected by Child and Youth Abuse</i> approved
<b>April 2024</b>	Safeguarding Strategy for SOS Children's Villages International approved Third full progress report on Safeguarding Action Plan published
<b>July 2024</b>	Extraordinary General Assembly





## Annex 2: Summary of progress and next steps

The status of the 35 current KPIs is as follows:

- 13 are **completed**
- 12 are **on track**
- 6 are **off track**
- 3 have been **discontinued**
- 1 has been **replaced**

Beyond the Safeguarding Action Plan, continuous improvement will be guided by our 2024–2030 Safeguarding Strategy, which focuses on the following six outcomes:

1. Staff in leadership and governance positions have the required commitment and competences to mitigate safeguarding risks in our daily operations.
2. Essential safeguarding standards are set and monitored through independent oversight, with possible external certification.
3. Anti-corruption and asset protection are integrated into federation-wide standard processes.
4. Safeguarding risks are mitigated through programme quality and child and youth participation.
5. Safeguarding risks are mitigated through a people and culture framework aligned with international standards.
6. Individuals affected by misconduct receive appropriate, timely and transparent response.



Action	Summary of progress	KPI	KPI status, February 2024	Next steps
1. Immediate support for those who have experienced abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A project to provide funding to national associations that don't have sufficient resources to respond to cases of past abuse closed at the end of 2023. Support funded by the project reached 730 people.</li> <li>Based on our experience over the past two years, a new mandatory regulation on support for persons affected by child and youth abuse has been approved.</li> </ul>	105 national associations implement global user guide, <i>Listening and Responding to Individuals Experiences of Past Child Abuse</i> , including minimum standards for individualized support, by December 2024	<b>On track</b>	<p>A final progress update against the Safeguarding Action Plan to come in early 2025</p> <p>Support for people who have experienced abuse to remain a top priority under the Safeguarding Strategy (outcome 6)</p>
2. Ombudsperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment of a global ombuds has been completed.</li> <li>National ombuds are in place in 4 countries; equivalent external systems have been approved in another 7.</li> <li>Ombuds implementation or evaluation of alternatives is in progress in 50 countries.</li> </ul>	Global ombudsperson for the federation by December 2023	<b>Completed</b>	<p>A final progress update against the Safeguarding Action Plan to come in early 2025</p> <p>Implementation to continue until 2027</p>
		136 national associations covered by system by December 2023	<b>Off track</b>	<p>Ongoing collaboration with the Ombuds Office to continue under the Safeguarding Strategy (outcome 6)</p>
3. Incident management system for persons that have experienced abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of a centralized software system to manage safeguarding incidents has been put on hold due to financial challenges.</li> <li>Both national associations and regional offices have made progress in implementing new incident management procedures.</li> </ul>	Real-time reporting platform on child safeguarding incidents of abusive behaviour developed by end of 2021	<b>Completed</b>	<p>A final progress update against the Safeguarding Action Plan to come in early 2025</p>
		136 national associations implement the incident management system by December 2023	<b>Off track</b>	<p>Improvement of incident management to remain a top priority under the Safeguarding Strategy (outcome 6)</p>



Action	Summary of progress	KPI	KPI status, February 2024	Next steps
4. Child and youth empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Applying Safe Behaviours project has concluded.</li> <li>A project to assess awareness of child rights and organizational safeguarding processes is being implemented in nine countries.</li> </ul>	30 national associations implement Protective Behaviours by December 2023	<b>Completed</b>	Child and youth empowerment to remain an integral component of our work under the Safeguarding Strategy (outcome 4)
5. Youth development and participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National associations are developing locally contextualized youth development concepts, involving young people in the process.</li> <li>Other activities in 2023 included training staff on youth care and development, training young people on matters relevant to participation, and supporting youth-led initiatives.</li> </ul>	105 national associations implement a locally contextualized youth development concept by December 2024	<b>On track</b>	<p>A final progress update against the Safeguarding Action Plan to come in early 2025</p> <p>Effort to facilitate child and youth participation to continue under the Safeguarding Strategy (outcome 4)</p>
		20,000 young people reached through global youth employability initiative by 2024	<b>On track</b>	
		105 national associations involve children and young people in training activities and shaping child safeguarding measures by December 2024	<b>On track</b>	
6. Working conditions for child and youth care practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An assessment of national pay has been completed.</li> </ul>	101 national associations contextualize and implement the <i>SOS Parent Profession User Guide</i> , including filling pension and compensation gaps, by December 2024	<b>On track</b>	<p>A final progress update against the Safeguarding Action Plan to come in early 2025</p> <p>The mainstreaming of effort in this area integrated into the Safeguarding Strategy (outcome 4)</p>
7. Research on gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We expect the first phase of the research to be completed by December 2024 and the second, by mid-2025.</li> </ul>	Research findings including recommendations available by December 2024	<b>Off track</b>	<p>A final progress update against the Safeguarding Action Plan to come in early 2025</p> <p>Efforts to address gender equality to be taken up in the Safeguarding Strategy (outcome 4)</p>



Action	Summary of progress	KPI	KPI status, February 2024	Next steps
8. Learning and development for care practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training workshops under the global learning and development framework have reached around 1,100 participants.</li> <li>National associations are also developing and implementing their own learning and development programmes.</li> </ul>	105 national associations ensure access to learning and development opportunities for all child and youth care practitioners	<b>Completed</b>	The mainstreaming of effort in this area integrated into the Safeguarding Strategy (outcome 4)
9. Federation culture development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safeguarding leadership awareness-raising sessions were the focus of activities. Although it is too early to evaluate the sessions' impact on organizational culture, they should provide a good foundation for subsequent culture development work.</li> <li>The Courageous Conversations project has been discontinued since its overall purpose overlaps with that of other initiatives.</li> <li>The 2021 Safe and Caring Environment survey will not be repeated due to its limited utility.</li> </ul>	3 targeted initiatives for federation culture development on holistic safeguarding developed by December 2023	<b>Indicator discontinued</b>	<p>A final progress update against the Safeguarding Action Plan to come in early 2025</p> <p>The mainstreaming of culture development integrated into the Safeguarding Strategy (outcome 5)</p>
		80% of safeguarding survey respondents at the General Secretariat evaluate work environment as positive overall by December 2024	<b>Indicator discontinued</b>	
		80% of all federation leadership, including board representatives, reached with safeguarding awareness raising and training by December 2024	<b>On track</b>	
10. Code of Conduct / values-based conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <i>Code of Conduct Regulation</i> was approved in April 2023.</li> <li>Roll-out will continue throughout 2024.</li> </ul>	New Code of Conduct established by January 2023	<b>Completed</b>	<p>A final progress update against the Safeguarding Action Plan to come in early 2025</p> <p>The mainstreaming of effort in this area integrated into the Safeguarding Strategy (outcome 5)</p>
		100% of the General Secretariat staff trained on new Code of Conduct by December 2023	<b>Off track</b>	
		3 senior staff added to drive Code of Conduct and initiatives in support of enabling a safeguarding environment by September 2021	<b>Completed</b>	



Action	Summary of progress	KPI	KPI status, February 2024	Next steps
11. Human resources values-based competency framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Living Our Values framework has been integrated into guidance on recruitment, onboarding, learning and development, and leadership. It will be integrated into performance management processes during 2024.</li> </ul>	Values-based competency framework finalized by end 2021	<b>Completed</b>	A final progress update against the Safeguarding Action Plan to come in early 2025
		Values-based competency framework integrated into all key HR processes by December 2023	<b>Off track</b>	The mainstreaming of effort in this area integrated into the Safeguarding Strategy (outcome 5)
12. Review of all human resources policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The review has been completed and will serve as an input for a new human resources policy.</li> </ul>	A review of existing federation HR frameworks and policies by the General Secretariat completed by the first quarter of 2023	<b>Completed</b>	Action closed
13. Safe recruitment regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcomes of piloting of the <i>Safe Recruitment Guideline</i> are being assessed. The outcomes will be used to develop minimum requirements, which will be incorporated into a broader people and culture policy document rather than becoming a separate regulation.</li> </ul>	Recruitment regulation ready for implementation in national associations by December 2024	<b>Indicator replaced</b>	<p>A final progress update against the Safeguarding Action Plan to come in early 2025</p> <p>The mainstreaming of effort in this area integrated into the Safeguarding Strategy (outcome 5)</p>
14. Strategy for safeguarding capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safeguarding capacity building has continued throughout initiatives to develop organizational culture and prevent misconduct.</li> </ul>	136 national associations implement continuous safeguarding capacity-building programmes by December 2024	<b>Completed</b>	<p>Action closed</p> <p>Safeguarding capacity building to continue as an integral part of preventing misconduct</p>
15. New global human resources policy with binding standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new human resources policy is expected to be finalized in 2025.</li> </ul>	136 national associations implement global HR policy by December 2024	<b>Off track</b>	<p>A final progress update against the Safeguarding Action Plan to come in early 2025</p> <p>The mainstreaming of effort in this area integrated into the Safeguarding Strategy (outcome 5)</p>



Action	Summary of progress	KPI	KPI status, February 2024	Next steps
16. Prevention of Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (PSHEA) regulation implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>So far, 42 national associations report having implemented the regulation in full and another 51, in part, with a plan to achieve full implementation.</li> <li>A global self-audit is under way.</li> </ul>	PSHEA regulation implemented in 100% of federation (national associations, regional offices and the international office) by December 2024	<b>On track</b>	<p>A final progress update against the Safeguarding Action Plan to come in early 2025</p> <p>Ongoing implementation to be managed under the Safeguarding Strategy (outcome 5)</p>
17. Independent Special Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The commission issued its final report on 6 June 2023.</li> </ul>	Commission established by end May 2021	<b>Completed</b>	<p>Action closed</p> <p>Findings to continue to be addressed under the Safeguarding Strategy</p>
18. Alignment of integrity, compliance and safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cross-functional incident management team have been set up and will undergo mandatory training and certification.</li> <li>A new <i>Anti-Corruption Regulation</i> has been drafted.</li> </ul>	Aligned reporting, responding and investigation procedures implemented across the federation by December 2023	<b>Completed</b>	Improvement of incident management to remain a priority under the Safeguarding Strategy (outcome 6)
19. Child safeguarding policy update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new <i>Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy</i> and an accompanying regulation have been approved.</li> <li>Training will continue in 2024.</li> </ul>	136 national associations achieve at least 90% compliance with child safeguarding minimum requirements by December 2024	<b>On track</b>	<p>A final progress update against the Safeguarding Action Plan to come in early 2025</p> <p>Policy implementation to be managed under the Safeguarding Strategy (outcomes 2, 4 and 6)</p>
20. Child safeguarding strengthening in high-risk environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By the end of 2023, 25 national associations received support and completed their final audits. Another 3 associations are finalizing implementation.</li> </ul>	25 national associations implement the project process and are audited by December 2024	<b>Completed</b>	Action closed



Action	Summary of progress	KPI	KPI status, February 2024	Next steps
21. Early warning system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This action has been completed.</li> </ul>	136 national associations complete the first annual assessment of the tool to assess their risk profile and define mitigating actions to address their internal and external risks by December 2022	<b>Completed</b>	Action closed
22. Safeguarding resources in institutional donor projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An assessment of project management practices has confirmed that all grant-funded project budgets and plans fully cover safeguarding-related activities.</li> </ul>	All institutional funding applications include child safeguarding risk analysis and budgets by December 2022	<b>Indicator discontinued</b>	Action closed
23. Increased investment in 70+ programmes to fix quality gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The binding <i>Programme Services Regulation</i> establishes clear minimum standards for programme quality.</li> <li>Results-based processes, which are currently being implemented, facilitate continuous programme improvement.</li> </ul>	98 subsidy-receiving national associations have a strategy to ensure relevance, efficiency and sustainability of programmes by December 2024	<b>On track</b>	<p>A final progress update against the Safeguarding Action Plan to come in early 2025</p> <p>The mainstreaming of safe programming integrated into the Safeguarding Strategy (outcome 4)</p>
24. Increased support for national associations to implement the SOS Care Promise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National associations have made progress, including in ensuring care settings are better integrated into the community and in developing measures to address mental health needs in their programming.</li> </ul>	91 national associations have board-approved national gatekeeping guidelines by December 2024	<b>On track</b>	<p>A final progress update against the Safeguarding Action Plan to come in early 2025</p> <p>Implementation of SOS Care Promise standards to continue as part of ongoing programme management</p>
		105 national associations implement a range of locally relevant measures to improve social integration by December 2024	<b>On track</b>	
		105 national associations include specific actions in their national plans to integrate mental health and psychosocial support into their programme work by December 2024	<b>On track</b>	