



LOOKING BACK ON THREE YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP
Report 2020

Introduction

The year 2020 was the third year of the partnership between Action and SOS Children's Villages. It has been a challenging year, both for Action as well as for SOS Children's Villages. In March 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic struck. Schools and kindergartens closed, and businesses and stores followed. COVID-19 has further marginalised vulnerable families. Faced with a new reality and existential problems, these families are often on the brink of survival. The stress, poverty and discrimination increased the risk of losing their parental capacities and providing inadequate child care. SOS Children's Villages is there to keep families together and if this is not possible then to provide the children a loving home. SOS Children's Villages does this in 136 countries and regions, but they cannot do this alone. The cooperation with partners has become more important than ever. Therefore they are very grateful for the continuous support from Action.

This report gives you a clear overview of the contribution Action is making to the programmes of SOS Children's Villages, both in Asia and in Europe. We start by looking back on how the partnership started three years ago and will follow by sharing some impact numbers, where you will also see how the partnership has developed in the past three years. In addition we will share some personal stories from children whose lives have been changed through our support. Lastly, we will look ahead to the future plans of the partnership and share the projects that Action will support in Europe in 2021.

Together we are able to make a positive change in these children's lives. **Together we can take ACTION.**



Contents

- How it all started 4
- Impact in numbers 5
- Not just a number 7
- Taking Action through Europe 8
- Future perspective 12
- Project proposals 2021 13
- Conclusion 18



How it all started

The partnership between Action and SOS Children's Villages started in January 2018. Action and SOS Children's Villages share a social mission and wanted to develop a successful long-term cooperation.

We wanted to make an important impact in the countries:

- where we source our products and
- where we operate.

Additionally it was really important to be able to closely involve Action employees. Therefore Action decided to sponsor a child or village in Asia per store and distribution centre. To increase local involvement Action makes a donation to a local program in the countries where we have an office. This way the partnership grows along with the growth of Action.

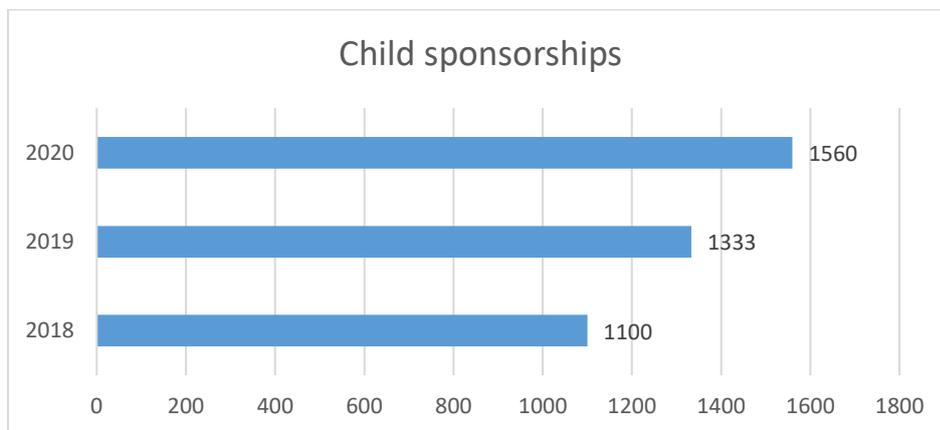
Through the partnership Action improves the living conditions of thousands of children around the world, ensuring they grow and thrive in our rapidly changing society. In 2020 Action sponsored over 1,560 children in Asia growing up in an SOS family in a children's village.



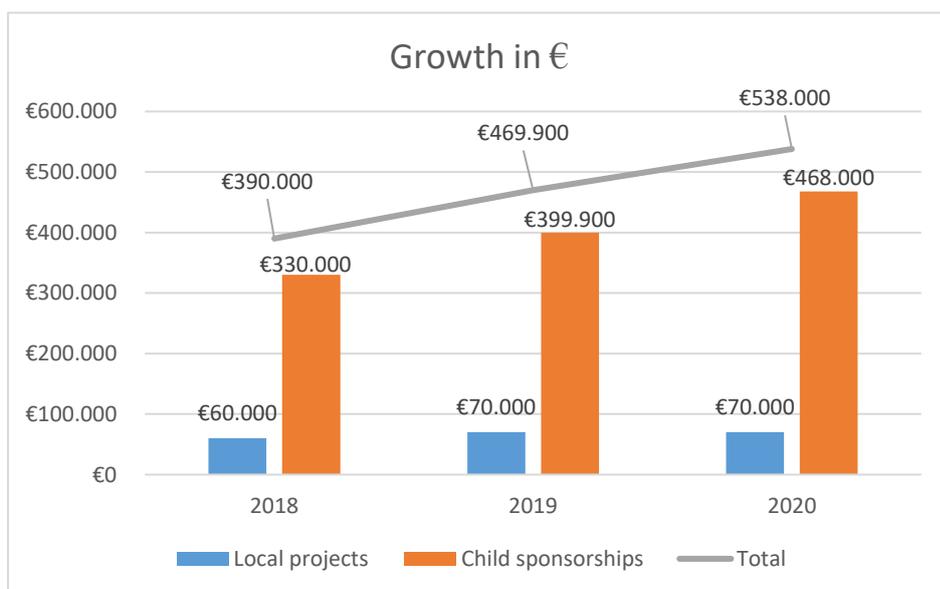
Impact in numbers –

Significant growth in the past three years

The special nature of the partnership between Action and SOS Children's Villages is that it grows along with Action's growth. Every new store Action opens, is an extra child that Action will support in the following years. The graph below shows how the partnership has developed over the past three years in terms of the number of child sponsorships. As you can see, we started in 2018 with the sponsorship of 1100 children and this has now grown to 1560 children by 2020.



Since there is a direct link between the amount of child sponsorships and the donation Action makes to SOS Children's Villages (€300 per child sponsorship), you can see there is also a significant growth in the past three years. Next to the donation per child, Action also contributes to local projects (€10.000) in the countries we have an Action office. As you can see from the graph below one more country, Poland, joined in 2019.



In 2020 Action sponsored 1560 children living in 90 SOS Children's Villages across Asia and Poland. Action contributed to the daily costs of these children and to their villages - this includes food, education, medical care and also sports and play. In short: everything that a child needs to grow up!

Action's contribution allows SOS Children's Villages not only to provide everything SOS children need to grow up in a safe and loving environment, but Action also supports vulnerable families in the communities surrounding the SOS Children's Village.

If you combine the impact that Action is making through local donations with the impact Action makes through its child sponsorships, Action has reached more than ten thousand children in 2020.



Not just a number

In 2020 Action has sponsored more than 1560 children through its sponsorships. This is a very impressive number, but it is good to realise that it is not just a number. This number represents real stories and lives of children to which we have made a positive contribution. The picture below is a collection of photos of the children Action sponsors.



The children Action sponsors do not have the possibility to live with their biological family. SOS Children's Villages values every child's right to privacy, and for data protection reasons, SOS Children's Villages limit access to information about the children and their family. The best interests of the child are their main concern.

Taking ACTION through Europe

Besides the impact Action is making in the countries where we source our products from through child sponsorships, Action also contributes to local projects in the countries Action operates. This way Action helps to improve the living conditions of children and young people in Europe. In the following pages you will read about the impact Action has made in our European projects throughout 2020.

The Netherlands – Simba Family Care

In 2020 Action supported the Simba Family Care project in the Netherlands, which is a project that aims to place siblings in care together and guide them into a safe reunion with their parents. The project focuses on families with children up to the age of 18 where there is temporarily no stable, safe home situation, for example because of relationship problems, a divorce or the loss of care of one or both parents due to mental health problems. This project is of great importance, since 40.000 children move in to care every year and there is a shortage of places where brothers and sisters, that are in care from one family, can stay together. Siblings are separated in about 50% of the cases and too often children in care never return to their parents.

Ravi and his older sister were placed in care – in different places - when he was six years old. His younger sister stayed with his mom. “So we missed out on a lot of each other’s lives. Now we do see each other, but we still do not have a real emotional bond. I now have good contact with my mother again, but with her I also miss that warm connection. I am convinced that if I would have grown up together with my siblings in a nice family, with dedicated family or foster parents, it would have strengthened the family bond with my sisters and brother.”



2020 was a tough but eventually also a beautiful year for Simba Family Care and the families in this programme. SOS Children’s Villages was able to strengthen four families and even reunite one. Thanks to their extensive lobbying, Dutch law will be adjusted: when children for their own safety and wellbeing have to move into care, siblings will have the right to be placed together.

Belgium – Temporary home in Children’s Village Chantevent

In the Children’s Village Chantevent in Bande, Belgium, Action made it possible to set up the project "Le Hêtre". This is a temporary home for up to 2 years for children and youngsters placed by the youth social services. They are in a difficult family situation, but have the possibility to reintegrate with their family. The educational team works intensively with the biological parents on the reasons that led to the placement, in particular their parental skills. The final aim is to ensure the creation of an environment conducive to the child's development in order to enable family reintegration in 2 years.



This innovative approach is highly appreciated because it avoids long term placement in care and offers the prospect of a renewed family life in good conditions.

In 2020, 11 children and 4 youth (16 to 18 years), participated in this project. We could reintegrate 4 children with their families under safe and good conditions.

Austria – SOS KinderWelt in Innsbruck

Action supported the centre SOS KinderWelt in Innsbruck, Austria. This centre offers opportunities for play and learning to children and families who had to leave their countries due to war or prosecution and now live in public or governmental shelters in Innsbruck. For example, children and women can learn the language in language class. This centre was especially important during the corona pandemic. Learning German helped these children and families better understand the news and measures to constrain the virus. SOS also helped organising home schooling, such as installing home schooling software on their phones (schoolfox), being a hub between the teachers and the families.

Normally 200 to 250 children, mothers and grandmothers can visit the village. In 2020, due to the corona pandemic, we had to cut down this number to about 50 percent.

The management team of Action Netherlands already visited the centre in 2019 and the wish is to invite the Action Austria team too when this is possible again.



France – New SOS Village in Besse-sur-Issole

Thanks to the support of Action, SOS Children's Villages in France could open its 17th Children's Village in Besse-sur-Issole. This new village provides a safe and loving home for fifty children and youngsters without parental care between the age of 0 to 21 years. It comprises :



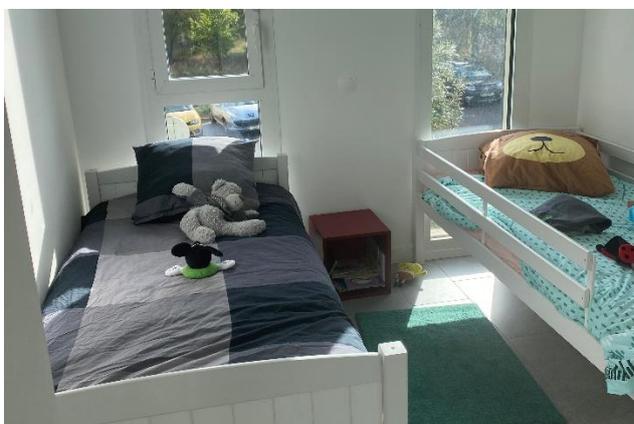
9 SOS family houses and a common house and garden for 40 children;



1 emergency house to care for children whose family situation required an urgent separation from their parents;



1 youth facility welcoming 5 young people from 16 to 21 to foster their independence and their employability.



Poland – Education support in Children's Villages Bilgoraj and Kraśnik

Thanks to the support of Action the Children's Villages Bilgoraj and Kraśnik could give extra educational support for the 101 children and youngsters (between 0 and 21 years) they take care of. For example in the SOS Children's Village Bilgoraj this meant an extra desk for a child who couldn't concentrate when she was studying together with the other children. Now she can study in peace in her own room.



In Kraśnik children benefitted of pedagogical and psychological support in the first half year. Children participated in didactic, compensatory and corrective classes adjusted to the needs of every child. These classes were especially important during this period, when teaching changed to online teaching because of corona.

Also the pedagogues gave assertiveness and social skills training, movement therapy and exercises and games. This helps children to learn to cope with stress and to increase their self-esteem. The children could also follow art, drama and technical classes or participate in sport activities. Children from the 8th grade discovered their talents and interests to help them choose a further education or profession. 20 children participated regularly in individual meetings that focussed on the needs of the children. The meetings consisted of e.g. drawing, discussion or fairy-tale therapy. The children became aware of their strengths and started to believe in their own talents. "I play football better and better and I am glad that my peers invite me to play together," says a boy who had problems with learning, after guidance from a psychologist and pedagogue.

Germany – Supervised playground in SOS Children’s Village Lusatia

In 2020 Action contributed to the supervised playground in the SOS Children’s Village Lusatia, where children and families from different backgrounds and nationalities meet. To help the families from the SOS Children’s Village integrate with the outside world, SOS organises several activities on a weekly basis, such as a wood workshop, a garden project, a cook workshop or sports activities. We also offer vacation trips; a paddling trip for several days on the Spree or one week camping at the Bautzen reservoir, with a hike to the source of the Spree and a visit to the Bautzen II memorial. By making these activities available to more families than just the children of the SOS Children’s Village, we stimulate integration of these children in the community and offer families outside the village a chance to participate in these activities.

In 2020 they received almost 3400 visitors. This number is lower than previous years, due to the corona restrictions.



Future perspective

In 2020 Action has decided to extend the collaboration with SOS Children's Villages for another three years. Extending our partnership allows us to work together to create a loving home for vulnerable children across the globe.

SOS Children's Villages is extremely happy and grateful that our collaboration will continue and they are looking forward to strengthening the partnership over the coming years, making even more impact in the lives of children worldwide.

Arian Buurman, director of SOS Children's Villages in the Netherlands, said: "We're living in challenging times, and have to do everything we can to ensure children in our projects are cared for. Right now, partnerships are more important than ever. I'm delighted and grateful that Action wants to extend its collaboration for a further three years. Action's contribution will allow us to provide everything SOS children need, such as food, education, medical care and sports, to grow up in a safe and loving environment. Action also contributes to the costs of maintaining children's villages and the homes of vulnerable families in the communities surrounding it."



Projects 2021

In this chapter you will find the individual SOS projects per country for 2021. To increase local engagement, the Action offices in the respective countries could choose between two projects. In 2021 Action's contribution will improve the situation of children and young people in Europe by advocating for children's rights, supporting educational and psychosocial programmes as well as building or renovating SOS Children's Villages.

Austria

Crisis accommodation SOS Barbakus, Carinthia

The SOS crisis accommodation Barbakus helps children when there is a major crisis situation in their family. The family problems are usually reported at kindergartens and schools. Social workers must then react quickly. Reasons for a crisis intervention are:

- physical, psychological or sexual child abuse,
- neglect or other types of aggression,
- drug or alcohol abuse,
- mental health problems.

A stay at SOS Barbakus can either be temporary (several weeks) or long-term (up to two years). The SOS intervention always focuses on the well-being of the child.



2020 was a very difficult year for SOS Barbakus. Due to COVID-19 the social welfare system partly stopped sending children to Barbakus, especially during the first lockdown which lasted for almost three months. In 2021 the program expects a rise in the number of placements for children. This expected rise is based on reports of escalating negatives effects on families during lockdown.

The Netherlands

Advocate for children's rights during the Youth Conference

There is a world to be won for children and young people without a safe home, both worldwide and in the Netherlands. Especially now, the COVID-19 crisis poses considerable risks for young people, and especially for vulnerable youngsters, with regards to their education, employment, mental health and disposable income.

For more than a year the virus has had the world in its grip. Children and young people have suffered little physical impact from the virus itself. However, the social and economic damage of the restrictive measures is enormous. During lockdown the number of reported domestic violence incidents explode, many young people feel isolated and lonely, and they are also the first to lose their source of income. School closures and home schooling reduce their academic performance. They are facing a lot of new challenges for which new solutions must be found, so they can come out of this pandemic even stronger.



Therefore, in November 2021 SOS Children's Villages Netherlands will organise a conference about Youth and how they could best be assisted to address these issues. The event will be centred around the themes (1) Social Protection- and support systems for Youth; (2) Leaving Alternative Care: Reintegrating Youth with Family and Society; (3) School-to-Work Transition; and (4) Youth in Transit during Humanitarian Crisis. To let the conference tie in as much as possible with the most relevant themes in the lives of young people (e.g.

mental health, domestic violence, COVID-19, climate change, minority equality, gender equality and education for all) young people from Netherlands, Indonesia, Ghana, Malawi and Colombia will participate actively and meaningfully. By talking to young people, questions, needs, experiences and solutions become clear. Sustainable changes are only achieved in cooperation with the people concerned.

The conference aims to inspire young people to formulate, together with experts, a 'Call to Action' (CTA) – young people will learn to be advocates for their own rights. In the Netherlands, we want to use this CTA to ensure young people's:

- voices are heard on issues that are important to them;
- rights are promoted;
- views and wishes are genuinely considered when decisions are being made about their lives.



Simba Family Care

In the Netherlands around 40,000 children move into care every year. There is a shortage of places where brothers and sisters, that are in care from one family, can stay together. When children from one household move into care, siblings are separated in about 50% of cases. Too often, children in care never return to their parents.

SOS Children's Villages has therefore started Simba Family Care (2019) in the Netherlands.

Simba Family care is for families with children up to the age of 18 where there is no stable, safe home situation, for example because of relationship problems, a divorce or the loss of care of one or both parents due to mental

health problems. These problems are so serious that the children cannot temporarily live at home. Both parents and children receive intensive guidance to enable recovery of family relationships. The goal is for the children to return home eventually, if they can grow up there safely. We work together with professional educators who take care of brothers and sisters together in their family home. SOS Children's Villages deploys family counsellors who provide intensive support to the parents for a long period of time to restore the home situation and make it possible to return.

Youth care has become even more complex in recent times. Partly due to the corona pandemic, there is a greater need to help and support children in unsafe home situations. In the coming period SOS Children's Villages will therefore dedicate themselves with a great deal of energy and determination to improve their Simba Family Care programme. They want to do this by focusing on:

- Recruiting family house parents and work with more youth care organisations.
- Obtaining appropriate Simba placements: siblings with a chance of return.
- Adapting and researching the Simba Family Care methodology through practical experience.
- Drawing up an SKJ (Stichting Kwaliteitsregister Jeugd) training course.
- Implementing lobbying and supporting communications.



Belgium

Specialised help for trauma: Psychometrician



In the SOS Children's Village Chantevent in Bande SOS Children's Villages takes care of 40 children. They are working with a team of specialists to help with the development of the children in need. They build an environment for children in which they can feel safe and where they find a loving home. Here the help of a psychometrician is desperately needed. A psychometrician supports psychologists by administering a variety of psychological tests. The psychometrician comes to the

village 3 times a week and helps children who have experienced trauma to better understand their emotions, to deal with frustration, fear or anger, to regain self-confidence and to regain trust in others. The support provided by Action would enable 40 children from the village to help overcome their difficulties.

France

Building 2 new SOS houses

In 2018 SOS Children's Village Gemozac opened and is now the home of 32 children without parental support. SOS Children's Villages France has seen an increased demand for support since then. To face these important local needs, the village would like to build 2 new SOS houses where 10 children can grow up in a loving environment with their siblings.

Poland

Roof renovation for 3 family houses in SOS Children's Village Krasnik

This year the roof renovation of three SOS family houses is urgently needed. The roofs have not been renovated since the opening of the village in 1992 and they are in a poor technical condition. The roofs have leaks and are causing moisture in the rooms on the first floor. In addition the roofs are not well isolated. This environment is not healthy for the children and is also causing high energy bills. Also the pedagogues gave assertiveness and social skills training, movement therapy and exercises and games. This helps children to learn to cope



with stress and to increase their self-esteem. The children could also follow art, drama and technical classes or participate in sport activities. Children from the 8th grade discovered their talents and interests to help them choose a further education or profession. 20 children participated regularly in individual meetings that focussed on the needs of the children. The meetings consisted of e.g. drawing,

discussion or fairy-tale therapy. The children became aware of their strengths and started to believe in their own talents. "I play football better and better and I am glad that my peers invite me to play together," says a boy who had problems with learning, after guidance from a psychologist and pedagogue.

Germany

SOS Children's Village Dortmund

Children who, for a variety of reasons, can no longer stay with their families need a protective living space that allows them to grow up in a child-friendly way. In the SOS Children's Village in Dortmund they find a new home with their SOS family. Six girls and boys are pedagogically cared for by a SOS mother and two pedagogues. Together they provide a safe home. The children and young people who come to an SOS Children's Village have been through a lot and can usually only work through their psychological injuries with professional help.



Conclusion

In this report you have been able to read how Action has helped to improve the lives of thousands of children worldwide. Anisha from India improves her writing skills by taking extra lessons in the Children's Village. Cao from Vietnam can dream again about the future, in which he would like to become a police officer. We also made sure that children in Poland received psychological support, and we gave children who had moved into care a new home in the Children's Village in Besse-sur-Issole in France.

In the coming years Action will continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of children worldwide.

