

A photograph of two young girls jumping rope on a blue lattice fence. The girl on the left is wearing a purple shirt and a patterned skirt, holding a red rope. The girl on the right is wearing an orange shirt and a red skirt, jumping. In the background, a dense village with colorful buildings is visible on a hillside.

6

Emergency Response



SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES



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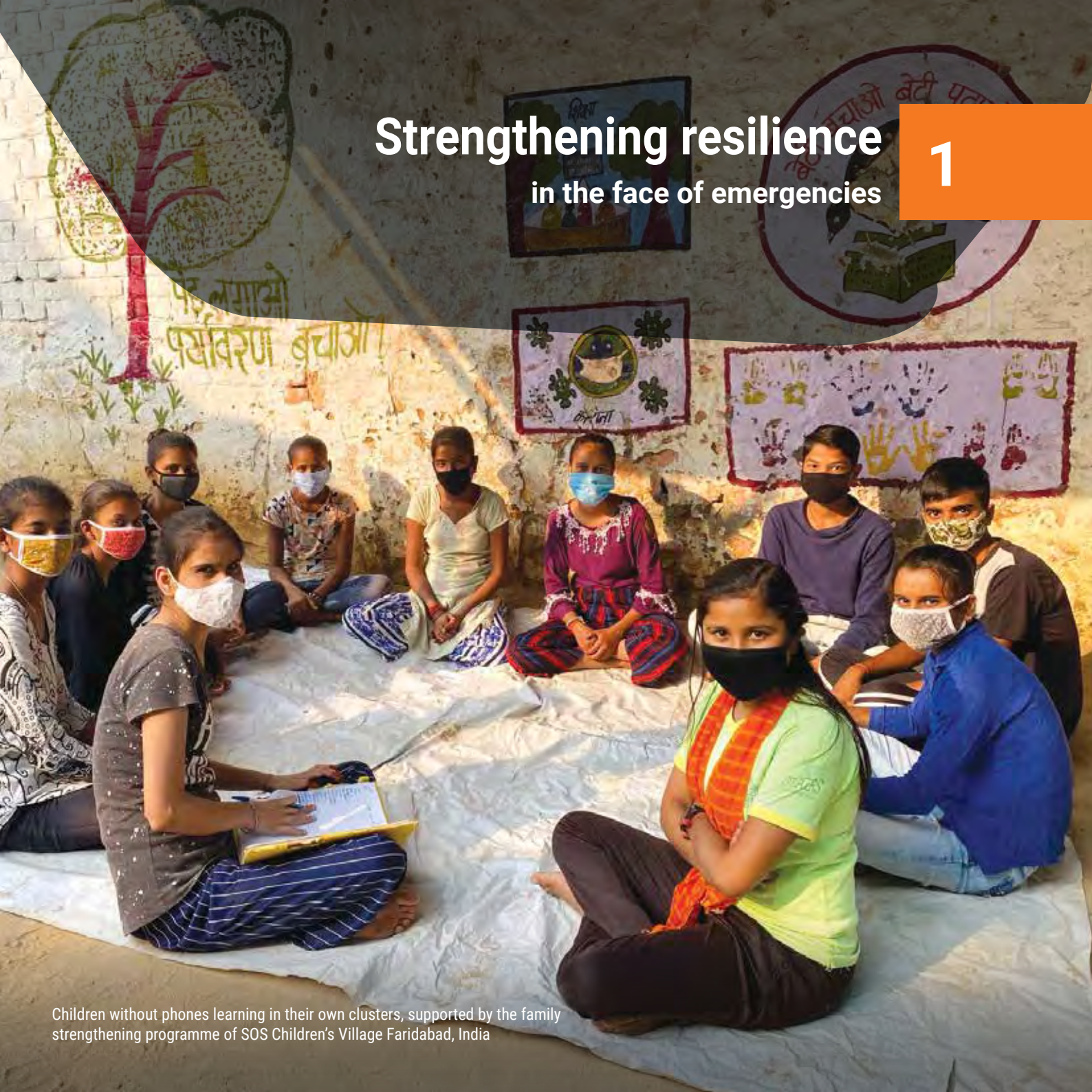
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Destruction caused by an earthquake in Indonesia

Strengthening resilience in the face of emergencies

1



Children without phones learning in their own clusters, supported by the family strengthening programme of SOS Children's Village Faridabad, India

Asia's disaster prone nature

- Active tectonic plate movement in the Indian Ocean - source of earthquakes and tsunamis.
- Generates tropical cyclones and typhoons.
- Home of young mountains – means higher risk of earthquake, landslide, flash floods, avalanches.
- Physical diversity creates further vulnerability – islands, mountains, extensive coastlines, forests, deltaic plains, deserts.
- Weather and the climate system depend on monsoon variability and snow cover dynamics – contributes to frequency and severity of floods and droughts.
- Several major rivers or network of rivers – across several national boundaries and a large portion of population lives in fertile valleys.²

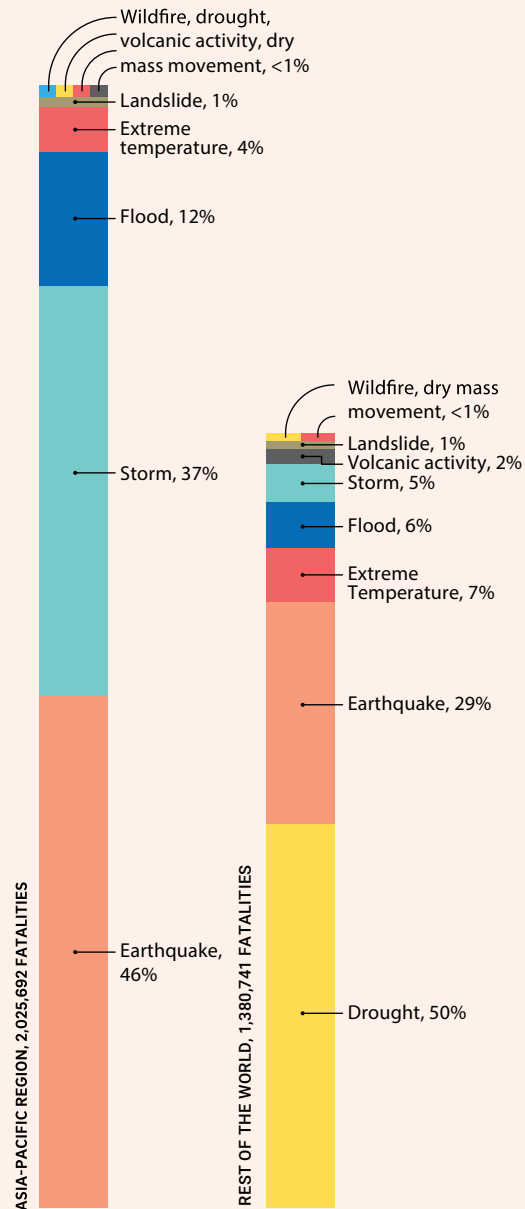
Risk and resilience in the Asia region

Living and working in Asia poses more risk of natural disasters than any other region in the world. We recognize that this means we need to be well-equipped with the right information, an effective mechanism to respond with, and most crucially, a proactive and positive mindset that is geared to overcome and build back better. The risk profiling of continents prone to disaster shows Asia as more vulnerable than any other region in the world. As we have been experiencing over the past two decades, there have been earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons, floods and cyclones lashing Asia relentlessly. Disaster risks are forecast to increase in many countries of the Asia region as more vulnerable people and assets are exposed to weather extremes.¹

^{1,2} David Li, "Overview of Natural Disasters and their Impacts in Asia and the Pacific, 1970 - 2014" (Paper presentation, Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, March 2015).

FATALITIES FROM NATURAL DISASTERS, 1970-2018

- Since 1970, two million people have been killed in disasters in the Asia-Pacific region – 59 per cent of the global death toll or 42,000 deaths a year. In the rest of the world, the average number of fatalities per year was 28,730.
- In 2018, almost half of the 281 natural disaster events worldwide occurred in the Asia-Pacific region, including 8 out of the 10 deadliest.



Source: *The Disaster Riskscape across Asia-Pacific: Pathways for Resilience, Inclusion and Empowerment. Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2019: Executive summary for policymakers.* UNESCAP, 2019.

A historical view of SOS Children's Villages' emergency response

It was the year 1949. Barely three years since the devastation of World War 2 had ended. As the guns fell silent, treaties were signed and the dust settled, the attention of Hermann Gmeiner – our founder – turned to the thousands of orphaned children right across Europe. He saw through the ruins of this human made disaster, the immense suffering of children, and decided that he would do something about it. His response was the world's first SOS Children's Village in Austria, which offered a family for children orphaned due to the war to grow up with siblings and a caring mother figure. As the world picked up its pieces and moved on, SOS Children's Villages has made a tradition of it, to respond to disasters with that same spirit and resolve to *build back better*.

Emergencies are now a given. Their frequency and severity are rising dramatically around the globe as a result of severe environmental degradation, climate change, poverty and a chain of other related economic and political factors. The impact of emergencies is particularly devastating in developing countries, including in Asia.

Nonetheless, through the years we see that despite all the devastation, loss and pain that disasters inflict, emergencies have still had the greatest influence on the growth and expansion of the programmes of SOS Children's Villages. The histories of many of our member associations in Asia and beyond demonstrate how both natural disasters and armed conflicts have often compelled SOS Children's Villages to rise up and respond strongly with new initiatives and far greater resilience.



SOS Children's Village Imst, Austria - the first SOS Children's Village founded by Hermann Gmeiner in 1949 following World War 2

The genesis

of SOS Children's Village Jaffna, Sri Lanka

History repeats itself. Just as SOS Children's Villages was born out of the ashes of World War 2, we have our similar experience and responses in the Asian neighbourhood.

It had been a bitter 30-year-old civil war in the island nation of Sri Lanka. May 2009 saw its bloodied end. As the dust settled, thousands of internally displaced and unaccompanied children languished in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps across the north where the war had been at its fiercest.

This was when the Government of Sri Lanka called upon SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka to take care of the hundreds of unaccompanied and orphaned children.

SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka responded instantly. First, they set up a temporary shelter and care programme within the IDP camps themselves to protect and care for all unaccompanied children streaming in to the camps. Then they initiated the rigorous and gigantic task of locating parents and unifying children with their families. Many hundreds were reunited in this manner. Finally, SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka also responded by setting up a new children's village in the northern district of Jaffna for children who had lost parents or whose parents were injured or otherwise rendered unable to look after their children. This was the birth of Sri Lanka's sixth SOS Children's Village: SOS Children's Village Jaffna.



An SOS family in SOS Children's Village Jaffna, Sri Lanka

2

Our guiding framework

A rights-based view of emergencies

Children can be considered the most vulnerable of the vulnerable at a time of crisis or disaster. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) articulates children's rights to survival, development, participation and protection in all circumstances especially during emergencies. It is at such times that the risk of violation of these rights increases. Children are particularly vulnerable to the loss of parental care and protection in the time when they need it most.



An SOS mother showing her daughter how to wash hands during the COVID-19 pandemic - SOS Children's Villages Viet Nam

Unaccompanied or separated children are at greater risk of being sexually abused, trafficked, or recruited into armed groups. Children's rights to health and psychological well-being are threatened, and access to education is often denied. Furthermore, children from ethnic or religious minorities, girls, children with disabilities, and children affected by HIV and AIDS face further risks of discrimination, violence and abandonment. The emotional impact of

disasters has the potential to jeopardize children's psychosocial recovery and long-term development. Girls and women are particularly vulnerable to being deprived of fundamental rights in emergency situations. The United Nations Security Resolution on Women, Peace and Security (S/RES/1325) addresses the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on girls and women. It also recognizes their rights to protection from violence and to participate in all peace and security processes.



A little girl goes back to the wreckage of her house to discover her battered teddy bear and tries to salvage it, following Typhoon Goni in 2020

Our internal framework



At SOS Children's Villages, we take emergencies very seriously. Our guiding documents form the bedrock on which every new response and initiative is anchored. These include the SOS Children's Villages Strategy 2030³, SOS Care Promise and SOS Children's Villages Emergency Policy.

The SOS Care Promise is explicit in our commitment towards children affected by emergencies:

Humanitarian emergency situations invariably lead to family separation and loss of security and livelihood. In such situations, we provide protection for unaccompanied children and young people, we actively support family reunification, and we assist families to overcome trauma and rebuild their lives. For children who cannot be reunified with their family, we work with authorities to find a suitable care placement.⁴

³ *No Child Should Grow Up Alone: SOS Children's Villages Strategy 2030* (Austria: SOS Children's Villages International, 2016).

⁴ *SOS Care Promise: How SOS Children's Villages Ensures the Best Care for Children and Young People* (Austria: SOS Children's Villages International, 2018).

⁵ *SOS Children's Villages Emergency Policy: Protecting Children in Emergencies* (Austria: SOS Children's Villages International, 2016).



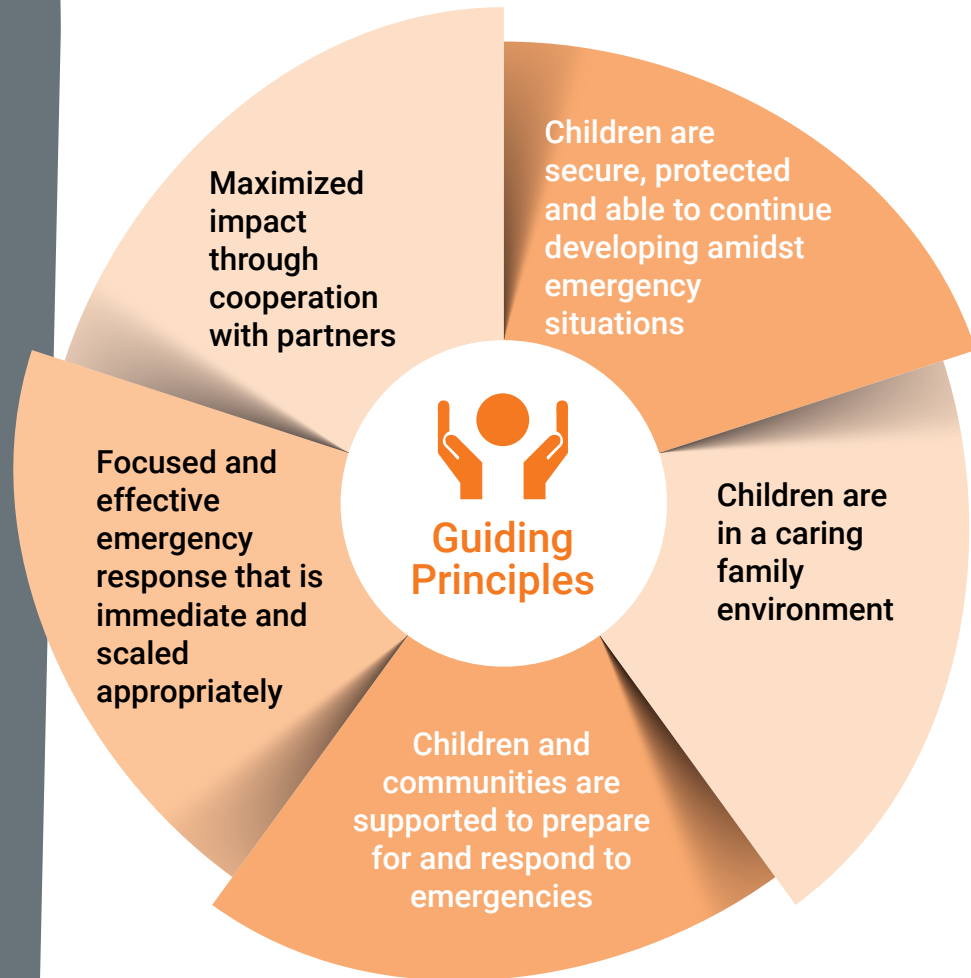
SOS Children's Villages Emergency Policy

SOS Children's Villages Emergency Policy is a testament to our commitment to protecting the most vulnerable in their darkest hours of need. Updated in 2016, it sets forth the ethos and culture of preparing for and responding to the plethora of emergencies that assail our member associations across the world. It expresses the organization's stand on emergency activities and sets an action framework for the SOS Children's Villages organization.⁵

This policy was designed through a consultative development process with wide participation and feedback from member associations, and incorporates the views of children and young people themselves.

FIVE PRINCIPLES GUIDING SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES EMERGENCY RESPONSES

As signatory of the **Code of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief**, our vision of humanitarian aid is based on International Humanitarian Law and the Humanitarian Imperative, and our conduct in all aspects of emergencies is guided by the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.



Source: *SOS Children's Villages Emergency Policy: Protecting Children in Emergencies*. SOS Children's Villages International, 2016.

1 We make sure children are secure, protected and able to continue developing amidst emergency situations.

During emergencies, our immediate response is to provide security and meet the basic needs of the children in our target group. We work in communities where we already have existing SOS Children's Villages programmes or in locations where our work can reasonably be carried out. We work to help restore the everyday rhythm of life in spite of the emergency situation so that children can continue developing. Our emergency response is rooted in the programme work of SOS Children's Villages so that as emergency

situations stabilize, long-term individual child and youth development can be sustained.

2 We make sure children are in a caring family environment. The key objective of our emergency response is to enable children to grow and develop within a caring family environment. We therefore strive to reunite unaccompanied children with their families, to prevent family separation and to strengthen families to care for and protect their children. Listening to the child and considering her or his best interests form the basis for any decision we take regarding their care and well-being.



A teacher describing a lesson to children at an elementary school rebuilt by SOS Children's Villages Philippines in Palanog, Tacloban, following Typhoon Haiyan 2013

3 We support children and communities to prepare for and to respond to emergencies. Preparedness is crucial for children, families and for SOS Children's Villages to be able to respond to an emergency situation and to mitigate its effects. We make sure our co-workers in high-risk countries are prepared to respond to emergencies by assuring they receive proper training and resources. Furthermore, preparedness tools using innovative technology as well as evacuation and security plans mitigate the risks for children and their caregivers, other participants in our emergency activities and co-workers. We use our expertise to strengthen the resilience of children, families and their communities to respond and cope if and when emergencies occur.

4 We carry out a focused and effective emergency response and recognize the importance of responding immediately and with the appropriate scale-up of resources depending on the needs of our target group. Based on our local presence and international support network, our emergency activities are quickly coordinated, based on needs identified in the field. In addition, we use our global capacity, knowledge and experience to support programme solutions. We make sure that the correct staff, funds, communications systems and monitoring activities are in place to deliver an effective response. We manage our emergency activities in a professional and transparent manner and in accordance with existing organizational policies, guidelines and external frameworks. We end our intervention properly with the implementation of an exit strategy.

5 We maximize our impact through cooperation with partners. We are a reliable and committed partner, and our existing infrastructure and logistics allow us to tailor our services to the needs of our target group. We recognize that a large-scale emergency can only be confronted in partnership with other stakeholders. We make our specialized contribution as part of a broader emergency response.





SOS Children's Villages responds to **Indonesian earthquake and tsunami in 2018**

Indonesia is no stranger to disasters. Periodic catastrophes and natural disasters are strewn across the pages of her history. Yet, this has made Indonesia quick to prepare, plan and implement. A mammoth 7.5 magnitude earthquake and tsunami which hit on September 28, 2018 is a case in point. The devastating quake and tsunami ripped through coastal areas of Sulawesi, including the city of Palu, the town of Sigi and the town of Donggala in Indonesia. At least 2,000 were killed and around 80,000 were displaced.

But in just 30 days after an earthquake and tsunami, SOS Children's Villages Indonesia was already up and running, providing more than 160 displaced children with Child Care Spaces or safe places to play and be taken care of. By the end of 2019, Child Care Spaces have been set up in ten locations providing services to 1,792 children from 939 families.

Two children having fun playing with balloons in the Child Care Space of SOS Children's Villages Indonesia



Children having fun with one of the SOS staff, at the Child Care Space set up by SOS Children's Villages Indonesia

The SOS Children's Villages Child Care Spaces offer recreational and educational activities in communities where many homes, schools and other public facilities were damaged or destroyed. The Child Care Spaces are located at shelters for displaced families.

SOS Children's Villages emergency response also included:

- Providing food to the children attending the Child Care Spaces to improve nutritional care.
- Helping to ensure that children have access to water, sanitation and hygiene facilities.
- Working with families to protect children's rights in emergency situations.
- Psychosocial support activities for resilience building and addressing trauma.
- Deliver Home in a Box packages of essential items in a time of disaster for 1,500 families.
- Unconditional cash transfer for 720 families.
- Establishing social network for the communities where SOS Children's Villages works to ensure all the emergency needs are covered by government and other stakeholders.

3

Our emergency response mechanism

Risk, vulnerability and resilience building

The interplay of risk and vulnerability of children in Asia needs to be understood prior to planning prevention, mitigation and eventually strengthening resilience. We recognize our crucial role in addressing the myriad vulnerabilities of Asian children caught in high-risk situations due to the unrelenting onslaught of numerous disasters.



Disaster management training provided to the emergency focal points of SOS Children's Villages Nepal

1

We believe that we should view resilience as a coming together of both new understanding of managing crises, and the reassertion of fundamental principles, tested by time and experience over decades.

2

We also believe that the best emergency preparedness actions are people-centred, and that pre-disaster investments to mitigate or even prevent crisis is essential.

3

We have seen that resilience building can be achieved through capacity building. Therefore, we now strive to advocate for and strengthen the capacity of our member associations in the Asia region.

4

The most vulnerable countries have been identified as disaster prone. The focal points of these countries have been provided with training and capacity building. They then share this capacity building with locational focal points.

5

Every children's village is equipped with an emergency toolkit which focal points are equipped to utilize when needed.



Basic first aid training provided to the staff of SOS Children's Villages Nepal, as a component of emergency preparedness and response training

Training in humanitarian assistance for focal points

This basic training on Emergency Preparedness and Response aims to empower focal persons of member associations intended to be the part of humanitarian interventions, assuring their meaningful participation in preparedness and response.

Goals of the training:

- To ensure capacities are placed among high risk member associations for developing and implementing effective emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes.
- To enhance capacity of focal persons to participate in humanitarian actions.
- To serve as Asia level knowledge hub for networking among humanitarian actors and professionals, designing innovative approaches, sharing data and best practices, and releasing publications.

This is what we learn about Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in these trainings:

- The relationship between development and disasters
- Basic information about risk, vulnerability and disasters
- Developing DRR plan and designing context-specific incidence response mechanism
- Conducting Rapid Needs Assessments
- Disaster needs assessments and emergency response decision making
- Basic methods and tools for collecting assessment information
- Humanitarian guiding principles including Red Cross Code of Conduct, HAP Standards, Sphere Standards and Core Humanitarian Standards, etc.
- Designing and implementing child-centric humanitarian interventions
- Institutional strengthening and alliance building on emergency response and preparedness
- Conducting sectoral needs assessments including in child protection
- Typical adverse effects and post-disaster needs commonly arising from specific hazard types
- Identifying priorities in emergency response and needs assessment

Emergency coordination and monitoring mechanisms

When a disaster invariably strikes, a well-designed, tried and tested implementation framework guides our actions. Implementation takes place through focal persons selected at local and national levels who coordinate with each other. The national level coordinates with the Asia regional Emergency Response Team (ERT), which advises and supports national level interventions. In the event of large-scale interventions, regional ERT works in collaboration with the international ERT. A number of co-workers who have years of valued experience in disaster response are also registered in the SOS Children's Villages International Emergency Roster and form a volunteer force of experts from different fields, who mobilize as an inter-disciplinary disaster response team when required.

Having a mechanism that works has helped us repeatedly to get in to action swiftly and efficiently, when everything around us breaks down in a disaster. Here is how it works:

- The emergency preparedness programme is led by the national director of the respective high risk country in close collaboration with International Office-Asia ERT.
- The national director is assisted by national level focal person, who is appointed by the national director based on given selection criteria. At the project level the programme is led by programme





A family in Nodhara, India, taking precautions on their shelter

director / village director and is assisted by project level focal person.

- A regional ERT is responsible for overall coordination with national level focal person and other regional stakeholders.
- The national level focal person is responsible for all national level coordination and coordination with International Office-Asia ERT.
- Focal persons upon completion of their training, develop detailed plans of intervention for awareness and training at the project level to implement activities.
- Key outcome and result indicators are identified and baseline data are considered to measure achievements.
- A participatory monitoring approach is used to implement systematic recording in order to monitor progress and provide necessary guidance towards achieving the objectives.
- Monitoring of the planned activities is also done by International Office-Asia co-workers by assessing reports and data received from member associations or through physical visits and evaluating the capacities of member association by conducting mock exercises.
- In Asia, human resources are shared among the locations. This is done in order to reduce the cost and share experiences and learning among member associations.



SOS Children's Village Tacloban, Philippines after being hit by Typhoon Haiyan in 2013



SOS Children's Villages Philippines Rebuilding Lives

November 8, 2013 will remain unforgettable for 11.3 million people of the Philippines. That was the day, category 5 Typhoon Haiyan (locally known as Yolanda) made landfall with a catastrophic direct hit on the Philippines. A country with a population of 92 million saw nearly 11.3 million affected in people in 36 provinces 9 regions.

In the SOS Children's Villages themselves, mothers and children had to battle Haiyan to stay alive. As the typhoon ripped through their homes and flood waters rose, one of the many brave mothers even told her children to quickly get up to the ceiling. She knew the roof and ceiling had been built to withstand typhoons. Her children were all saved that day!

The SOS spirit and resolve have been tested before, and at every devastating turn, this spirit would help us simply get up, and build again. As soon as the waters subsided and the wind died down, SOS co-workers, children and other staff came out of their damaged houses and shelters, with an old and firm resolve that this time too they would rebuild their lives better, stronger and more resilient.

SOS Children's Villages International Office-Asia, on behalf of SOS Children's Villages Philippines, launched a humanitarian appeal immediately after the typhoon to address the immediate, mid-term and long-term needs of children and their families, including the needs of unaccompanied and separated children.

SOS Children's Villages Emergency Response Programme (ERP) visited and planned interventions in three area includes three *Barangays* (Bislig, Magay and Palanog). As an immediate measure, 12 Child Care Spaces were set up in locations within a 25km radius of SOS Children's Village Tacloban.

Next, Home in a Box, which is a relief package, was distributed to 630 families of the worst affected in the three *Barangays*. These boxes contained essential items like clothes, shoes, utensils, mosquito repellants and cooking oil. Families under the kinship care programme who were taking care of children without parents in their own extended family were also supported.

Child Care Spaces: A hallmark of the SOS Children's Villages' ERP intervention in Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan

12 Child Care Spaces were established as an immediate response, to ensure that children were shielded from the chaos and destruction, and did not suffer further trauma.

Many children were unable to go to school as their school and playgrounds were damaged. This meant they had nowhere to play and no one to play with. To make matters even harder, most children had evacuated their own damaged homes and were now living in a new environment with many limitations like unreliable electricity supply, food and clean water. The Child Care Space intervention by

providing all of these basic necessities was a vital tool in recovery for the community. Children soon were able to feel safe, play with friends and be happy again. They also learned to express their feelings about the horrors they witnessed and find a measure of healing. They also found relief and comfort, a structure to their day, stability and order to their lives, through the Child Care Spaces which were open to them to come to daily. Parents too found this a huge relief as they could be sure their children were somewhere safe while they themselves went on with the work of picking up the pieces and rebuilding their lives.



Children enjoying a safe space in the Child Care Space of SOS Children's Villages Philippines, after Typhoon Haiyan

Photograph source: : <https://ciligyolanda.wordpress.com/tag/tanauan/>



SOS Children's Villages was one of the first organizations to come here to help



An Interview with
PELAGIO TECSON
Mayor of the Municipality
of Tanauan

Q In Tanauan, how heavy was the damage from Typhoon Haiyan?

A We did all we could to prepare for Haiyan, but it was so catastrophic! The destruction was unprecedented. We lost more than 1,300 lives in our municipality alone. Countless homes and properties were gone in an instant. But we needed to get back on our feet.

Q Did SOS Children's Villages arrive with help after the typhoon?

A Yes, SOS Children's Villages brought necessary supplies. It was one of the first organizations to come here to help. Its

International Director-Asia even came here personally. SOS Children's Villages did not only offer relief goods and temporary programmes for our affected population, it was also interested in providing a long-term solution to one of our pressing problems—the lack of safe and permanent houses for families at risk. We were very happy that SOS Children's Villages came forward to help us.

Q Now that most of the houses are finished, can you confirm that the structures are sound and safe?

A I've seen the housing projects in our municipality. I can say that the SOS houses are the strongest ones that have been given for free to families in need.⁶

⁶ *Rebuilding Lives: Emergency Response Programme in the Philippines, 2013-2017* (India: SOS Children's Villages International Office Asia).

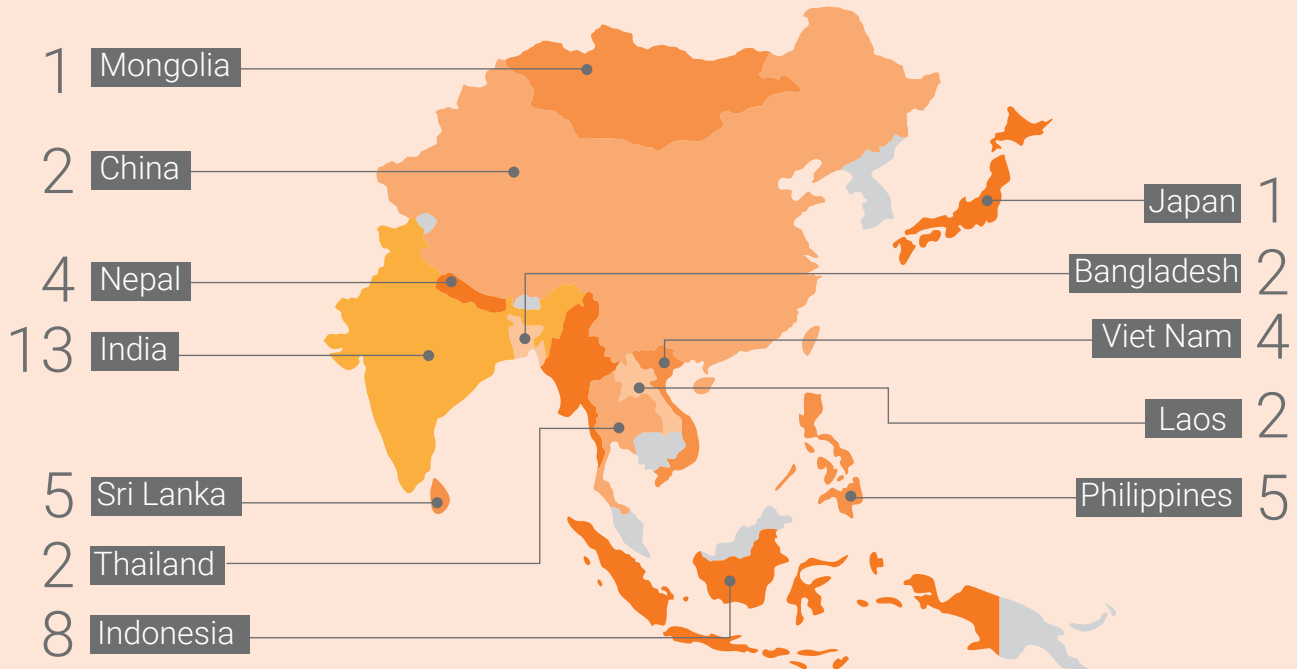
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MAJOR EMERGENCIES RESPONDED TO IN 12 COUNTRIES ACROSS ASIA BETWEEN 2000 & 2020

(Data as on December 31, 2020)

Emergency response staff of SOS Children's Villages Indonesia, assisting a mother to take care of her infant child in the aftermath of an earthquake that hit Yogyakarta in 2006

EMERGENCY RESPONSES OF SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES IN ASIA (2000-2020)





4

COVID -19

An emergency
like never before

When COVID struck

2020 was a year that would test our mettle and resolve to the core, and challenge our perception of emergencies. The Novel Corona Virus pandemic (COVID-19) began spreading in the latter part of 2019 in the Far East and swept through the world by March 2020. Every one of our member associations was shaken almost overnight by this phenomenon of a pandemic which few if any had ever experienced. All that was normal to us such as movement, connectedness, communication and access to resources suddenly became tainted with a killer virus. As we write, we are still finding our feet after the first and second waves that swept over us in Asia.

Reflections in retrospect



Q You have seen many emergencies through the years. How is COVID-19 different?

A When we look at an epidemic, we never expected one to be a serious risk. None of the emergency preparedness work we have done through the years had prepared us for this. We didn't have a contingency plan for a lockdown because we had never had a lock down! But our strength and bounce back capacity was tested immensely. We survived and are even thriving today seven to eight months down the line because we have a hugely dedicated co-workers and caregiver base. We seem to have managed with precautionary work.

Q What happened within the SOS family across Asia when COVID struck?

A The first we heard of it was 31st December when China reported it for the first time. Then when we got a report on 15th January 2020, we gave a caution for travel plans and developed new guidelines. We waited and watched. By the end of January, we sent a communication to all our member associations in Asia that all travel

was suspended. We had to protect our children and staff. By 4th March, reports of cases started coming, then we sent a formal advisory with further guidelines. By late March, we had provided multiple documents to the SOS family to understand the disease.

Q No one had time to prepare for this. How did you all manage those tough days?

A We started responding very early. Even as early as March and April 2020, we started stock piling. At SOS Children's Villages we have a standard stock of one month of provisions anyways. But we realized people will be worried, so because of the COVID preparedness we started stock piling for more than one month. We even had moving stories coming in, like from Jorparti in Nepal where we have an SOS Children's Village for children with disabilities, where our SOS mothers and their children were so well prepared and stocked that they were able to share with their own neighbours, providing a wonderful model of how a village can assist others around them in the neighbourhood..."

Responding to the pandemic

Already possessing standard emergency protocols meant we had a head start in implementing safety measures. We simply had to adapt these measures to the unique and unprecedented nature of the pandemic and consequent lockdowns.

Having time-tested emergency protocols in place was also possibly the reason for faster recovery, better resilience and efficiency in safeguarding children from a virus whose advent was fast, furious and wholly unexpected. Educating ourselves on the go, educating children, mothers, co-workers and all stakeholders was an equal priority. However, SOS Children's Villages International Office was quick to meet and come up with useful guidelines that helped navigate an entirely unfamiliar world.



Three strategic principles guide our COVID-19 response

(as introduced by the international senate of SOS Children's Villages in April 2020)

We care for children, young people and employees

The **safety, security and emotional well-being of children and young people** is of utmost importance-especially in times of crisis. In all situation, we aim to continue learning and development activities. We **prevent premature end of care** in alternative care and ensure that vulnerable families continue to receive support via our family strengthening services. We also put particular focus on the **safety, security and well-being of our employees**, in particular SOS parents and others working directly with children.

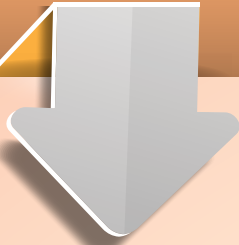
We take visible action from a strong local base

As a direct service provider with a global footprint we **take responsibility and act** for our target group. Our SOS Children's Villages across the globe are a base for a **tailored and locally-rooted response** to the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequence. We harness our experience from tackling crisis situations in the past and together with our **partners**, take coordinated action.

We act with solidarity

As a federation, we unite more than ever to overcome a challenging financial situation. All member associations explore ways to **generate funds** and are ready to show **solidarity and step in** if other member associations cannot live up to their programme commitments.

A battle with an unseen adversary: The way we adapted



PREVENTING THE SPREAD

- Educating and supporting proper hand washing and hygiene.
- Promoting and ensuring people are practicing physical distancing.
- Introducing COVID-19 testing and treatment in our medical facilities
- Providing masks and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as required.
- Conducting continuous awareness raising both in person and online.



DEALING WITH INFECTION AND PSYCHOSOCIAL ISSUES

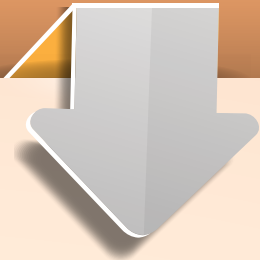
- Introducing quarantine and isolation procedures for those infected or suspected of carrying the virus.
- Addressing psychosocial issues, anxieties, stress and uncertainty related to COVID and lockdown especially through virtual and phone counselling and Psychological First Aid.



MITIGATING IMPACT OF LOCKDOWN

- Providing stocks of provisions and basic amenities to survive lockdown.
- Providing IT facilities, digital equipment and training to facilitate online education.
- Launching digital fundraising and online trainings for all level of staff.
- Partnering with government and non-government stakeholders for rapid needs assessments and the provision of support to affected communities.

COVID-19 prevention and response across all the SOS Children's Villages programmes in Asia – whether it be in children's villages or communities – took place and evolved to suit country realities. The support provided in 2020 include the following:



ADDRESSING IMPACT ON YOUTH AND CARE LEAVERS

- Providing accommodation for care leavers (individuals who have transitioned from alternative care to independent living) who lost accommodation and jobs due to the COVID crunch.
- Providing dry rations and emergency cash support.
- Mobilizing the care leavers' peer group Generation Never Give-up Network in Sri Lanka.
- Providing training, reskilling and mentoring support to increase youth employability.



PROTECTING CAREGIVERS AND FAMILIES

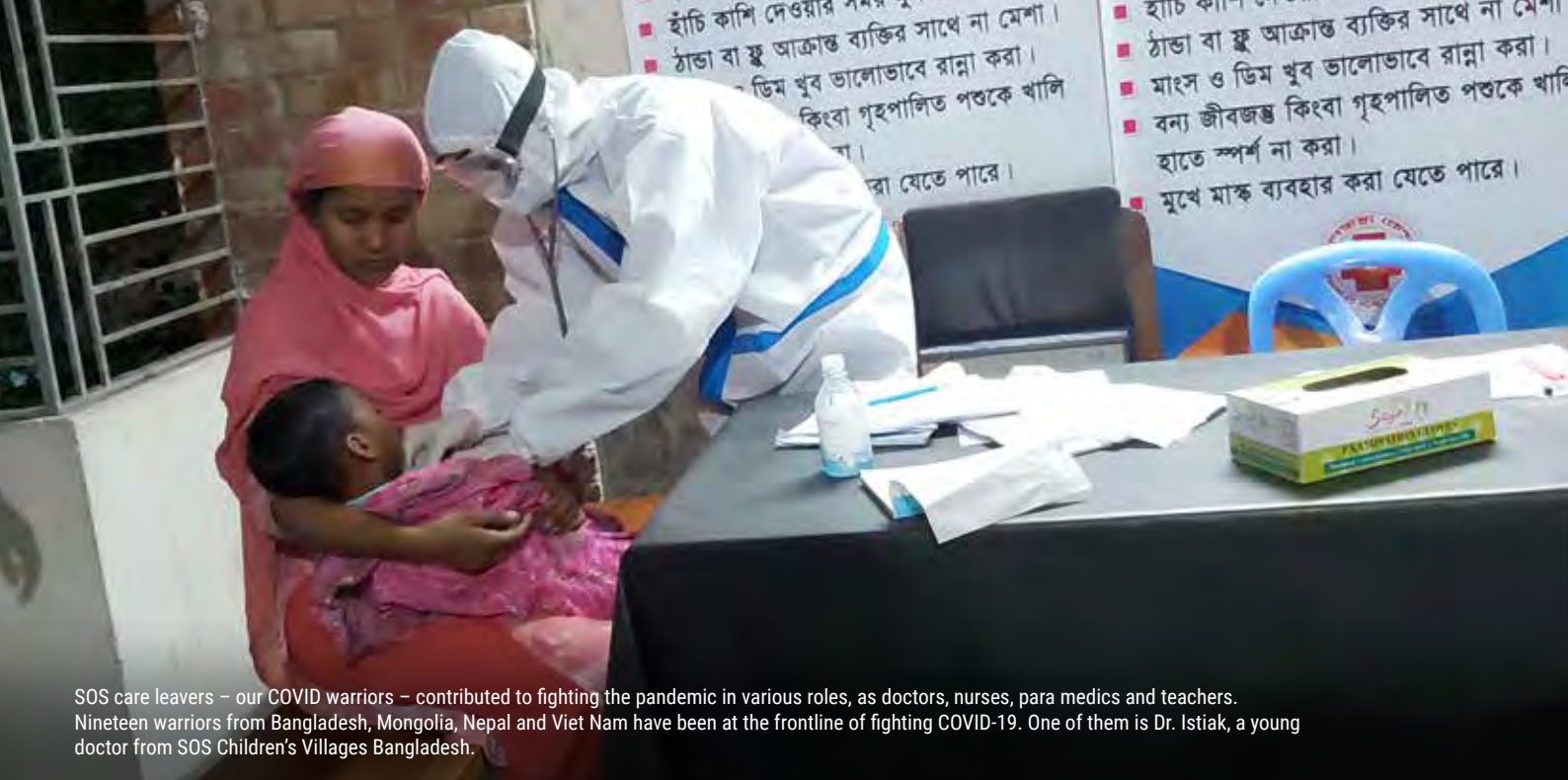
- Providing extra support and wellbeing enhancement for SOS mothers and aunts who had to work overtime for extended periods of time without a break.
- Educating families in our family strengthening and kinship care programmes.
- Addressing increased domestic violence in lockdown situations in the family strengthening, foster care and kinship care programmes.



ADVOCATING FOR CHILDREN

- Sending joint appeals to government and inter-governmental bodies together with child rights coalitions, highlighting the challenges faced by children and youth during the pandemic and the redressive measure to be taken.
- Organizing regional and national online forums to put the spotlight on the impact of COVID-19 on children in alternative care and care leavers.
- Providing opportunities for children and young people to speak out and lead campaigns.

READ MORE: Refer book 7 - Advocacy of this Information Pack for further information.



SOS care leavers – our COVID warriors – contributed to fighting the pandemic in various roles, as doctors, nurses, para medics and teachers. Nineteen warriors from Bangladesh, Mongolia, Nepal and Viet Nam have been at the frontline of fighting COVID-19. One of them is Dr. Istiak, a young doctor from SOS Children's Villages Bangladesh.



Rejuvenating Huts for SOS mothers to spend time in rest and relaxation, created by SOS Children's Villages Thailand



SOS Children's Villages Laos developed many Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials together with partners for community awareness raising



The family strengthening programme team of SOS Children's Village Trichur, India, collaborated with the local Panchayat in establishing a community kitchen for supplying food to 100 vulnerable families who were quarantined due to secondary contact with COVID-19 affected people. The team supported the community kitchen with food materials.

BANGLADESH

- Cash & food support to 2,564 FSP and Kinship Care families.
- Supplementary nutrition to 1,121 children under FSP
- Cash Support to 92 care leavers.
- Health and safety training to 18 youths residing in hostels/other boarding facilities.
- Short term market-driven agricultural course provided to 24 youths.

PHILIPPINES

- Food support to 1171 families under FSP & nutritional support to 235 pregnant and lactating mothers.
- Assessment underway in 7 FSP programme locations to identify livelihood options for care givers and youth.
- First-aid kit provided to 66 SOS family houses, 12 youth facilities and 1,477 FSP families across 8 programme locations.
- Cash support provided to 1720 FSP & Kinship Care families.

VIET NAM

- Food support to 1,638 families under FSP.
- Cash support to 247 care leavers.
- Food support to 1,726 children, youth, mothers through enhanced family budget allowance.
- Nutritional food support to 191 youth.
- 85 computers to support online learning in CVs and youth houses.

INDIA

- Livelihood support to 324 families under FSP.
- Education kits for 8,000 children under FSP.
- Cash Support to 832 care leavers.
- Re-skilling of 50 youth for better employment prospects in diverse sectors.
- 2 Short stay homes for children in need of care and protection.
- Food support to 4,722 families and hygiene kits to 5,845 families under FSP.

NEPAL

- Supplementary vitamins/minerals to 1,517 children and caregivers in 10 CVs.
- Awareness generation for 1,517 children and caregivers and 2,500 families under FSP.
- Cash support to 2,500 FSP families.
- Vocational training for 6 youth.
- Cash support to 185 care leavers.
- Educational support to 3,600 FSP children.
- Computers for online education in 9 youth care facilities and children in 8 CVs.

LAOS

- Cash support to 96 families under FSP.
- Cash support to 23 care leavers.
- Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) & awareness generation for 1,352 children, youth, care givers, mothers, aunts, staff under FLC/FSP/Youth Care/HGSs.

INDONESIA

- Cash support to 24 care leavers and mobile data support to 35 youth living in external facilities.
- COVID-19 testing for 144 children and caregivers in CV Medan & unsubsidized medical expenses by the government in all the CVs.
- Toys and board games for children to ensure psychosocial and mental health.
- Provision of Vitamin C supplements to all the children and caregivers in CV Medan.
- Internet Access for all the 30 SOS family houses in CV Banda Aceh and CV.

SRI LANKA

- PPE & awareness generation for 8,395 children, youth, care givers, mothers, co-workers.
- Cash and food support to 900 families under FSP.
- Cash and food support to 50 care leavers.
- CDs, Books, internet for 1,000 children under FLC and 2,500 children under FSP.
- Psychosocial counselling to 200 children, youth and care givers.

MONGOLIA

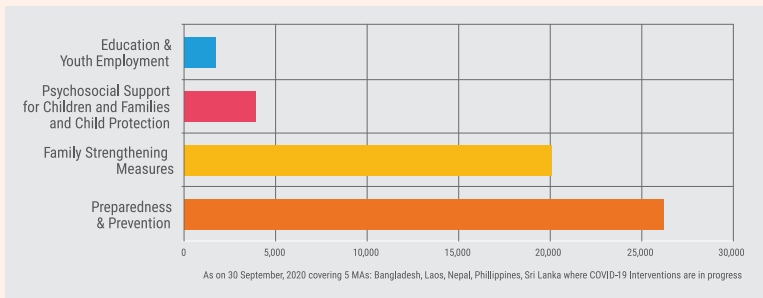
- Food support and psychosocial counselling for 69 families under FSP.
- Education kits for 219 children under FSP.
- Awareness generation on hygiene practices, disease prevention and child safeguarding for 69 families under FSP.

7 MAS Responded across **50+** Locations

234 Care leavers supported in **4 MAS**

10528 People received food assistance under FS Programme in **7 MAS**

8218 People received PPE kits in **4 MAS**



CV - Children's Village
 FLC - Family Like Care
 FSP - Family Strengthening Programme
 HGS - Hermann Gmeiner School
 MA - Member Association

Source: *Managing the Unprecedented Regional Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Asia*. SOS Children's Villages International Office Asia, 2021.

Showing the way in Da Nang

The year was 2020. The month March. Da Nang in Viet Nam was the epicenter of COVID-19.

When everyone was shaken badly by the pandemic and floundered with what measures to take, one corner of Da Nang was active, confident and successful. SOS Children's Village Da Nang seemed to have gotten a head start. They had clear guidance, protective

protocols, and all of the necessary supplies and equipment in place. Things had moved quickly in the SOS family worldwide and SOS Children's Villages Viet Nam was ready.

A COVID task force was quickly set up in SOS Children's Village Da Nang. Instant measures ensured that all children and staff were made aware of the way the virus was working and how protection should happen. New and



Community members the worst affected by the pandemic received food provisions from SOS Children's Village Da Nang

unfamiliar terminology and practices kicked in speedily. Personal Protective Equipment, handwashing, social distancing, sanitizers, shields, mask wearing and generic medicines to increase immunity were all applied and put in practice.

Nearly a year has passed. Not a single case of COVID-19 has been reported from the SOS Children's Village Da Nang. Everyone is safe and healthy. They have also shared their knowledge and some very crucial support with the community around which has strengthened the wider community as well. Nguyen Thi Minh Nguyet, Deputy Head of the Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs in Hai Chau District, Da Nang is particularly impressed and appreciative of the support offered to COVID-affected families by the family strengthening programme of SOS Children's Village Da Nang. She particularly appreciates the food distribution to the families with children registered in the programme. She remarks publicly about the effectiveness of the timely support rendered by the programme during an extremely difficult time in known history.

The final accolade comes to SOS Children's Village Da Nang from the fact that all lessons learned have been shared with and replicated by other child care organizations in Viet Nam! All the hard work and the diligent good practices have paid great dividends.

Finally, I can sleep well again

My name is Sunita Sada. I live in Itahari, a sub-metropolitan city of province number one in the eastern part of Nepal. There are five members in my family including my husband, three daughters and myself. My husband has been in Qatar, working as a security guard for the past two years. I look after our two daughters. Neither my husband nor I had studied very much more than the fifth grade. I had never heard of anything like the COVID virus. When it hit I didn't bother much initially. But then when the lockdowns started my whole world was shaken. I didn't know what was happening. I couldn't go out and get food, I didn't have enough money anyways to even get what we wanted. I was so afraid that my husband, my children or I would be infected. I had so many worried and anxieties all the time that I thought my head would burst. Bad news kept increasing. The death rate was climbing; the spread of the affected areas was increasing. I was beside myself with fear, worry and anxiety. I cried a lot, could not sleep and I felt so helpless even to take care of my children.



Sunita with her three daughters, facing COVID confidently with better coping strategies

In the meantime, I received a phone call from SOS Children's Village Itahari. They offered to talk with me about what I was facing. Though I was unsure how to talk about these things initially, the caller made it very easy for me by understanding my fears, and asking me helpful questions. He also made it sound quite normal to feel this way. This really eased some of my reticence immediately. I kept talking, and he gave me some very good ideas on how I could manage myself, my feelings and my children.

With his advice, I started to spend time with my children and relax with them, playing and finding things to enjoy. We also spoke regularly with our friends and relatives on

the phone and especially with my husband, which helped a lot to feel connected and ease some stress. We also were more careful about the information we took in and only took verified information so we didn't get upset by false information. The helpful caller from SOS Children's Villages also referred me to psychosocial support services and to a doctor as well, all of which was helpful.

We also later received financial relief support to help us through this unexpectedly difficult time. I am now able to manage my emotions and have adjusted to the new way of living that COVID has brought about. I can sleep in peace once more.

Lessons learned:

COVID the teacher

Over the past months as we write this, we have been involved in a daily battle with the pandemic. Countless lives are being lost. Life has changed as never before, and yet, these dark times have stirred us to reflect, rethink, and reimagine our futures. In this ever-changing reality, we are learning as we speak. Here are some of the many lessons we are learning:

- We are learning that online training and the virtual platforms are no longer a dream but a reality, no longer a luxury but an essential survival tool. Online trainings are now often conducted for caregivers, at SOS Children's Villages, family strengthening locations and youth care settings.
- We are learning how challenging it is to maintain social distancing and COVID regulations when large numbers of children share space in groups.
- We are learning that child safeguarding reporting and investigation are far more complex due to mandatory social





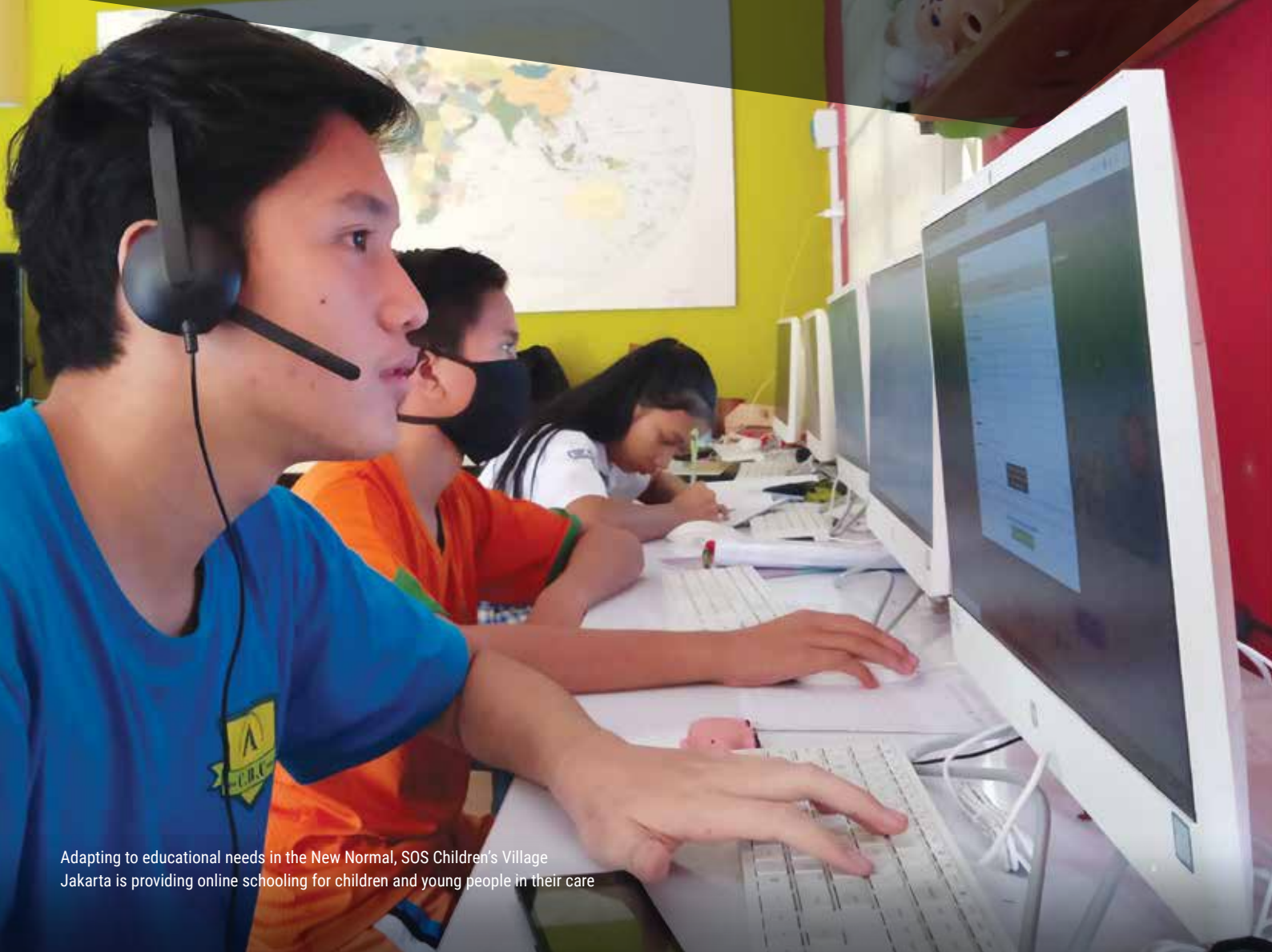
SOS mother in Laos teaching her children how to wash hands

distancing and lockdowns. There is need for developing alternative ways to register and resolve child safeguarding issues.

- We see that already self-reliant youth and families in the family strengthening programme can become vulnerable all too easily in a pandemic. There is a need for resilience building amongst all our target group so that their dependence on us can be reduced and their capacity can bounce back enhanced.
- Even for extended periods, business continuity can be ensured by providing basic IT infrastructure that facilitates Work from Home. All manner of meetings, trainings and communications can be enabled by good technological support for virtual meetings.
- We also learn that not being with colleagues and being isolated with no team spirit and camaraderie can adversely impact staff wellbeing. The need for psychosocial support is underscored yet again.

5 Emergency preparedness and the future

We have learned hard lessons through emergencies, on which we base our goals for the future. We are committed to forming pathways that can take our children, our families and our organization to a stronger, safer future.



Adapting to educational needs in the New Normal, SOS Children's Village Jakarta is providing online schooling for children and young people in their care

1. We are moving to make the digital village concept a reality. We are committed to equip SOS Children's Villages to survive and thrive in a new world where life online and in cyber space becomes the norm and remote access to learning, communications and business become the new normal. Towards this end we will strive to:
 - a. Continue focus and investment on developing and using online modules.
 - b. Strengthening of our IT infrastructure - laptops, internet, TV screens in SOS Children's Villages, family houses, key family strengthening locations and youth houses need to be put in place urgently.
2. A fresh look at child safeguarding.
 - a. Reporting mechanisms, both offline and online need to be put in place.
 - b. Child safeguarding investigators need to be trained in online interviewing.
3. A more robust support system for care leavers.
 - a. Particularly, building ductile structures of support that can sustain them in the event of disasters that can lead to financial destitution.
 - b. Follow an agile development plan for a few years even after social reintegration.
4. E-learning and digital approaches for learning and capacity building for staff who must work remotely.
 - a. Modules for children, mothers, families and co-workers that are not only useful during emergencies but also during normal situations.
 - b. Psychosocial counselling modules for caregivers, co-workers and leaders, since trainers work remotely.
 - c. Digital and telephone fundraising modules that can be implemented quickly, ensuring people raise funds while operating remotely.

At SOS Children's Villages, we recognize that we have a crucial role in addressing the numerous natural and human made disasters and crises in Asia. We recognize that such disasters, if we are adequately prepared, can bring out the best in us as an organization, and an extended family of care.

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Two girls playing with each other in the village of Chinurpudupettai, one year after tsunami - SOS Children's Villages India



Children enjoying game activities in the Child Care Space of SOS Children's Villages Laos



**SOS CHILDREN'S
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