

THE SOS MOTHER PROFESSION



SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES
INTERNATIONAL

HR/D cycle and external recognition



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“SOS Children’s Villages focuses on the child’s development into a self-supporting and contributing member of society. A child’s development to his or her full potential is best realised in a caring family environment...” (SOS Children’s Village Programme Policy). According to this policy statement, SOS Children’s Villages works with different forms of family, including families of origin, SOS families and other forms of family-based care. An SOS family is a place, where the child who has lost parental care can develop within a caring family environment. The SOS mother leads the SOS family and is directly responsible for the care and development of each child. This handbook is targeted at the development of SOS mothers and their profession.

SOS Children’s Villages looks for women to become SOS mothers whose personalities and ways of dealing with life are such that the children can model themselves on them. Through the relationship that grows between the SOS mother and each child in her care, she passes on a part of herself to them. At the same time, she is a child care professional who is able to adequately deal with the children and their specific life stories, by using her child care and educational competences.

The motives of women who take on this profession are as diverse as their life stories. Whatever the individual motives are, the demands that come with the profession are such that an SOS mother always moves between the areas of private life and work, between family life and the organisation. Trying to keep a balance between these different areas is one of the biggest challenges that come with the profession.

Over the last fifteen years, SOS Children’s Villages has invested a lot in professionalising the position of the SOS mother, in order to better meet the high demands of the profession and to improve the quality of the child care the organisation provides. Yet, according to many SOS mothers, „Not nearly enough can be done in this direction“. In 2007, an international expert team was installed to update the organisation’s SOS Mother Handbook. Since then, various guidelines from the SOS Children’s Village Manual have been elaborated in-depth to provide the national associations with better orientation and guidance. The SOS mother profile, for example, has been thoroughly adjusted to new external and internal developments and may now serve as frame for national recruitment, training, and development procedures. The included global framework curriculum serves as a basis for elaborating regional and/or national SOS mother trainings in detail while taking into account local needs and requirements.

The main target group of the Handbook includes continental, regional and national HR/D managers, co-workers in charge of SOS mother training, SOS mother co-ordinators and, of course, every co-worker who wants to gain a deeper understanding of the SOS mother profession.

This Handbook describes the tasks of an SOS mother in detail by presenting four main areas of responsibility: **1)** Family development: The SOS mother creates a family together with the children who grow up as brothers and sisters in an atmosphere of security and joy. **2)** Child development: The SOS mother ensures the holistic development and wellbeing of each child in her family. **3)** The SOS Children's Village organisation: The SOS mother cooperates with the organisation. **4)** Self-development: The SOS mother leads her personal and professional growth.

Based on the list of tasks comprised within these four areas, a comprehensive competence profile has been elaborated. This profile covers the 24 main competences an SOS mother needs to develop, in order to be able to fulfil her responsibilities.

The Handbook only lists the summaries of the competences. The full profile includes more differentiated descriptions based on the three competence dimensions "attitudes & values, knowledge, and skills", as well as performance indicators and corresponding training content. An intranet link to this profile can be found in the respective chapter.

A thorough recruitment process and a well-structured two-month orientation period are the next phases which are outlined in the Handbook. These are followed by the two-year initial training programme which every SOS mother trainee needs to actively participate in before she may become an SOS mother.

The included global framework curriculum serves as a frame for SOS mother training around the world and includes the strategic objectives, the quality features of the training system, the general didactic principles, a content overview, and a learning unit description. There is an emphasis on the characteristics of the practical training, on the process of integrating theoretical and practical training parts, on support systems including mentoring and on the final evaluation of the SOS mother trainee.

Throughout an SOS mother's career, ongoing development opportunities are important means to promote her performance and motivation. These include regular performance appraisal talks, ongoing follow-up training, continuous support offers as well as specific development opportunities for long-serving SOS mothers.

The final phase in an SOS mother's career, the „end-of-employment relationship“, also needs to be well prepared and individual forms of growing into retirement and finalising an SOS mother's career have to be considered. Issues such as the model of „SOS mother for one generation of children“, unplanned terminations, retirement and early retirement are covered in the Handbook.

The final chapter focuses on the external recognition of the SOS mother profession, which was formulated as one of the organisation's strategic goals in 2003. It is a complex and challenging issue which requires intensive cooperation with governments, ministries, educational institutions and other child care professions.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS FROM THE TEAM

Any HR/D standards, even if well-elaborated and properly implemented, will fail their objectives if the preconditions or framework conditions do not meet the needs. The same is true for this Handbook and the development of each SOS mother and the SOS mother profession as a whole.

Working conditions as defined in the SOS Children's Village Manual or staffing patterns as defined in the HR Manual need to be thoroughly implemented. The issue of the number of children per family needs to be handled with care and according to individual family constellations and needs. The same is true for the timing of the establishment of a new SOS family.

The number of SOS aunts or family assistants and the quality of their cooperation with SOS mothers is another factor which has a direct impact on the performance and motivation of an SOS mother, as their help has proven to be the most important support resource for SOS mothers.

Respecting Human Rights, Women's Rights, and the right to privacy, beyond all cultural and societal characteristics and traditions should be something which does not need to be mentioned, but still we would like to underline the importance of these rights in this context.

And last but not least, the SOS mother's salary needs to be adequate for a professional child care worker. We as an organisation build our SOS family child care model on her work and responsibility, so paying her adequately (1) expresses our respect for her contribution, and (2) helps to prevent that our well-trained SOS mothers leave for another organisation because of salary reasons.

INTRODUCTION

The caring and stable relationship between the SOS mother and the children entrusted to her is the foundation of the SOS family child-care model. The SOS mother is a child-care professional who is committed to the long-term care of children. She leads the SOS family and is directly responsible for promoting the development of each child in her care.

The SOS Children's Village organisation is dedicated to building the SOS mother profession; a profession for people who are strongly committed to care for children in need of alternative care. The organisation ensures a thorough selection process, a high standard of training as well as ongoing support to make sure that the SOS mother can develop continuously, expand her capabilities and qualifications and grow according to her potential.

The SOS Children's Village organisation as reflected in its programme policy invites and welcomes couples, married women and single men to join it in fulfilling the role of a parent. While throughout this handbook the term "SOS mother" is used the content is valid for all those who fulfil the role of a parent.

The selection and training of and the support for SOS couples/parents are more complex issues and are not covered in this handbook. In such cases, both adults have to undergo a qualified training process.

1.1 PROFESSIONAL CHILD CARE

The care which an SOS mother provides is a very specific and special form of child care. She integrates professional child care practices into her everyday family life with the children. In contrast to everyday routine, the formation of inter-personal relationships with children and young people in family based forms of alternative care is based on a target-oriented and reflective process.

Living and working within a family-like system is characterised by two main aspects: **1)** the separation between private life and professional life hardly exists in this shared environment; and **2)** the carer's personality has a holistic effect on the care s/he provides.

All the different learning processes which are initiated as part of the qualification process of an SOS mother trainee develop and extend the adult's competences for promoting the development of children and young people. As a consequence, professional action in the care process mainly focuses on two core areas: **1)** to create relationships which promote the development of the child between everyone involved in the process, and **2)** to establish an environment for the child that encourages learning.

Professional care in a family-like system involves a complex field of action, constituted by the child care authorities, the child care professional and his/her organisation, and the child's family of origin. The quality of care provided needs to be guaranteed through the carer's appropriate personal and professional competences.

1.2 WHAT DO SOS MOTHERS SAY?

During the first phase of the organisation's 2009-16 strategy development, 27 SOS mother groups from all continents contributed their experience and suggestions. The following results and quotes are taken from this "Listening to SOS mothers" report:

Nine SOS mother groups explicitly expressed their hope that their profession would be officially recognised. However, it is the overall development of their profession, including training and career opportunities, working conditions and internal recognition, what SOS mothers most strongly request: "You should invest in the personal growth and professional knowledge of your SOS mothers!" and "Take care of the carer" are two major trends in their inputs.

Almost all groups express their appreciation for the training they have received: "The experience during the practice and the SOS mother trainings was very useful in creating the families". But they nevertheless ask for even more training, particularly in the area of child development.

SOS mothers suggest creating career growth opportunities for SOS mothers and underline the importance of "experiencing the organisation's trust in our daily work". They ask for more support in the educational and psychological field as well as for more "hands-on" support in the SOS families by family assistants.

SOS mothers themselves obviously do not see any contradiction between professionalism and their love for children. They want professional knowledge, tools and working conditions to be able to live up to the challenges of their responsibility and give the children what is in their best interest.

1.3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOS MOTHER PROFESSION

From the very beginning, Hermann Gmeiner had a vision for SOS mothers: "We must make the profession of an SOS mother attractive in the intellectual as well as spiritual sense. Hereby we must create a new, modern women's profession like the nurse or social worker professions."

He laid out a first frame for the development of the SOS mother profession in 1978: The SOS Mother Statutes included first international standards on training, support services, salary and benefits. However, the degree of empowerment of SOS mothers and the promotion of their profession for a long time depended on the people developing the different programmes.

Over the last 15 years, the content of the SOS Mother Statutes has been incorporated and developed in the organisation's manuals: **1)** The SOS Mother Handbook was initiated, which lead to stronger efforts in implementing standards on SOS mother recruitment, training and development on all continents. **2)** The HR Manual states Hermann Gmeiner's vision regarding SOS mothers in standard 10, "The SOS Mother Profession is built." (HR Manual, page 39-40). **3)** The SOS Children's Village Manual defines the role and responsibilities of the SOS mother profession (see also page 5 in this handbook).

In 2003, the external recognition of the SOS mother profession was formulated as one of the organisation's strategic goals. The national plan trend analysis 2006-08 showed that 67% of the national associations strive for legal recognition of the SOS mother profession while 35% pursue accreditation of the SOS mother training by government or other educational authorities.

This global strive for external recognition led to a stronger internal focus on SOS mother profession topics (first continental studies on turn-over rates were launched, for example) which revealed a clear need to improve the whole HRD cycle of SOS mothers.

Thus, a global team of experts on SOS mother profession issues from all continents was installed in 2007 to push the development of the SOS mother profession further. The team agreed that an update of the SOS mother handbook was necessary and consequently reworked the HRD cycle over a period of 2 years. The team members also collected feedback from various co-worker groups on their continents to ensure that the new content is supported by a representative part of the organisation. The result of this process is the document at hand.

1.4 TARGET GROUP OF THE HANDBOOK

The SOS mother/parent handbook is a reference frame for all national associations. Various guidelines from the SOS Children's Village Manual, such as the two-year initial training programme, have been elaborated in-depth to provide the national associations with better orientation and guidance. The SOS mother profile has been thoroughly adjusted to new external and internal developments and may now serve as frame for national recruitment, training, and development procedures. The included global framework curriculum, for example, serves as a basis for elaborating regional and/or national SOS mother trainings in detail, adapting them to local needs and requirements.

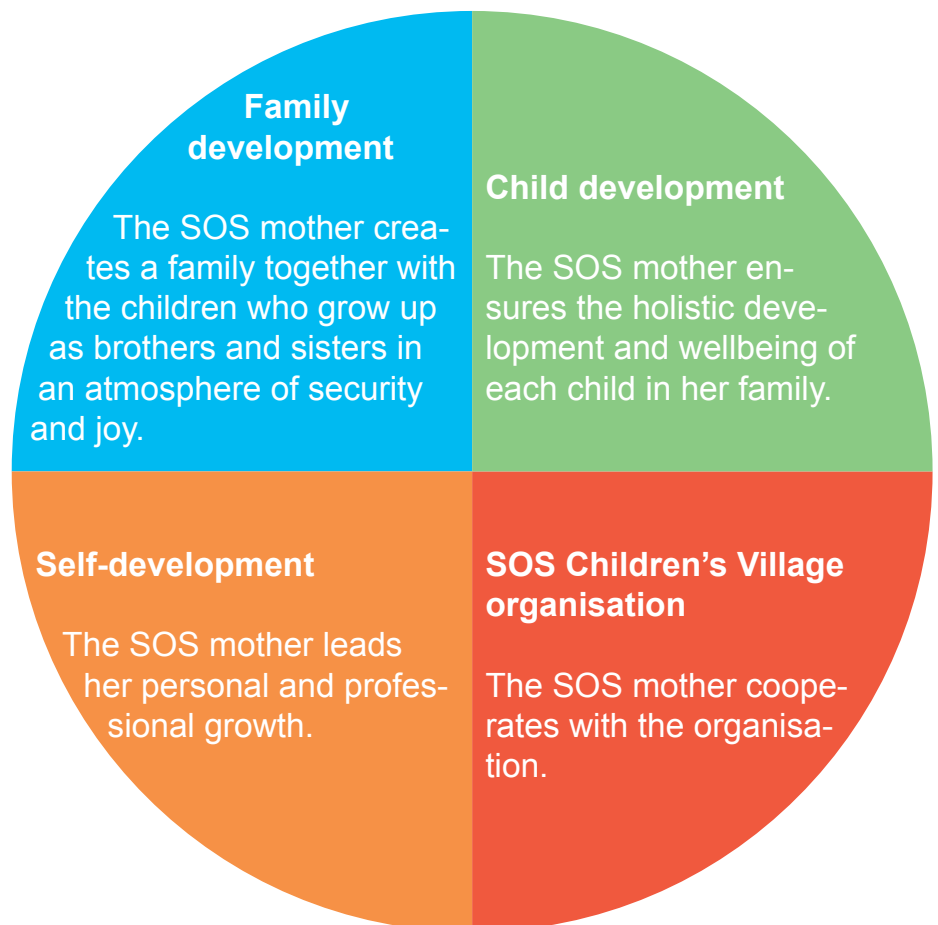
The main target group of the handbook therefore includes continental, regional and national HRD managers, co-workers in charge of SOS mother training and other SOS mother profession issues (like SOS mother co-ordinators), and, of course, every co-worker who needs and/or wants to gain a deeper understanding of the SOS mother profession.

2 THE SOS MOTHER PROFILE

The following profile consists of the SOS mother's main tasks and responsibilities and the competences she needs to fulfil her tasks. The profile provides a reference frame for the elaboration of continental and local job profiles and descriptions. Furthermore, the entry profile and the training curriculum which are presented in this handbook are based on this profile. Trainers will hopefully also see it as a useful tool for developing individual training modules.

2.1 MAIN TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

SOS mother tasks and responsibilities



In the SOS Children's Village Manual, the role and responsibilities of SOS mothers are defined as follows:

“The SOS mother leads the SOS family: The SOS mother shares her life with the children, offering them emotional security and the opportunity to develop new and lasting relationships within her SOS family where love can grow. At the same time, the SOS mother is a child-care professional who co-operates with the other village co-workers in meeting the needs of the children.” (CV Manual standard 2, page 19)

“The SOS mother is the leader of the SOS family and is directly responsible for the care and development of each of her children. She guides them towards self-sufficiency and independence and leads the decision-making process with her children. She also seeks out expert advice from other village co-workers when it is needed.” (CV Manual, page 19)

In this document, the tasks and responsibilities of an SOS mother are outlined more in detail. Together, the two documents build the basis of the SOS mother competence profile.

Area of responsibility: Family development

The SOS mother creates a family together with the children who grow up as brothers and sisters in an atmosphere of security and joy.

Tasks:

- She leads her SOS family.
- She ensures that the SOS family is a secure environment in which relationships are based on mutual respect.
- She accepts each child as s/he is and supports the child in coping with his/her life history including challenges like trauma and loss.
- She builds a stable relationship with each child, supporting his/her feeling of belonging.
- She maintains and strengthens the child's relationship with his/her family of origin in the best interests of the child.
- She organises everyday family life in a structured way with the children's participation according to their age and abilities (common meals, rituals like birthday celebrations).
- She creates a family environment in which bonding among the children is fostered.
- She uses family resources responsibly ensuring that the children's basic needs are met.
- She creates a family home with a friendly and welcoming atmosphere.
- She continuously reflects upon her own behaviour being a role model for the children.

Area of responsibility: Child development

The SOS mother ensures the holistic development and wellbeing of each child in her family.

- a) The SOS mother supports the child's emotional and spiritual development.

Tasks:

- She responds sensitively to the child's past and present emotional experiences.
- She respects the intimacy and privacy of the child.
- She strengthens the child's self-esteem by providing individual attention and positive feedback.
- She strengthens the child in his/her own religious and cultural identity.
- She promotes the spiritual and moral development of the child.

b) The SOS mother ensures the necessary support for the child's physical wellbeing.

Tasks:

- She provides a good standard of physical care (hygiene, nutrition, clothing, exercise, etc.).
- She ensures regular health check-ups and organises necessary medical support.
- She teaches the child to take care of his/her physical wellbeing (creating awareness for self-care, physical exercise, illnesses including HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, etc.).

c) The SOS mother supports the child's social skills development.

Tasks:

- She strengthens the child's communication skills and his/her ability to deal with conflicts constructively.
- She supports the child in building and maintaining relationships in the community.
- She supports the child in handling strong emotional reactions and behaviour.
- She supports the child in developing his/her sexual identity.
- She delegates responsibility to the child according to his/her maturity.
- She teaches the child to manage resources responsibly (economic, material, environmental, etc.)

d) The SOS mother supports the child in the cultural and recreational area.

Tasks:

- She identifies and promotes the child's interests and talents.
- She encourages the child's engagement in recreational and cultural activities like arts, sports, nature, and handicraft.
- She encourages the child to play and participates herself in joyful activities with the children.

e) The SOS mother supports the child's intellectual and educational development.

Tasks:

- She identifies and promotes the child's individual abilities, interests and creative potential.
- She stimulates the child's cognitive development through play and other activities.
- She creates a proper and supportive learning atmosphere within the family.
- She ensures that the child has the necessary learning material and support.
- She supports the child to reach an adequate level of education according to his/her abilities.
- She keeps contact with teachers and kindergarten staff.
- She provides the child with career orientation and guidance.

Area of responsibility: SOS Children's Village organisation

The SOS mother cooperates with the organisation.

Tasks:

- She identifies with the organisation's values, vision, and mission (Who We Are).
- She complies with the organisation's quality standards (CV Manual, Child Protection Policy, Inclusion Policy, etc).
- She leads the individual development planning process for each child in her family.
- She actively participates in teamwork.

- She cooperates effectively with the SOS aunts and family assistants.
- She uses resources efficiently and accounts for them.
- She is actively involved in the local community and advocates for Children's and Women's Rights.
- She interacts appropriately with external stakeholders (such as teachers, other NGOs, state authorities, etc.) in the best interest of the child.

Area of responsibility: Self-development

The SOS mother leads her personal and professional growth.

Tasks:

- She identifies her own needs and interests and develops her physical, emotional, social, mental and spiritual wellbeing.
- She balances her personal and professional life.
- She communicates her support needs and makes use of the support offered.
- She continuously develops her own stress management abilities.
- She regularly reflects upon her professional practice.
- She participates in ongoing training and actively stays up-to-date on new developments.

2.2 COMPETENCE PROFILE

The purpose of this competence profile is to present the main competences an SOS mother requires to be able to fulfil her tasks and responsibilities. This profile, which indicates very specifically what an SOS mother needs “to be, to know and to be able to do”, serves as a basis for developing the SOS mother entry profile, the necessary training modules as well as the learning and development goals.

For the detailed competence profile, including performance indicators and main training headlines, please see this [intranet link](#). Below, only the summaries of the main required competences are listed.

2.2.1 COMPETENCES IN THE AREA OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

Managing living standards

The SOS mother is familiar with the organisational policies concerning the SOS mother's role and responsibilities. She plans family life and uses the available economic family resources in a well-structured way. She furthermore creates a comfortable and warm living atmosphere for the family.

Dealing with loss

The SOS mother is capable of identifying a child's emotional state due to loss, abandonment or alienation from the family of origin. She is ready and able to offer understanding and emotional support, and to take the necessary actions to help the children overcome their painful situation. The new family bonds offer the child the secure and stable environment required to be able to start his/her healing process.

Fostering a sense of belonging

The SOS mother acts with sensitivity and dedication to ensure that the children in her family can develop emotional bonds with their new family members. At the same time, she tries to maintain and strengthen their emotional relations with their families of origin and thereby help them to accept themselves, to develop self-esteem, and to fully integrate into different social contexts.

Maintaining relations with the child's family of origin

The SOS mother respects the importance of the family of origin for the integral development of a child. She is willing to find and apply strategies to maintain, rebuild and strengthen the child's communication and relationship with his/her family of origin. She is aware that a reintegration into the family of origin may be possible. At the same time, she develops actions to strengthen fraternal relationships between all children in her SOS family.

2.2.2 COMPETENCES IN THE AREA OF CHILD AND ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

Supporting the child's self-esteem

The SOS mother is aware of the importance of positive self-esteem for the well-being of human beings. She is willing to develop actions aimed at improving the well-being of children, in order to strengthen and/or reconstruct a strong self-esteem in every child in her care.

Promoting the participation of children and young people

The SOS mother understands the participation of children and young people as their right and as an educational approach. She therefore creates participation spaces in everyday life as an essential part of the integral development of children and young people.

Promoting spiritual and moral development

The SOS mother respects the fact that moral and spiritual values are a means to live in harmony with oneself and other people. She shows that she has found a balance in her own life and she is able to transfer moral and spiritual values to the children without intruding on them.

Promoting socio-cultural identity

The SOS mother is familiar with the socio-cultural patterns of her country and region. She values and practices those that respect the fundamental rights of the child. She offers the children and young people access to different areas of social interaction which promote their personal growth and their development of a national identity and citizenship.

Ensuring health care and creating health awareness

The SOS mother has the capacity and willingness to attend to each child's personal health, using all preventive programmes and treatments available at local or national level. She establishes a good hygiene standard and basic security in the house, and offers nutrition based on the scientific criteria for each age group.

Developing social capacities

The SOS mother has the capacity to establish and maintain adequate interpersonal relationships and social habits, which allows her to interact with different groups and persons. She is an example for the children showing them routines of positive social behaviour and interaction on a daily basis.

Promoting environment protection

The SOS mother is sensitive to and aware of environmental protection and is willing to develop practices to save natural non-renewable resources, to use less polluting agents at home, to preserve the health of others, and to teach the children and young people how to do so.

Promoting recreational, sportive and cultural activities

The SOS mother appreciates the necessity of creative, sportive and recreational practices as important factors for human well-being. She promotes and develops these activities to support the children and young people in their integral development.

Supporting the cognitive development of children

The SOS mother identifies general characteristics, potentials and needs in the personal development of each child and adolescent and provides the necessary affective and material conditions to guarantee the best development opportunities in every developmental phase.

Dealing with learning difficulties

The SOS mother is committed and willing to permanently accompany the schooling process of each child in her care. She is always well informed about their performance, supports them, and, when necessary, asks for specialised help in the case of learning difficulties.

Dealing with difficulties in the behaviour of children

The SOS mother has the capacity to clearly identify inadequate behaviour in children and reacts positively to meet these challenges. At the same time, she is able to offer a stable relationship and the right atmosphere and space to find a solution.

Promoting the integral development of young people

The SOS mother is familiar with the general characteristics of the development of young people and the main motivations and interests that influence their behaviour and attitudes. She uses appropriate educational strategies according to the different stages. Furthermore, she shows her understanding, offers orientation and is tolerant regarding the difficulties characteristic of adolescence.

2.2.3 COMPETENCES IN THE AREA OF THE SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGE ORGANISATION

Living a rights-based approach

The SOS mother has the capacity to identify, accept and practice human rights, particularly children's rights, and shows the necessary attitude and full commitment to respect them in all areas of life. She thinks democratically and believes in the same rights for all within a culture of peace and tolerance and acts accordingly.

Living the SOS philosophy

The SOS mother identifies with the organisation's objectives and is committed to achieving them by supporting and implementing decisions and policies.

Living the child protection policy

The SOS mother has the capacity to compare the principles and patterns of child care she has got to know in theory with the existing ones in her surrounding and to correct the undesired ones. This enables her to establish a healthy, respectful and tolerant relationship with the children and young people. She shows them her affection and treats them well, in order to live up to the rights of children, to build a culture of peace, and to eliminate any kind of child abuse.

Leading the individual development plan for each child

The SOS mother is able to identify strengths, potential and needs in the development of each child, to plan actions and activities to support his/her development, to implement these actions, and to assess and document the process in co-operation with other co-workers.

Working in teams

The SOS mother is willing and able to co-operate closely with other co-workers as well as with external stakeholders. She is able to actively participate in planning and reaching a common goal, including the realisation of objectives which may not be directly related to her personal fields of interest but serve principles and strategies of the organisation.

2.2.4 COMPETENCES IN THE AREA OF SELF-DEVELOPMENT

Leading her personal development

The SOS mother is able to balance her professional, personal and social life. She develops actions and strategies to care for her physical and emotional health which allow her to grow as a human being and to maintain a positive attitude towards life.

Communicating assertively and participating

The SOS mother has the capacity to listen, express her feelings and ideas, and to accept feedback. She is able to handle personal conflicts and interpersonal relationships in a well-balanced way, keeping a positive attitude to resolve them with respect towards herself and others. She is willing and able to participate actively in different events.

Leading her professional development

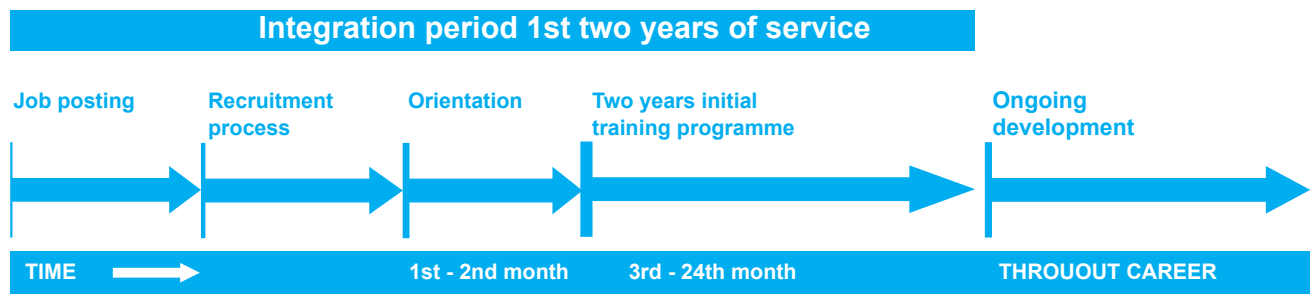
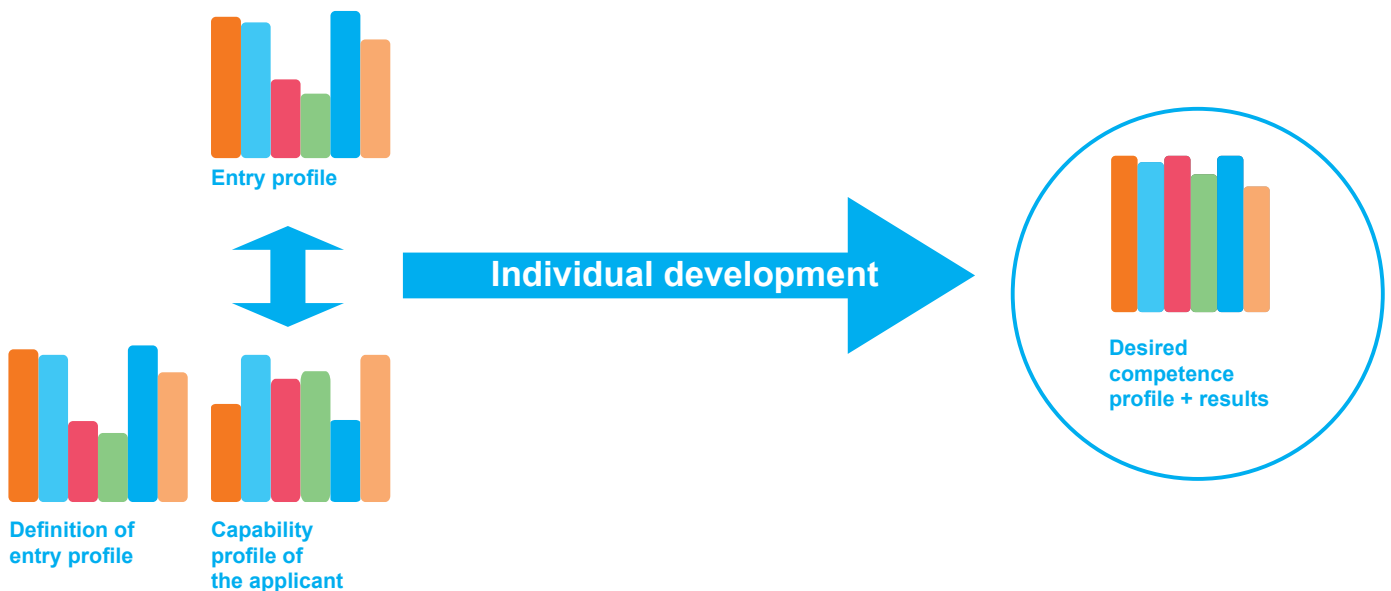
The SOS mother strives for her continuous professional improvement. She reflects on her own practice, searches for peer exchange, and takes part in further training opportunities.

2.3 JOB DESCRIPTION AND JOB PROFILE

Based on the tasks and responsibilities and the competence profile of the SOS mother, a job description and job profile for the SOS mother profession have been developed, summarising the main characteristics of the profession.

For these two documents, please see Appendix 1.

SOS mother profile and HR/D cycle



3

RECRUITMENT

Each SOS mother applicant goes through a professional recruitment process which is usually led by the village director and supported by the HR function and/or a recruitment team. This ensures that the successful applicant has the necessary attitude, knowledge and skills to meet the organisation's professional standards. An employment contract is signed by both parties.

The recruitment of SOS mothers is carried out according to the national HR plan and that of each programme. Good planning is vital to ensure that the necessary time for orientation and preparation is guaranteed before the SOS mother trainee takes on the responsibility for an SOS family.

3.1 THE SOS MOTHER ENTRY PROFILE

An entry profile has been designed for the search and selection stage. The successful applicant needs to bring along personal key competences and has to fulfil certain selection criteria which are considered minimum requirements. Based on these key competences, the applicant may then develop and strengthen other competences until she reaches the occupational profile that proves her suitable for the position.

The criteria and requirements to be taken into account when recruiting and selecting SOS mother applicants are:

General characteristics:

Age: Between 25 and 45 years of age

Education and work experience: medium level of education; preferably secondary school; academic and/or work experience in areas related to child care, education, family and/or community development desired

Good character reference

Marital status: preferably single, widowed or divorced with due respect to the social, cultural and legal norms of the country

Family: preferably no dependent children; in case an applicant with dependent children is recruited, they live with her in the SOS family (max. 1-2 children)

Health: physically and mentally healthy

Willingness to live in an SOS Children's Village and to take on a long-term working commitment (at least for one generation of children and youth)

Willingness to obtain the necessary knowledge and skills through a professional training process and ongoing development

Personal key competences

The following five personal competences (personality traits) are considered key or basic requirements for those applying for the position (entry profile). Applicants do not need to have fully developed these competences at the time of selection but there should be an intermediate development level so that the competences can be strengthened during the two-year initial training programme.

Readiness for "social motherhood":

Being prepared and highly motivated to live together with boys, girls and young people who are not her own; accepting children with all their individual characteristics; readiness for personal bonding;

Constructive handling of mistakes:

Ability to question her own actions and to recognise, admit and learn from mistakes; ability to not give up when faced with failure or difficulties; ability to accept constructive criticism and to give feedback in an appropriate way;

Capacity to deal with pressure:

Ability to work under pressure, while still pursuing and accomplishing her own aims. This implies self-control and the ability to act calmly when facing difficult situations; ability to establish distance when necessary and to protect herself from overstrains;

Ability to build interpersonal relationships:

She is able to get along with others, to work in teams and to establish and maintain solid relationships. This implies the ability to empathise with and understand other people

and the ability to handle communication processes on different levels with an adequate emotional response;

Flexibility:

Ability to react appropriately according to different situations; ability to adapt one's behaviour to the respective situation;

3.2 THE VILLAGE DIRECTOR LEADS THE PROCESS

The village director is responsible for an appropriate HR plan in the programme and for the timely recruitment of staff. S/he leads the recruitment process in close cooperation with the national office. If possible, the national HR manager, an experienced training centre co-worker and/or the national SOS mother coordinator support the village director in the process.

In some national associations, the recruitment of SOS mothers is the task of the HR manager in the national office. In these cases, a timely involvement of the village director needs to be guaranteed.

3.3 RECRUITMENT IS HANDLED WITHIN THE FRAME OF THE HR MANUAL

The first selection is based on the **written applications**, including the letter of application, the curriculum vitae, the police records and reference verification, as well as certificates. Applicants who pass this first screening are invited for a first interview.

The aim of this **first interview** is to gain a more detailed knowledge of the applicant's character and a verification of the given information (employment, family, social status, etc).

Additional recruitment tools like a behavioural interview based on the entrance profile, a logical reasoning test, an investigation into the applicant's family and social background, medical and psychological examinations, and a stay with an SOS family may be applied.

During the **trial stay in an SOS Children's Village** which each applicant needs to go through for a minimum of three days, the applicant has the opportunity to get a first realistic impression of life in an SOS family. An experienced SOS mother accompanies the applicant and introduces her to daily work in an SOS family. At the same time, the village director and his/her recruitment team have the chance to get a clearer impression of the applicant by observing her behaviour and attitude towards children and youth and work in general. The children and all programme co-workers are prepared for this visit.

In the second interview, at least one additional village co-worker (usually the SOS mother representative) is involved.

The applicant can pass or fail at any stage. From the very beginning, the recruiting team clearly transmits **realistic job expectations** and informs the applicant on the opportunities and limits of the SOS mother career. This information is cross-checked with the applicant's expectations. Finally, all collected information is analysed and summarised in an **evaluation report** and the village director takes the final decision.

3.4 CONTRACT AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

Once selected, the successful applicant is given an employment contract and begins her career as an SOS mother trainee. In countries where the labour law allows for this, the subsequent orientation period is still part of the legal probation period.

The recruitment team makes sure that the applicant is well informed about the specifics of the SOS mother profession before signing the contract. The conditions of service include the clear requirement to have her centre of life within the SOS family, the number of children in her care, the housing situation, her days of rest and vacation, salary, career path, accountabilities, development opportunities, medical and retirement benefits.

4 ORIENTATION

Every newly employed SOS mother trainee goes through a well-structured two-month orientation period.

It is essential that the newly employed SOS mother trainee is given space and time for orientation. Therefore each SOS mother trainee undergoes an orientation period of a minimum of two months.

The orientation period provides the opportunity for both the SOS mother trainee and the organisation to examine the trainee's motivation and qualification before she participates in the initial training programme. Experience shows that this introductory practical experience promotes the impact of the training.

A good welcome for every new SOS mother trainee is among the most important measures to support her long-term commitment.

4.1 STRUCTURED ORIENTATION MODULE

The orientation stage is planned in detail as it is the first impression the applicant has of life in an SOS family. It focuses on Who We Are, the SOS family child care model and the SOS mother role and respects the trainee's individual learning style and ability. Specific training material may be developed for this phase.

The orientation period assures the SOS mother of her role and clarifies the organisation's expectations.

4.2 EVALUATION

At the end of the orientation period, the SOS mother trainee is evaluated by the village director before she may take part in the initial SOS mother training programme. S/he is

supported by an experienced training centre co-worker and/or the national SOS mother co-ordinator. This ensures that the experiences of village co-workers with the trainee, particularly those of the mentoring SOS mothers and the SOS mother representative, are well taken into account.

5 THE TWO-YEAR INITIAL TRAINING PROGRAMME

Every newly employed SOS mother trainee goes through a professional two-year training programme.

As defined in the SOS Children’s Village Manual, “The first two years of her career consist of three months’ theoretical child-care training and 21 months’ practical on-the-job training. The three months’ full-time theoretical training is the minimum requirement; longer training periods are beneficial.”

This implies that the initial SOS mother training programme lasts a total of two years comprising two months of orientation, a minimum of three months of theoretical and a maximum of 19 months of practical training.

5.1 THE GLOBAL FRAMEWORK CURRICULUM

The global framework curriculum is a frame for SOS mother training around the world. It is based on the SOS mother competence profile and covers all major topics that need to be dealt with during the initial training programme. Based on this frame, the respective regional and/or national SOS mother training is elaborated in detail according to local needs and requirements.

5.1.1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF THE CURRICULUM

By providing this global framework curriculum the SOS Children’s Village organisation aims to:

- Contribute to the protection of the rights of the child and to the improvement of the quality of life of children and young people whose rights have been violated. This is to be achieved by offering the support of a person specialised on child care and child protection within the context of family-based care so that the children can grow in a loving, respectful and safe environment.
- Offer a solid and comprehensive theoretical and practical professional training, including both basic and specialist competences, to prepare participants both emotionally and professionally for their role of a parent within the context of the SOS family child-care model where stable and lasting affective relationships are established.

- Ensure that participants learn to recognise children's individual stages of development including possible psychological problems. On the basis of this knowledge, they build up a relationship that encourages development and organise daily life with a focus on encouraging learning. They are prepared to constructively and respectfully cooperate with the parents in the child's best interests and they are aware of being a role model in every sphere of life. They learn to use self-reflection techniques and to focus on processes and quality.
- Ensure that every SOS mother trainee around the world goes through this well-balanced initial training programme that meets the requirements of the profession.
- Respond to the need for comprehensive development opportunities for the women who directly take care of the children and young people in the SOS families. They need to be accompanied in each phase of their development cycle within the organisation, in order to ensure their personal well-being and guarantee high quality in their educational interventions with the children and young people.
- Respond to the current social, legal and organisational child protection demands to be able to continuously offer up-to-date trainings which satisfy these demands.

5.1.2 QUALITY FEATURES OF THE TRAINING SYSTEM

The quality of the learning processes depends upon the quality of the training system.

The training system as a paradigm

All relationships within the training processes serve as examples for dealing with personal needs and different values and for building up relationships which are based on good partnership. In order to enhance the participants' family child care competences these relationships should promote learning and allow for participant feedback.

Strengthening the sense of responsibility of the trainees

The trainees themselves are responsible for completing the specified training modules. They need to inform the persons in charge on what they need for their personal learning process. The training centre itself is obliged to comply with the defined standards and to enforce structural changes, if required.

Continual opportunities for putting the acquired knowledge into practice

Thanks to the combination of theory and practice, the newly acquired perspectives and methods can be directly tested and developed further in practice. This allows the trainees to integrate their new knowledge and extend their repertoire of methods while realising how much sense the new perspectives and methods make in practice.

Process-oriented support for the individual learning process

The professional development of the trainees and their development of family child care competences are repeatedly evaluated together with the trainees who receive individual support throughout the entire learning process. Coaching is used to develop the trainees' individual skills.

Holistic personality development

The quality of the training programme is characterised by its variety of methodical approaches to each subject. This allows for an array of experiences and for learning at many different levels. The subjects of the curriculum are presented in a unified yet varied manner.

Experts and trainers from the field of practical work

Inviting experts from the different fields as well as coaches and/or lecturers with practical experience to teach the trainees will certainly improve the quality of the training.

Link between teaching and research

The fields of teaching and research are strongly interlinked. The training centre's areas of expertise need to be continually developed further, new developments have to be promoted and the curriculum and syllabus have to be modified on an ongoing basis.

5.1.3 GENERAL DIDACTIC PRINCIPLES

It is the task of the trainers to initiate a learning process and to give trainees the possibility to have positive experiences. This is ensured through personal contact, objectiveness and humanity within the training. The learning process has to be based on the trainees' capabilities, needs and interests as well as on an understanding of their current experiences. Training has a model character.

The following didactic principles or general guidelines need to be taken into consideration in the organisation of the learning process.

Adult adequacy

The target group of this training are adults who are usually able to lead their life in a self-determined way. Therefore it is important to give each participant as much space as possible for personal activity and participation as long as the objectives of the training are respected.

The participants need to be able to deal with their own learning process in an independent way. They should trust and rely on their own faculties and take on responsibility for their own learning. The learning process is based on the available resources and respects the participants' different requirements. It takes advantage of the life experiences of the trainees by using their knowledge as a basis for social learning within the training.

Moreover, the way adults learn changes as they get older. This aspect also needs to be taken into consideration and should be reflected in an appropriate choice of didactic tools.

Learning – a lifetime process

Being an adult does not mean being a complete human being and this should be reflected in the training process. New developments and changes can always have an impact on both our personal and professional life. The learning process will therefore be organised so that the present life and learning experiences are put into context while learning is understood as a lifetime process.

The group as a social learning platform

The group serves as a social learning platform. Since the group members have very diverse backgrounds, their social skills are enhanced by interaction. The trainers are role models of positive group work, communication and conflict solution.

Profession and life style

The learning process is organised so that the interconnectedness of theory and practice becomes obvious. Practical experiences are always based on theory while the theoretical knowledge is at the same time continually put into practice. It is important to define training contents with reference to the professional and private realities of the trainees, which are also strongly interlinked. Besides, training contents should be based on the current scientific state of knowledge in the different training fields.

Learning through personal experience and personality development

When a learning process is to be initiated, it is important to take into consideration that we are holistic beings. In general, knowledge can only be fully assimilated when it is connected to an integral experience. Therefore, the teaching methods should allow for the possibility of integrating knowledge on the basis of personal experiences.

Our education and life experiences, which are expressed through our personality, have a direct impact on our personal and professional life. Therefore, the training should offer opportunities for self-reflection so that the trainees may become aware of how their personal background influences their behaviour. Furthermore, aspects of self-development should be adequately integrated into each one of the different training subjects.

Systematic learning

Successful learning processes depend upon a deliberate and systematic organisation of the teaching and learning steps. Only a thorough content analysis reveals if a subject matter is, for example, suitable for exemplary teaching or rather for teaching which gives orientation and an overview. This analysis is the responsibility of the trainers.

Interdisciplinarity

Even though each one of the different training fields has its own focus, their interdisciplinary character should be revealed by organising the learning process in a way that makes the close connection between the different fields become apparent.

Monitoring and evaluation of learning successes

In order to guarantee and evaluate the learning success of each trainee, regular meetings are held to reflect on the trainee's personal development. These evaluation meetings serve to discuss the trainee's development and to evaluate to which degree she has achieved her personal qualification for the SOS mother profession. Since self-reflection skills are essential for child care work, this process is taken very seriously and is deliberately not based on marks.

5.1.4 CONTENT OVERVIEW

The SOS mother training is usually structured in three phases. Each phase covers all four areas of the SOS mother tasks and responsibilities.

AREA OF THE SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGE ORGANISATION		
Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision, mission and values • History of SOS Children's Villages and its founder • The four educational principles • Maternity and SOS mother figure • The SOS family child care model, family strengthening, family-based care and other types of alternative care • Basics of Human Rights • UN Convention on the Rights of the Child • The 5 policies of SOS Children Villages: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Programme Policy 2. Child Protection Policy 3. Education Policy 4. HIV/AIDS Policy 5. Inclusion Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation on the rights of children and young people • Legal basis of the family child care model • Paradigms which form the basis of the rights of children and young people (Convention on the Rights of the Child) • Child rearing techniques and models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important aspects of the strategic plan • The concept of childhood in history • Rights and duties within the family and the community • Gender issues • Model of child development planning • Quality evaluation of development planning

AREA OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT		
Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibilities of SOS mother and SOS aunts/family assistants • The role/importance of family roots in identity development (family of origin and SOS family) • Tools for dealing with families of origin • Supporting a sense of belonging • Early attachment • Material living standards in the families • Health awareness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preventive health: national vaccination programme/use of medical cards, signs and symptoms of child diseases - First aid - Reproductive health - Knowledge on common infectious diseases - Hygiene and personal care habits and hygiene in the family house - Environmental protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing self-esteem in children and young people • Sibling dynamics • Developmental dysfunctions • Positive parenting • Characteristics of poverty and its impact on socially excluded people/families. • Health awareness/nutrition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nutritional pyramid and/ or groups of food - Alimentary planning: balanced, economic, use of seasonal products - Storage and conservation of foods - Preparation of food - Illnesses caused by bad nutrition habits • Knowledge on how to deal with a child who suffers from HIV/ Aids or a disability without discriminating him/her 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept of autonomy and independence • Planning: child development plan, family plan • Participatory planning (child participation and planning of transition from SOS Children's Village to youth programme) • Managing the family budget • Trauma healing, dealing with loss • Knowledge on sexually transmitted diseases, e.g. HIV/Aids

AREA OF CHILD AND ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT		
Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education regarding different value systems and religious practices • Identification of positive and negative ethical practices • Concept of development and growth (infants from newly born to 6 years): physical, social, emotional, cognitive, moral • Care for new-borns • Early stimulation • First aid (basic) • Personal hygiene • Importance of play, recreation and sports • Development of self-esteem • Promote child participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept of development and growth (from 6 to 12 years): physical, social, emotional, cognitive, moral • Behavioural challenges; dealing with emotions • Learning difficulties • Development of the child's socio-cultural identity and fostering integration into social networks • Delegating duties and responsibilities according to the child's age • Importance of play, recreation and sport • Vocational orientation • Promotion of the participation of children at school age 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept of development and growth (young people) • General characteristics of the development of young people: physical, social, emotional, cognitive, moral • Behaviour modification techniques • Delegating duties and responsibilities (independent living skills) • Emotional dysfunctions of young people • Psychosexual development of young people • Promoting the participation and decision-taking ability of young people • Personal hygiene of young people • Risk factors in adolescence • Techniques of assertive communication with young people

AREA OF SELF-DEVELOPMENT		
Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SOS mother profession • Self-awareness • Physical fitness • Values • Training of self-esteem • Concept, basic elements and types of communication • Assertive attitude in communication • Teamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a professional; professional ethics and values • Support services within the SOS Children's Village and in the community • Comparison of the SOS mother profession with other child care professions • Dealing with loss • Promoting her own integral health and development • Active listening; communication barriers • Participation as a right 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept and types of autonomy • Autonomy and independence of the SOS mother • Theory and tools of reflective practice • Signs and symptoms of stress and stress management • Relaxation techniques

5.1.5 LEARNING UNITS

Each training module consists of smaller learning units which include theoretical in-class training as well as practical training in the village.

General description

Learning units may be structured in the following way:



COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION
IDENTIFICATION	Name of training project (SOS mother school, training centre, etc.), corresponding course or level, name of facilitator/trainer and date
THEMATIC AREA (or area of responsibility)	Name of the thematic area (or area of responsibility) the respective learning unit corresponds to. The training curriculum has been divided into different learning areas. Each of these areas consists of a set of common competences which serve as a linking axis. Although the contents are systematised, the emphasis is on identifying problems that arise in the practical work context and to link them with the competences. The thematic areas link technological and academic knowledge with popular wisdom while taking into account the social and professional settings within which the training process takes place.
COMPETENCE	Describes the respective competence (see competence profile)
TOPIC	Corresponds to a specific part of the area and the competence that the unit focuses on.
RESULTS-BASED OBJECTIVES	Clearly sets out the concrete results that should be achieved during the learning process (includes in-class results and activities in the village).
CONTENTS	Describes the key knowledge that the trainee should acquire in terms of “to be, to know, and to do”. This should also include the training material or available resources such as summaries prepared by the trainer, videos, booklets, books, etc.
ACTIVITIES	<p>Specific activities or tasks carried out by the participants to consolidate what they have learned. Specific instructions should be given for each activity, including illustrations for procedures that require more clarity.</p> <p>The learning process comprises the following stages:</p> <p>Motivation: A start-up activity that seeks to encourage the trainees to broach a specific topic and identify their prior knowledge</p> <p>Development: Develop the topic so that new knowledge is acquired (also includes practical work in the village)</p> <p>Wrap-up activities: Reflecting on the newly acquired knowledge and relating it to daily life or work – the trainee should be able to apply certain strategies (context based) for solving a problem or carrying out a task. This requires knowing what needs to be done, knowing how to do it and monitoring of what is done.</p>
NUMBER OF HOURS	Number of learning hours in class and at distance (including practical work) considered as necessary for the trainee to meet the learning targets
RESOURCES	Human resources and materials needed for each unit
PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	Describes the performance indicators (see competence profile)
EVALUATION	Evaluates the three types of knowledge; describes the method of evaluation and the timeframe or evaluation levels: react, learning, behaviours and results; proof and tools
BIBLIOGRAPHY	List of the documents that the contents have been taken from

Learning unit example

For an elaborated learning unit example, please see Appendix 2.

Learning unit evaluation

Evaluation is an important part of any training process. Ideally, each learning unit is evaluated on four levels: satisfaction with the unit, learning results, application, and impact.

The following table gives an idea of who may evaluate what, how and where:

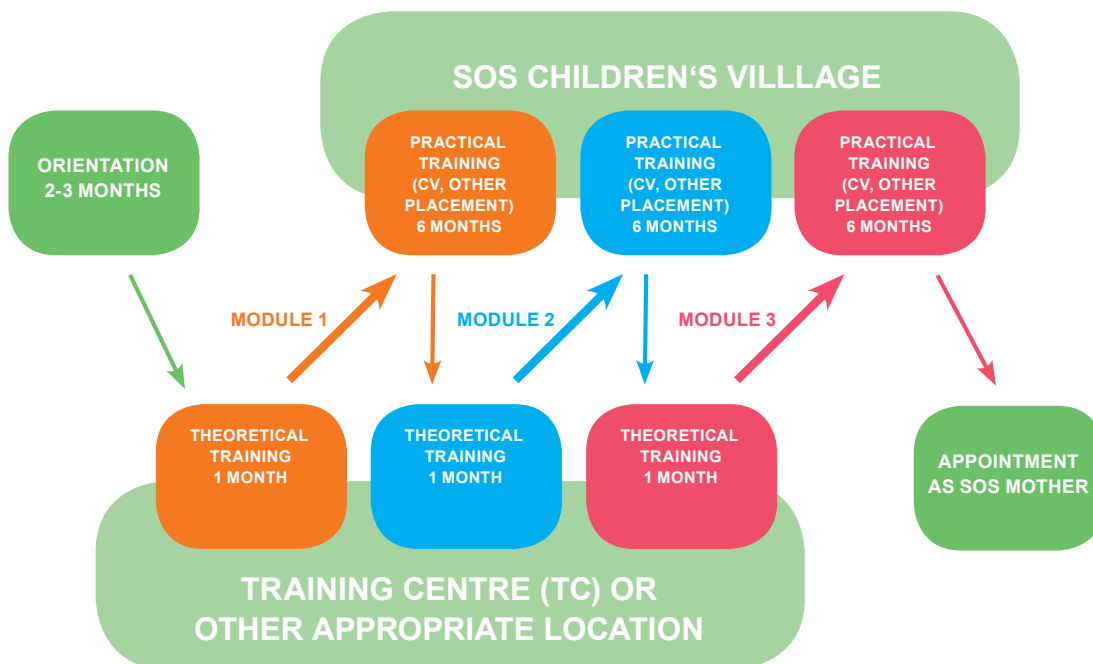
	WHO	WHAT	HOW	WHERE
Level 1: Satisfaction	Trainer and trainee	Satisfaction, feeling, trainer, training methods, expectations, objectives, time frame, perception of stakeholders	Interview, questionnaire, group discussion, report, follow-up	Training centre
Level 2: Learning Results	Trainer	Understanding of the content	Written tests, case studies, project, research, home work, checklist, follow-up	Training centre
Level 3: Application	Village director, pedagogical team of the village and the TC, mentoring SOS mothers	Performance evaluation, change in attitude	Observation, checklist, interviews, follow-up	SOS Children's Village, community
Level 4: Impact	Village director, pedagogical team of the village and the TC, mentoring SOS mothers	Performance indicators	Performance appraisal (based on performance indicators), follow-up	SOS Children's Village, community
Adapted from: Kirkpatrick "Evaluating Training Programs", In: Factbook Recursos Humanos (2006). Hay Group; Thomson & Aranzadi, Navarra				

5.2 INTEGRATED THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL TRAINING BASED ON COMPETENCES

The principle of integrating theory and practice throughout the two-year training process - as laid out in the learning unit example - keeps the learning process alive and supports an ongoing and holistic learning experience. What is learnt in theory is timely applied in practice, and what is experienced in everyday life can timely be reflected upon and contrasted with theoretical considerations.

Long periods of theoretical or practical training bear the threat of losing their stimulating character, so they need to alternate with each one aiming at a certain level or learning goal to be achieved.

Integrating theory and practise



5.2.1 LEARNING GOALS ARE DEFINED

Based on the comparison of the SOS mother profession profile with the personal profile of the SOS mother trainee, a catalogue of individual learning goals is defined by the trainee together with the village director.

What are the requirements of the profession, which competences and abilities does the trainee already bring along, and what are her specific development needs to be able to fulfil the requirements in the future? These questions are to be discussed and individual learning goals to be derived.

Documenting the goals helps to keep them in mind and allows for an evaluation of the learning success in spite of a long training period. The village director communicates the established goals to the training centre as early in the process as possible, so that the training provided meets the needs of the individual trainees as well as the village.

5.2.2 PRACTICAL TRAINING

The main focus of the practical SOS mother training is on the SOS family where the trainee works under the guidance of a mentoring SOS mother. As additional learning fields, placements in at least one other SOS Children's Village and at least one other NGO or GO are recommended.

Support and monitoring by the village director

During the first six training months, the village director meets with the SOS mother trainee at least once a month. The close guidance and the regular meetings between the village director and the SOS mother trainee are a main pillar of the training.

S/he listens actively to the trainee's experiences and questions she might have, provides her with the necessary orientation regarding her role and responsibilities in the village, encourages her to take the lead in her own professional development, and ensures that she receives the support she needs.

The village director monitors the trainee's professional development throughout the entire two-year training period.

Life and work in a well-established SOS family

Living in and working with an SOS family under the guidance of an experienced SOS mother is the main part of the practical SOS mother training. This includes co-operating with other co-workers and the community.

The SOS mother trainee lives and works with a well-established SOS family to gain a deeper understanding of the role of an SOS mother and the functioning of the SOS Children's Village. Experience shows that the trainee should stay with at least two SOS families during the two years' period to sensitise her to the fact that each SOS family has its own atmosphere and character.

The kind of work the trainee does during her stay in an SOS family is similar to the work of an SOS aunt, but the SOS mother trainee does it with a different goal in mind – she wants to start her own SOS family. To enable her to achieve this goal, she receives special training, guidance and support.

The mentoring SOS mother integrates the trainee into her SOS family and her work as much as possible, giving her the opportunity to work in all areas of the SOS mother job description, including co-operation with other co-workers and the community.

Experience other SOS Children's Villages

The SOS mother trainee gets the opportunity to be placed in at least one additional SOS Children's Village for a couple of weeks in order to sensitise her to the fact that each village has its own character and to broaden her learning experience.

Experience other governmental and non-governmental organisations

Besides the placement in an SOS family, stays with other organisations or institutions in related work fields like kindergartens, day care centres, hospitals, centres for abused children, and child and youth care authorities have proven to be a valuable input for the SOS mother trainee. These usually one to three weeks' internships are organised by the training centre and/or national office in co-operation with the trainee's SOS Children's Village. The gained experience widens the trainee's knowledge in the respective fields of

work and strengthens her understanding of the children's possible backgrounds. Group reflection on their experiences promotes additional learning and understanding of child and youth care work in the respective country.

These co-operations also promote the external recognition of the SOS family child care model and the SOS mother profession.

5.2.3 STEP-BY-STEP QUALIFICATION

The two-year initial training programme is designed in a way that the SOS mother trainee is provided with a step-by-step qualification. The kind of responsibilities the SOS mother trainee can be entrusted with depends upon the level of personal and professional development she has reached. For example, it needs to be carefully considered from which point on a trainee may start to relieve an SOS mother while she is on leave.

5.2.4 THE ONE-YEAR GUIDELINE

The so-called "one-year guideline" is defined in the SOS Children's Village Manual as follows: "An SOS mother trainee takes on responsibility for an SOS family after one year at the earliest: The SOS mother trainee must have worked for at least one year in the village, including three months' theoretical training, before she is given responsibility for her own SOS family". This guideline expresses the organisation's commitment to entrusting the children in our care only to well-trained and well-assessed SOS mothers. When an SOS mother trainee may take over an SOS family after one year of training, she is trusted and given full responsibility for her SOS family. The fact that she will be a trainee for another year means that she will still receive special attention, support, and guidance during this period, including times to study and to reflect upon her practice. Concerns have been articulated around the "one-year guideline" when it comes to emergencies (like the termination of service of an SOS mother) or the start-up of a new village. Emergencies can arise, but in general personnel planning should be such that emergency employments are avoided; that we take the necessary time for recruitment, selection, and training processes; that an adequate number of SOS mothers, SOS aunts, and trainees work in the villages; and that the trainees are given the necessary time to learn and reflect, and take their weekly days off.

A new SOS Children's Village

Also in the case of a new programme, good planning as well as creative ways of organising the training for SOS mothers is needed. Here, some ideas shall be mentioned:

The SOS mother trainee is employed at least nine months before the village is completed and/or around 12 months before the anticipated date of the first child admission. The trainee starts with three months of orientation in another village, and takes part in three months of theoretical training alternating with three months of practical training. She is assessed by the training centre, by the village director and by the mentoring SOS mother of the programme where she does her practical training. The first three months in the new programme are a probation period, with a focus on evaluation and assessment. The trainee continues to be considered such and receives close guidance until the end of her two-year training.

The village director is also hired well in advance and undergoes his/her training, in the course of which he/she joins the SOS mother trainees in some parts of their training. In case of a new village, the training centre plays a special role in providing support, monitoring and guidance.

5.3 MENTORING AND OTHER SUPPORT

5.3.1 MENTORING

Mentoring by an experienced SOS mother

In addition to the hands-on experience of living and working in an SOS family, it is particularly the support given by the mentoring SOS mother that promotes the trainee's development. The mentoring SOS mother makes sure that the trainee receives the information necessary to fulfil her tasks and offers the trainee her own experience to learn from. She does this through regular dialogue with the trainee on a daily basis as well as in two to four reflection meetings per year.

She also helps the trainee by offering concrete problem solution advice. She promotes a continuous learning cycle, clarifying the tasks and expectations in the beginning, supporting the planning process, offering help regarding performance, if necessary, and finishing off with a performance evaluation together with the trainee.

In summary, the mentoring SOS mother provides the trainee with continuous support in all areas of the SOS mother job description. She passes on a deep understanding of the SOS mother role, and gives the trainee feedback on her performance.

The mentoring SOS mother is trained for her task

SOS mothers need specific skills, additional time and energy, and a strong feeling of responsibility to take on the mentoring role for an SOS mother trainee. Specialised training to learn how to pass on practical knowledge and experience is offered to future mentoring SOS mothers. In addition, the SOS mother's commitment has to be highly appreciated within the village, especially by the village director.

Meetings between village director, mentoring SOS mother, and trainee

Initial, interim and final talks between the village director, the mentoring SOS mother, and the SOS mother trainee have proven to be valuable means of supporting the learning process. Before the trainee's stay with an SOS family, the three of them define major goals for the placement which endorse her individual learning goals. Follow-up meetings are held in between and at the end of the placement to jointly reflect on the trainee's progress. These meetings support the process of working towards agreed goals and guarantee regular communication between the three main people involved in the training process.

5.3.2 OTHER SUPPORT OFFERS

Additional support through a senior child development co-worker

Besides the village director and the mentoring SOS mother, one of the senior child development co-workers may support the professional development of the SOS mother trainee. His/Her role would be to promote the trainee's individual learning through theoretical input and professional discussions in regular one-on-one meetings.

The aim is to support the trainee's problem solving competences, to strengthen her confidence in her own abilities, and to impart theoretical knowledge. The supporting co-worker acts within the frame of the learning goals agreed between the trainee and the village director and merely offers support.

Specific training material

Some training centres have developed specific training material to strengthen the link between theoretical input and practical experience. The contents of the theoretical training are deepened as they are put into practice in the village. One region, for example, has developed a special "logbook" for the practical training in the village, a working booklet that guides the trainee through the various topics and helps her to self-monitor her development.

Learning diary

Another tool that may support the SOS mother trainee in her learning and development process is a learning diary. Writing can be a means of reflection and trainees could be encouraged to use it for themselves. Writing about her experience may help the trainee to reflect upon and thus promote her personal and professional development during her training and beyond. This diary is for the trainee's personal use only.

Activities for all SOS mother trainees in the programme

Besides the individual learning approach, workshops and discussion groups for all SOS mother trainees are organised in the village, providing them with the opportunity to share their experience. Case studies and theoretical input are presented and discussed by the trainees. In addition, experts from within or without the village may bring in their expertise in relevant areas.

5.4 EVALUATION

"After the two-year training period, the SOS mother trainee can become a professionally qualified SOS mother. This important career step is possible if the SOS mother trainee is responsible for her SOS family and the evaluation conducted by the village director indicates that her performance and skills allow her to join the SOS mother profession. When the SOS mother trainee meets these requirements, a celebration is held in the village to acknowledge that she has now joined the worldwide SOS mother profession." (SOS Children's Village Manual)

This section specifies the "evaluation conducted by the village director" as mentioned in the SOS Children's Village Manual.

5.4.1 MONITORING AS AN ONGOING PROCESS

The final evaluation of the SOS mother trainee is based upon the ongoing monitoring of her professional development throughout the two years' training period. The trainee's individual learning goals, which are defined and documented by the trainee and the village director, remain the frame of reference throughout her training. The key process in assessing the achievement of goals and the trainee's overall development is regular reflection, a process that takes a lot of thought, experience and intuition.

Through regular one-on-one meetings with the SOS mother trainee, meetings with the mentoring SOS mother and the trainee as well as through support by other co-workers, the village director takes the lead in monitoring the trainee's development throughout her training.

5.4.2 THE SOS MOTHER TRAINEE'S SELF-EVALUATION

There are different methods of trainee self-evaluation that have proven to be successful. In some countries, the trainee evaluates her own performance by filling out a form that covers all areas of the SOS mother job description. In other countries, the trainee writes reports on her practical placements which are included in the overall assessment.

The already mentioned "logbook", a specialised training material that promotes the trainee's self-evaluation ability, and the learning diary, a tool that stimulates self-reflection, support the trainee in her self-evaluation efforts.

Whatever method is chosen, the involvement and participation of the trainee in the evaluation process is crucial.

5.4.3 APPOINTMENT AS AN SOS MOTHER

The decision whether or not an SOS mother trainee may become an SOS mother is based on a thorough evaluation in which the village director's ongoing monitoring of the trainee as well as the feedback of other co-workers involved in the training process are taken into consideration:

- The mentoring SOS mother gives her feedback on the performance of the SOS mother trainee. If the trainee stayed with more than one SOS family during her practical training, the feedback of all mentoring SOS mothers is taken into consideration.
- The supporting child development co-worker gives his/her feedback regarding the trainee's professional development.
- The self-evaluation of the SOS mother trainee is taken into consideration.
- The director of the training centre and/or the SOS mother co-ordinator gives his/her evaluation of the SOS mother trainee.

If the overall results indicate that the trainee's performance and competences allow her to join the SOS mother profession, she is officially appointed by the national association.

6

ONGOING DEVELOPMENT
THROUGHOUT THE CAREER

Every SOS mother assumes responsibility for her own personal and professional development. She is supported by the village director who offers learning and development opportunities according to the SOS mother's needs and the organisation's strategic goals. Annual performance appraisal talks serve to reflect upon the process and to stay on track.

“Individual growth and development are nurtured” is one of our Human Resources principles. Every co-worker in SOS Children's Villages is entitled to support by his/her superior as well as to being given opportunities for further development.

The SOS mother's personal and professional development has direct effects on each child's development in her SOS family. Her development is an ongoing, continuous process which starts with her employment as an SOS mother trainee and lasts up to her retirement.

6.1 PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL TALKS

The SOS mother receives regular feedback and support by the village director. Their working relationship is based upon respect, understanding, trust, and an on-going dialogue. Once a year, the village director holds a formal performance appraisal talk (PAT) with each SOS mother in the village. They give each other feedback on performance and cooperation, reflect on the SOS mother's individual learning and development plan and make adjustments as needed. They agree on goals, development needs and wishes are agreed upon which are then aligned with the written mid-term development plan (scope 3-5 years). The village director provides support and encouragement and ensures that the SOS mother takes her annual leave in full each year. Also the SOS mother's long-term career planning, including the finalisation of her employment and/or her retirement need to be regularly monitored and agreed.

The PAT is formally followed-up every six months to ensure that the necessary training and other support services are available.

6.2 ONGOING TRAINING

6.2.1 ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

The SOS mother receives assistance in the general running of her household. Other staff members help her with tasks such as budgeting, planning, and child development planning if she requires this support. This process can be seen as an on-the-job training since the aim of this support is to empower the SOS mother to eventually be able to lead and manage her SOS family independently.

6.2.2 FOLLOW-UP TRAINING

Outside the village

The SOS mother attends **a minimum of two weeks of follow-up training at least once every two years**. This training takes place at a suitable location outside the SOS Children's Village such as the training centre.

Objectives of these trainings are: reflection of her own work, exchange of experiences with SOS mothers from other SOS Children's Villages, support for each other, professional qualification through new inputs, and information on new developments in the organisation. The topics are offered according to the SOS mothers' needs.

In the village

In addition, training programmes are held within the village during **at least seven days each year**. These training days can be organised as one or two-day workshops, and/or as weekly training sessions. They cover the current training needs of the SOS mothers in the village such as child development issues, child development planning, conflict management, and HIV/AIDS. The training may be conducted by village staff and/or external consultants. The village director or an assigned co-worker keeps track of the training needs within the village and is in charge of organising and running the trainings. S/he establishes a link between the village and the responsible SOS mother trainer and/or SOS mother co-ordinator in the country or region, keeping them up-to-date on the training process in the village and communicating training needs of the village to them. The person in charge of organising trainings in the village is prepared for this role through so-called "train-the-trainer programmes".

6.3 ONGOING SUPPORT OFFERS

6.3.1 SPECIAL ATTENTION FOR SOS MOTHER TRAINEES

During her first two years in the village the SOS mother trainee is given additional attention that focuses on her special situation: The village director is the main support and guide for the SOS mother trainee; apart from that, a mentoring SOS mother supports the trainee in everyday life and gives feedback on her performance.

6.3.2 SOS MOTHER MEETINGS

Once a month, SOS mothers organise an SOS mothers meeting which is also attended by the village director. Other co-workers are included as determined by the SOS mothers and the village director, and written records are kept. These meetings offer SOS mothers an official platform for discussing and exchanging on child care and organisational matters.

6.3.3 THE SOS MOTHER REPRESENTATIVE

Every two to three years the SOS mothers of each village elect their SOS mother representative who is their spokesperson and also a member of the village committee.

6.3.4 INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

On request, the SOS mother can make use of professional support services such as: study help and spare time activities for her children which are organised by an educator; child therapy by a psychologist; personal counselling for herself by an external professional; support by the village social worker with collecting information on the history of the children in her care.

The actual support offers depend upon the specific needs of the SOS mother and her SOS family. The supporting co-workers are service providers to the SOS mother.

6.3.5 NETWORKING – PEER GROUP EXCHANGE

Face-to-face and virtual exchange among peers is an important part of professional development and is therefore supported by SOS Children's Villages. Good practises are identified within workshops and virtual or face-to-face meetings and are shared with others to promote learning. SOS mothers maintain regular contact with their peers to exchange experience and enhance performance. This exchange may take place at internal or external level (with other NGOs, child and youth care organisations etc.).

6.3.6 ANNUAL RETREAT

SOS mothers may spend 2-3 days per year in retreat. This is a period of thought and reflection for SOS mothers which takes place in an appropriate location outside the village. Away from their everyday-life, SOS mothers find time and space for themselves as individuals and as a group.

6.3.7 THE SOS MOTHER'S SOCIAL LIFE

A crucial factor for the SOS mother's well being throughout her career is her social life inside and outside the SOS Children's Village. The village director encourages the SOS mother in maintaining and strengthening her contacts with other SOS mothers, relatives, friends and other organisations without interfering in her private sphere.

6.4 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR LONG-SERVING SOS MOTHERS

SOS Children's Villages strives for well-qualified long-serving child care co-workers, who can provide children with the stable relationship they need for their sound development.

Usually child care is a profession with few career opportunities, a fact that leads to particular challenges: Finding ways to keep up an SOS mother's enthusiasm and motivation for her important role is one of the key tasks of the village director and the whole organisation. Because only qualified, content and motivated child care co-workers are able to provide quality care for children.

It is necessary to find individual ways of recognising the achievements and expertise of long-serving SOS mothers. This is usually done in the frame of the regular performance appraisal meetings where the SOS mother and the village director reflect upon individual development opportunities. They may agree on new and challenging tasks or opportunities for the SOS mother to pass on her experience in a structured way.

Appreciation for the experience of long-serving SOS mothers can be expressed through:

- Appointment as an SOS mother mentor including previous mentoring training with other SOS mothers.
- Involvement in SOS mother training sessions as a trainer: topics may include individual child development planning, coping with stress when working with traumatised children, etc.
- Involvement in the selection process of SOS mothers, SOS aunts and family assistants with equal voting right in the evaluation process.
- Involvement in capacity building activities for parents in the community and/or for other child care workers in the country.
- Participation in planning, strategy and policy processes: SOS mothers may participate in development processes at local, national or international level.
- To be able to dedicate herself to her new assignment, the SOS mother receives additional help in the family house or maybe already has fewer children in her SOS family.
- In cases where an SOS mother has accompanied one generation of children until they were all ready to leave the SOS family, a break before she starts with the next generation of children may be a way of regaining new energy. During this break, a cross-training or secondment could be an option: An SOS mother may be temporarily assigned to another field of work or a different part of the organisation to acquire new knowledge and/or train others and build capacity. She may also be temporarily released to another organisation to develop new competences.

7 END-OF-EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

When an SOS mother's career comes to an end, the organisation aims to offer her flexible and individual forms of growing into retirement and finalizing her career. Proper planning gives the SOS mother and the children in her care security.

Long-term commitment and the prevention of a sudden termination of employment are among the most important goals when working with SOS mothers. These goals need to be reflected in the recruitment, selection, training and supporting measures as well as in a transparent planning of the SOS mother's career through regular performance appraisal talks.

When an SOS mother ends her career it is also crucial to take this into consideration in the thorough and sensitive SOS family planning process. The amount of the children who live with an SOS mother needs to be gradually decreased when her career comes to an end (retirement or SOS mother for one generation). She gradually grows into retirement, having less and less children in her care. As compensation, she might take on additional tasks in the village like providing support for other SOS mothers, helping out at the kindergarten, or providing homework support for children.

There are several ways to prepare for the end of an SOS mother's career and employment:

7.1 TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

7.1.1 SOS MOTHER FOR ONE GENERATION

The model of becoming an SOS mother for one generation of children is still an exceptional career path. This model implies that a woman decides to care for one generation of children until they have moved to the next stage of care (SOS youth programme, return to family of origin, etc.). Then the SOS mother leaves the organisation or applies for another job within SOS Children's Villages.

The SOS mother takes the decision for this career path either at the time of signing her employment contract, or at some point during her working career; in this case she needs to come to an agreement with the village director at least one year in advance. The minimum duration of an SOS mother's employment is of 15 years, in order to ensure long-lasting relationships to the children in her care.

7.1.2 THE SOS MOTHER LEAVES ON HER OWN OR ON THE VILLAGE DIRECTOR'S INITIATIVE

Sudden and "unplanned" terminations of employment need to be avoided wherever possible because they usually imply another sudden and painful separation for the children in the SOS mother's care.

Ideally, the relevant persons know about a termination well in advance and the village director prepares the necessary steps together with the SOS mother. The children receive special attention and support during this period of change.

The village director organises a formal exit discussion with the SOS mother and, after some time, also an out-of-employment discussion. These meetings serve to clarify the reasons for the termination. This way, learning experiences can be derived.

7.2 RETIREMENT

The SOS mother is informed about the organisation's retirement regulations at the beginning of her employment. The preparation process for her retirement starts at least three to four years before the actual retirement and includes individual talks and seminars with other concerned SOS mothers.

7.2.1 FULL RETIREMENT AGE

Eligibility

The SOS mother retires according to the defined age within the national labour law. To be eligible for full retirement benefits, the SOS mother must have completed at least 15 years of service (including training) and must have reached legal retirement age.

SOS family

Ideally, the SOS mother's career path and the development of her SOS family are planned to ensure that all the children in her care have already moved to the next stage of care at the time of her retirement. At least, no child should be under the age of 14 when the SOS mother retires.

Individual solutions

If all the children in the SOS mother's care move to the next stage of care before the SOS mother reaches legal retirement age, the option of applying for another job or task within the organisation until reaching full retirement age may be considered for the last one or two years of her employment. The organisation does its best to match the SOS mother's needs with those of the organisation, but this cannot be considered a right of the SOS mother.

During this transition period, the SOS mother may work in the village according to an agreement with the village director. She can, for example, provide support for children with learning difficulties or organise recreational activities. She can also support young SOS mothers in their professional development (e.g. mentoring) and/or support them in art activities, creative work, organising leisure time, etc. In countries where the SOS mother profession is a legalised profession or where it is recognised as a corresponding child care profession, the SOS mother may also apply to the state for early retirement.

7.2.2 EARLY RETIREMENT

The SOS mother may apply for early retirement as defined in the HR Manual: Applications are accepted only a maximum of five years before the legal retirement age and are considered by the Board. Generally, the decision is based on the respective State regulations for early retirement for the corresponding profession and may be approved only if the SOS mother has completed at least 15 years of service.

If her early retirement is approved, the SOS mother gets a reduced pension according to the national early retirement system until she reaches legal retirement age, and is eligible for full SOS retirement benefits as soon as she reaches legal retirement age. Here, the national association needs to develop an early retirement scheme which defines how and to which extent the organisation contributes.

7.2.3 BEING RETIRED

Once the SOS mother has retired, SOS Children's Villages stays in contact with her through regular meetings and/or functions for retired SOS mothers. At least once a year contact is initiated by the organisation with her involvement being optional.

8

SUMMARY OF VILLAGE DIRECTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Each SOS mother can rely on good and effective leadership by the village director which fosters her long-term service and commitment.

The village director puts the human resource principles and standards into practice within the programme:

- S/he leads the **recruitment process** and is responsible for an appropriate HR plan in the programme and the timely recruitment of staff in close cooperation with the national office.
- S/he ensures that each SOS mother trainee goes through a **structured orientation period**.
- S/he ensures that each SOS mother trainee participates in the **two-year initial training** and that each SOS mother meets the “one-year guideline”.
- S/he is responsible for the **SOS mother training in the village**. S/he ensures a well organised practical training in the village, keeps track of additional training needs, and organises trainings in the village in close cooperation with the national or regional SOS mother training co-ordinator.
- S/he ensures that the SOS mother has **good working conditions**: e.g. fulfilment of village staffing patterns (particularly an appropriate number of SOS aunts and family assistants); good organization of leave days and vacations; leadership culture based on trust; compliance with the maximum number of children per family.
- S/he ensures that the SOS mother has access to **specialised support** from co-workers and external experts when needed.
- S/he promotes the **ongoing professional development** of each SOS mother through regular meetings and performance appraisal discussions, support offers, and learning and development opportunities. The village director also encourages the SOS mother in maintaining a healthy work-life-balance.
- S/he works out an **individual development plan** together with each SOS mother with a scope of 3-5 years. This plan is updated within the annual performance appraisals.
- S/he promotes **networking among SOS mothers** by providing the necessary resources for sharing knowledge and learning.
- S/he provides a well structured and **appreciative phasing-out process**: The village director holds an exit discussion and an out-of-employment discussion with the leaving SOS mother.

9 EXTERNAL RECOGNITION OF THE SOS MOTHER PROFESSION

The external recognition of the SOS mother profession is part and parcel of the overall development of the SOS mother profession. Ultimately, only strong SOS mothers are able to build a profession together with other child and youth care workers.

However, this does not mean that the organisation's efforts towards recognition should be "delayed" until all other HRD aspects have been well developed. On the contrary, efforts towards external recognition can stimulate and speed up internal processes: profiles need to be sharpened, curricula standards need to be raised to catch up with external standards, and the organisation has to account for the quality of its trainings. A higher qualification may also imply the need to upgrade the conditions of service (fewer working hours, higher salary). In this process, each national association is challenged to find its own balanced and appropriate way.

What are the benefits of an external recognition of the SOS mother profession?

- It is an implicit drive to professionalise our SOS mothers and thereby improve the quality of child care in the best interest of the children entrusted to our care;
- Official recognition leads to higher prestige for SOS mothers which, in a profession with few career opportunities, is an important motivating factor;
- The internal and external recognition of the SOS mother profession supports the recognition of our SOS child care model as a whole;
- And, last but not least, SOS mothers gain a certain degree of "freedom to chose" if their training and profession are recognised.

The way towards legal recognition of the SOS mother profession as a child care profession is usually a long and complex one. Depending on the national situation with regard to labour laws, child welfare legislation, other child care professions etc., the actions that need to be taken are manifold.

So far, the following avenues towards recognition can be identified:

9.1 COOPERATION WITH GOVERNMENTS AND MINISTRIES

Government agreements on the SOS mother profession in combination with the SOS family child care model give a certain security that the profession is recognised by government authorities. They serve as a foundation for further steps with regard to the recognition of the SOS mother profession and are a frequent practice on the African continent. The inclusion of the SOS mother profession in national profession categories is another way towards recognition. Examples of this can be found on the CEE/CIS/Baltic continent and in Algeria.

Negotiations with regard to labour law:

- In some cases the profession has been fully recognised in a way that also solves the working hours dilemma, like in France where SOS mothers are recognised as “family educator”, in some CEE/CIS/Baltic countries where they are part of the group of “foster parents” or in Brazil where they form part of the group of “social mothers”;
- In other cases individual exemptions are established with government agencies like in Bolivia, where SOS mothers are “employees in a position of trust”; in this case employment contracts and working conditions are approved by the labour inspector or the responsible ministry;
- In some countries, the recognition of the SOS model and the SOS mother profession in a government agreement is sufficient, for the time being;
- Another way of handling working hours and other labour law related issues is the inclusion of SOS mothers in a collective agreement like in Austria.

The promotion of the SOS model and advocacy activities are essential prerequisites for the recognition of the SOS mother profession. SOS Children’s Villages is active in governmental bodies or working groups in the area of child care and co-operates with other NGOs and government agencies to promote the rights of children etc.

9.2 COOPERATION WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER CHILD CARE PROFESSIONS

Experience shows that the external recognition of the SOS mother training is an important step towards the recognition as child care profession. Some of our training centres in, for example, South Africa, The Gambia, Columbia, Venezuela or Austria have already been successful in the accreditation of their training programmes. The training centres in Bolivia and Kenya are well on their way. Curriculum development in accordance with external standards is the crucial process to achieve this recognition.

Another way towards the recognition of the profession is the participation of SOS mothers in externally approved training courses. This may be a governmental foster care programme or a formalised training to become an educator who is recognised by the government like in Germany.

Obviously, cooperation with universities, education institutes, other NGOs, and child care professions is important in this area.

For more information, particularly a collection of good practice examples, please see the survey “External recognition of the SOS mother profession (2004)” on the intranet.

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Team members

Ms Tran Thi Kim Dung, Deputy National Director, Vietnam

Ms Rita Furmanova, Continental SOS Mother Coordinator, Belarus

Ms Rosa Heim, Director "Colleg für Familienpädagogik", Austria

Mr Mysore K. Lokesh, Zonal Director West, India

Ms Vilma Lopez, Director of the SOS Training Centre, Nicaragua

Ms Julieta Mendes, Regional Education Advisor, The Gambia

Ms Soad Milad, Regional Educational Advisor Middle East, Egypt

Ms Judith L. Miranda, Regional SOS mother profession Advisor, Bolivia

Ms Thembi Modungwa, Director of the Adult Training Centre, South Africa

Ms Hannele Nikkanen, Quality Advisor, Finland

Ms Adriana Rodriguez, Regional HR/OD Advisor, Costa Rica

Ms Wilma Sosa, Director HRD, Paraguay

Ms Ayanda Tshuma, National Education and Training Advisor, Zimbabwe

Ms Elisabeth Ullmann-Gheri, Programme Development IO, team coordinator, Austria

Ms Sigita Žilėnienė, Continental SOS Mother Coordinator, Lithuania

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: SOS MOTHER JOB DESCRIPTION AND JOB PROFILE

SOS MOTHER JOB DESCRIPTION

National association:

Name of the employee:

Position title: SOS mother

Reporting to: Village director

Location:

Position summary

The SOS mother is the leader of the SOS family. She is a child care professional within a family environment and is directly responsible for the care and development of each child in her SOS family. The SOS mother shares her life with the children, offering them emotional security and the opportunity to develop new and lasting relationships. She guides them towards self-sufficiency and independence and leads the decision-making process with her children. As a child-care professional she works within the standards of the SOS Children's Village organisation and according to a child rights-based approach, and cooperates with the other village co-workers in meeting the needs of the children.

Aim of the position

- The SOS mother creates a family together with the children who grow up as brothers and sisters in an atmosphere of security and joy.
- She organises everyday family life in a structured way with the children's participation according to their age and abilities.
- She builds a stable relationship with each child, supporting his/her feeling of belonging and ensures the holistic development and overall well-being of each child in her family.
- The SOS mother identifies with the organisation's values, vision, and mission, and complies with the organisation's quality standards.
- She regularly reflects upon her own behaviour and practice and leads her professional and personal growth.

Cooperation and Reporting Relationships

- The SOS mother reports directly to the village director. She receives ongoing guidance and support from him/her and participates in regular performance appraisals.
- She fosters and maintains good working relationships with other SOS mothers, SOS aunts and family assistants, SOS youth care co-workers and other village staff.
- The SOS mother maintains and strengthens the child's relationship with his/her family of origin in the best interest of the child.

- She is actively involved in the local community and interacts appropriately with external stakeholders in the best interest of the child.

Main tasks & responsibilities of an SOS mother

- **The SOS mother is responsible for the development of her SOS family:** The SOS mother leads her SOS family. She creates a secure environment and a welcoming family home in which relationships are based on mutual respect. She accepts each child as s/he is and supports the child in coping with his/her life history including challenges like trauma and loss. She uses family resources responsibly ensuring that the children's basic needs are met. The SOS mother fosters deep emotional bonds within her family and also takes actions to maintain and strengthen the child's relationship with his/her family of origin in the child's best interest.
- **The SOS mother supports the holistic development and wellbeing of each child in her family:** She strengthens the child in his/her own cultural identity and promotes his/her spiritual and moral development. The SOS mother strengthens each child's self-esteem by providing individual attention and positive feedback. She ensures the necessary support for the child's physical wellbeing and encourages the child to play and participate in spiritual and cultural practices as well as in sportive and recreational activities. She delegates responsibility to the child according to his/her maturity and supports the child in building and maintaining relationships in the community. The SOS mother identifies and promotes the child's individual abilities, interests and creative potential and supports him/her to reach the adequate level of education according to his/her abilities.
- **The SOS mother cooperates with the SOS Children's Village organisation:** She identifies with the organisation's values, vision and mission and complies with the organisation's quality standards. The SOS mother leads the individual development planning process for each child in her family. She actively participates in teamwork and effectively coordinates her cooperation with SOS aunts, family assistants, youth leaders and other village co-workers. The SOS mother is actively involved in the local community and advocates for Children's and Women's Rights. She interacts appropriately with external stakeholders (such as teachers, other NGOs, state authorities, etc.) in the best interest of the child.
- **The SOS mother leads her personal and professional growth:** She develops her own physical, emotional, social, mental and spiritual wellbeing and balances her personal and professional life. The SOS mother communicates her support needs and makes use of the support offered. She regularly reflects upon her professional practice, participates in ongoing training and peer exchange, and stays up-to-date on new developments.

Validity/Effective date:

Next review of the job description (in the frame of the performance appraisal talk):

Signatures:

Employer

Employee

Date:

Date:

SOS MOTHER JOB PROFILE

The job profile serves as a reference paper and allows for national adjustments considering the size of the organisation, the potential growth plan, etc.

General characteristics

- Age: Between 25 and 45 years
- Education and work experience: Medium level of education, preferably secondary school; academic and/or work experience in areas related to child care, education, family and/or community development desired;
- Marital status: preferably single, widowed or divorced with due respect to the social, cultural and legal norms of the country
- Family: preferably no dependent children; in case an applicant with dependent children is recruited, they live with her in the SOS family (max. 1-2 children)
- Health: physically and mentally healthy
- Willingness to live in an SOS Children's Village and to take on a long-term working commitment (at least for one generation of children and youth)
- Willingness to obtain the necessary knowledge and skills through a professional training process and ongoing development

Personal key competences:

The following five personal competences (personality traits) are considered key or basic requirements for those applying for the position (entry profile). Applicants do not need to have fully developed these competences at the time of selection but there should be an intermediate development level so that the competences can be strengthened during the two-year initial training programme.

- **Readiness for “social motherhood”:** She is prepared and highly motivated to live together with boys, girls and young people who are not her own. She accepts children with all their individual characteristics. She is ready for personal bonding.
- **Constructive handling of mistakes:** She is able to reflect upon and question her actions and to recognise, admit and learn from mistakes. She does not give up when faced with failure or difficulties. She is able to accept constructive criticism and to give feedback in an appropriate way.
- **Capacity to deal with pressure:** She is able to work under pressure while still pursuing and accomplishing her own aims. This implies self-control and the ability to act calmly when facing difficult situations. She is able to establish distance when necessary and to protect herself from overstrain.
- **Ability to build interpersonal relationships:** She is able to get along with others, to work in teams and to establish and maintain solid relationships. This implies the ability to empathise with and understand other people and the ability to handle communication processes on different levels with an adequate emotional response.
- **Flexibility:** She is able to react appropriately according to different situations. She is able to adapt her own behaviour to the respective situation.

Competences in the area of family development:

- **Fostering a sense of belonging:** She is able to sensitively and wholeheartedly support the children in developing emotional bonds with their new family members. She is at the same time able to strengthen the children's emotional relations with their family of origin, so that

they can develop their self-esteem and can fully integrate into different social contexts.

- **Managing living standards:** She is able to understand her own responsibilities and is familiar with the related organisational policies. She uses family resources in a well-structured and responsible way. She creates a comfortable and warm living atmosphere for the family.
- **Planning and budgeting:** She is able to use the family's economic resources effectively and responsibly.

Competences in the area of child development:

- **Supporting the child's holistic development:** She has knowledge and skills in key concepts on early attachment, child development stages, supporting self-esteem, dealing with trauma and loss. She is able to identify strengths, potentials and needs in the development of each child and adolescent and take actions to ensure the best development opportunities in every developmental phase.
- **Supporting the child's self-esteem:** She is aware of the importance of positive self-esteem for the well-being of human beings. She is ready and able to develop actions aimed at strengthening and/or reconstructing the self-esteem of every child in her care.
- **Dealing with difficulties in child behaviour:** She is able to identify inadequate behaviour and to react positively to meet this challenge while always offering a stable relationship and the right atmosphere to find a solution.
- **Putting Child Rights into practice:** She understands and lives up to the rights of children and to the SOS Child Protection Policy. She is capable of establishing a healthy, respectful and tolerant relationship with children and young people. She shows them affection and treats them well, in order to live up to the rights of children and to eliminate any kind of child abuse.

Competences in the area of the SOS Children's Village organisation:

- **Living the SOS philosophy:** She identifies with the organisation's values, vision and mission and put its principles and standards into practice.
- **Working in teams:** She cooperates constructively with the village director, the SOS aunts, the family assistants, the youth care co-workers and other village co-workers.
- **Leading the individual development plan for each child:** She is able to identify the strengths, potential and needs in the development of each child. She takes actions to support the development of the children and evaluates and documents the process in co-operation with other village co-workers.
- **Gender and diversity sensitivity:** She is able to respect diversity and to bridge differences within the family and between the family and other stakeholders.

Competences in the area of self-development:

- **Leading her own personal development:** She is able to balance her professional, personal and social life. She cares for her own physical and emotional health. She maintains a positive attitude towards life.
- **Communicating assertively:** She is able to listen, to express her feelings and ideas, and to accept feedback. She is able to handle personal and interpersonal conflicts and relationships in a balanced way.
- **Leading own professional development:** She strives for continuous professional improvement. She is ready and able to reflect her own practices. She actively participates in peer exchange and makes use of further training opportunities.

APPENDIX 2: LEARNING UNIT EXAMPLE

COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION
IDENTIFICATION	<p>SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES – COUNTRY Professional training programme for SOS mothers Level I Trainer: Date:</p>
RESPONSIBILITY AREA	SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGE ORGANISATION
COMPETENCE	<p>LIVING A RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH The SOS mother has the capacity to identify, accept and practice Human Rights, particularly Children's Rights, and shows a positive attitude towards these rights and full commitment to respect them in all areas of life. She thinks democratically and believes in the same rights for all within a culture of peace and tolerance for the people around her.</p>
TOPIC	HUMAN RIGHTS
RESULTS-BASED OBJECTIVES	<p>She is familiar with the origin, principles and basic characteristics of Human Rights. She identifies and explains the principles of Human Rights and knows who the duty bearers of rights are within society. She is able to identify situations where rights are respected or disrespected in her country, community and village. She expresses her opinion on how to behave with peers.</p> <p>In practice: She treats everyone with respect and consideration. She teaches Human Rights. She maintains an attitude of respect towards and solidarity with her peers.</p>
NTS	<p>HUMAN RIGHTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Origin of Human Rights • Background of the Universal Human Rights Declaration • The Universal Human Rights Declaration • Key concepts of Human Rights • What are the Human Rights • Characteristics of Human Rights • Fundamental principles of Human Rights • Human Rights duty bearers • Classification of Human Rights
ACTIVITIES	<p>I. AT THE TRAINING CENTRE</p> <p>Motivation: reading, short videos, exclusion game, identification of prior knowledge, etc.</p> <p>Thematic development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation by the facilitator - Brainstorming - Reading, group work - Role play - Video on Human Rights etc.

<p>ACTIVITIES</p>	<p>Wrap-up activities: Each participant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prepares a list of the main things s/he has learned. - analyses his/her own everyday behaviour as to whether it respects or disrespects Human Rights. - defines two concrete actions that s/he would implement during the training week in order to improve his/her behaviour in relation to Human Rights. - prepares to present his/her work in the plenary session; defines who is responsible for the follow-up and is ready to sign a letter of commitment. <p>II. IN THE VILLAGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The trainee reads minimum contents and complementary literature - She implements learning activities to build awareness; for example a small investigation: The trainee researches and reinforces the Human Rights capacities in the village. She lists rights that are implemented/not implemented, that can be observed well/not so well and explains her findings. - She identifies Human Rights organisations in her community or city, and collects some printed material on Human Rights - She prepares posters on Human Rights and uses them to explain Human Rights to the children in the village
<p>NO. OF HOURS</p>	<p>... hours in class (at the training centre) ... hours of home study (in the village)</p>
<p>RESOURCES</p>	<p>Printed material on Human Rights: posters, documents, texts, booklets... Teaching material: games, cards, posters, flip charts, etc. Specialist facilitator</p>
<p>PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The family house is a place of liberty and freedom where the children can freely express their opinion. • The SOS mother informs, explains, and orientates the children on how to exercise their rights, and on how to participate in decision-making processes that affect their own lives, community and country. • The children participate in the decision-making processes that affect family life and their own lives. • The SOS mother gradually gives the children responsibility, so that they can practice their right to choose and decide. • The children treat each other with respect and tolerance. • The SOS mother supports the skills and talents of the children and young people.
<p>EVALUATION (AUTO-EVALUATION, CO-EVALUATION, EVALUATION)</p>	<p>AT THE TRAINING CENTRE: Reactions: Self-evaluation: What have I learnt? What did I like about the class, what did I not like? Which issues would I like to know more about? Method: questionnaire or interview Knowledge: The participant identifies a situation(s) of right violation and proposes actions to solve the situation (step-by-step procedures). Method: case study Behaviour: At the training centre; method: observation</p> <p>IN THE VILLAGE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance regarding the implementation of the learning activities in the village • Evaluation by the trainer • Development of a personal work plan • Implementation of the new knowledge (in attitudes/values, knowledge and skills), evaluation by village director and child development staff, and mentoring SOS mothers
<p>BIBLIOGRAPHY</p>	<p>List of the documents the contents have been taken from</p>

THE SOS MOTHER PROFESSION



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