SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES INTERNATIONAL

PROVIDING QUALITY SPONSORSHIP SERVICES

A joint effort of the international sponsorship network

January 2020 – Version 5.0

POLICY SUPPORT DOCUMENT

PUTTING POLICIES AND QUALITY STANDARDS INTO PRACTICE

KEY USERS

Mandatory for:	Sponsorship co-workers and fundraisers in promoting and supporting associations Sponsorship coordinators at national associations Sponsorship co-workers at programme level National heads of finance Regional donor services coordinators and advisors Co-workers at ICC FD Individual Giving
Recommended for:	National directors Programme directors National PDB focal points

RELATED POLICIES

Basic policies:	Statutes, Strategy 2030, Who We Are, Brand Book
Core policies:	SOS Care Promise, Child Protection Policy
Quality standards:	Good Management and Accountability Standards, Code of Conduct, Fundraising Manual

RELATED DOCUMENTS, TOOLS, SYSTEMS

	User guide for PSA sponsorship co-workers
	User guide for NAs on servicing international sponsorships
	DSApp user guide for NSPO
	Storytelling Guide
	Protecting Children´s Privacy
	Finance Management

RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTENT

Function:	ICC Fund Development
Department:	Individual Giving

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Approved by:	Management Team (September 2019) and Management Council (October 2019)
Original language:	English
Intranet address:	

CHANGE HISTORY

Version	Date	Changes
5.0	January 2020	Digital content for online sponsorship services; updated sponsorship systems; updated visitor's guide and social media frame.
4.0	January 2018	Increase of number of sponsorships per child; usage of children's first names only; adaptation to EU GDPR; structural change to one joint policy support document and user guides for PSAs and NAs
3.0	July 2016	Shifting service elements from IO to NAs; programmatic developments witin family-like and family-based care; updated visitor's guide.
2.0	October 2014	Updated staffing recommendation; social media policy; updated child and data protection guidelines; storytelling method; money gifts disbursement regulation.
1.0	December 2011	Document approved by SMT

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TABLE OF CONTENT

A loving home for every child

1   Introduction

As a flagship fundraising product, international sponsorships have driven growth within our federation for many years. They remain a stable source of income and a funding pillar for our international programs. In close cooperation with Individual Giving, all member associations pursue the same goal to secure the best interest of the child and to support as many children as possible, as well as to manage sponsor expectations. In order to secure donor retention and long-term loyalty from donors, it is necessary to balance the interest of all stakeholders, and to continuously monitor, develop and adapt our services.

1.1   Aim of the policy support document

This document presents an overview of the sponsorship eco-system, it´s processes and standards, as well as child safeguarding policies. This document, together with the NA and PSA user guides, forms the framework of international sponsorships and outlines mandatory quality standards.

1.2   Why international sponsorships?

Approximately one third of our net income worldwide that is available for international work is raised through international sponsorships. Sponsors build a unique, long-term relationship with our organisation, becoming our partners in child safeguarding and in providing children in need with a loving home, an education, and a future. Sponsorships are the most successful when the best interests of the children are secured, and our supporters feel connected to our programmes and establish trust in our organisation.

1.3   Local sponsorship programmes

In an attempt to support even more children, substantial efforts are made to increase additional income, therefore local sponsorship products are a great fundraising opportunity. In order for local and international sponsorships to function in parallel, a coordinated approach is crucial. When implementing a local sponsorship programme, compulsory rules of engagement as stated in the NA user guide need to be followed.

2   Sponsorship Basics

2.1   Child and village sponsorships

Today, sponsors support us either through a village or a child[1] sponsorship. All contributions are part-earmarked (for more information, see chapter 7.1.1) to the budget of a specific SOS Children´s Village programme, including all programme units at that location.

2.2   Registering an SOS Children's Village to the sponsorship programme

For a programme to be included in the international sponsorship programme, certain criteria have to be fulfilled. The NA sponsorship coordinator fills in the clearance form and sends it to IG. IG checks with Finance and Controlling that all relevant information is available and releases the SOS family care and youth care units of the specific SOS Children´s Village for sponsorships. Other units providing alternative care at the same location may be eligible for sponsorships as well; the criteria and release process for these programme units is described in the NA user guide.

2.3   Which children can be sponsored?

All children below 15 years of age can be registered to the sponsorship programme, provided that their legal guardians have given written consent to the use the children´s personal information and pictures.

This applies to children living in SOS Family Care (SFC), Youth Care (YC), Small Group Homes (SGH), Other Alternative Care (OAC), and Family Foster Care (FFC), if the criteria defined in the NA user guide is met. Child sponsorships for children from Family Strengthening Programmes (FS) are currently being piloted; please contact IG-QM@sos-kd.org for more details. Biological children of SOS co-workers cannot be admitted to the sponsorship programme.

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[1] In the sponsorship context, we mean child to include children and young people up to the age of 23.

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2.4   A new sponsorship begins. Planning, recruitment and sponsorship potential

IG monitors the global potential for child sponsorships in order to consult PSAs and other stakeholders on relevant developments concerning global child and village sponsorship potential. The Stop & Push list informs on child and village sponsorship potential per PSA, as well as on programmes closed for new sponsorships.

PSAs align their campaign plans with IG to enable their best support for ongoing sponsor recruitment.

2.5   Sponsorship allocation and sponsor wishes

Our goal is to allocate the largest number of sponsorships possible in SOS Children´s Villages with a particularly high financial need, or where children have few or no sponsors. However, when PSAs have priority villages (villages where the PSA has financial obligations), those will be prioritised in the matching process.

3   Roles, responsibilities and systems

3.1   The NA sponsorship team

A strong and empowered sponsorship coordinator guides a network of designated co-workers in every SOS Children´s Village who support sponsorship services at programme level. The services they deliver together as a team are a major factor in retaining sponsors.

In addition to the national sponsorship coordinator, the key stakeholders at NA level are:
- Programme sponsorship co-workers
- National PDB focal points
- National director
- National head of finance
- Programme director

3.1.1   Quality needs adequate human resources: a staffing recommendation

To offer the best services we can to our donors and sponsors, the NA user guide offers a calculation model of the minimum staff required based on number of sponsorships, number of children in the sponsorship programme, and service language(s) offered.

3.2   Other stakeholders

Taking care of sponsors is the joint responsibility of national associations and promoting and supporting associations, which are strongly supported by the Individual Giving department at the International Office. Additionally, the regional Quality Assurance Network (QAN) and the Sponsorship Core Group support the development and continuous improvement of sponsorship services and skills.

The QAN is a team of regional donor services coordinators and advisors that consult NAs on administrative issues, donor communication, strategic quality improvement, and provide sponsorship system support as well as capacity building measures.

The Sponsorship Core Group is a team of PSA, QAN and NSPO representatives that consult on messaging, product and service improvement.

The Sponsorship Lab (SPO LAB) is a joint initiative amongst MAs for innovation in product development, coordinated by IG.

Finance and Controlling Services (FC) are responsible for bookings, payments and transfers.

3.3   Sponsorship systems

Strong, integrated systems are a stable backbone in ensuring efficient end-to-end sponsorship processes. All solutions in place guarantee a streamlined and secure information flow throughout the organisation.

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IG and PSAs partly share the same system (FRnow), and partly they connect via individual data bridges. All NAs use the same sponsorship system (DSApp) which is connected to PDB on programme or national level and to FRnow at IG. Close cooperation with Programme & Strategy is imperative as data quality relies on PDB.

Information from DSApp is also transferred to the IG DAM, which is the Backend system for storing and sharing digital sponsorship content across the federation.

IG also offers the "Frontend" to PSAs, a customizable and secure digital platform where sponsors and donors can login and access videos and images from the programmes and children they are supporting.

4 Key service elements

Key service elements describe the minimum standard and service level provided by member associations participating in international sponsorships. Processes described in this chapter summarize the sponsorship service deliverables.

4.1 Consent availability

Signed consent forms by the child's legal guardian are a compulsory requirement for registering a child to the sponsorship programme. See details under 5.1.

4.2 Regular data compliance checks

Every NA executes a bi-annual data monitoring exercise to ensure that all child data is correct and that children who are no longer eligible for the sponsorship programme are withdrawn from it. See details under 6.1.1.

4.3 Child profiles and photos

The child profile, as the first introduction between sponsor and child, is one of the most valued and important communications in the initial phase of a new sponsorship. These unique texts are delivered by the NAs in English upon registration of a child to the sponsorship programme, and updated upon request to ensure availability for the allocation of additional sponsorships.

4.4 Child data changes and transfers

We keep sponsors updated if there are changes to the sponsored child's personal data (name, date of birth), or when a child moves to another SOS Children's Village.

4.5 Child departure notices

When a child leaves the care of SOS Children's Villages, the national sponsorship coordinator sends a detailed departure notice in English immediately; max. 30 days after the child's departure. This process is started in PDB and finalized by the PSA sending the information about the departure to the sponsor.

Children can remain in the sponsorship programme until the maximum age of 23 years if:
- They permanently live in SOS Family Care, Foster Family Care or a physical Youth Care unit.
- We have valid consent to the use of their data for sponsorship purposes.
- Sponsors can be provided with regular updates and photos.

4.6 Welcome process

Once the sponsor has taken on a sponsorship, they enter the welcome process defined by the respective PSA, as well as the standard NA welcome procedure.

The PSA welcome process includes the child or village sponsorship pack and a sponsor's handbook that outlines the dos and don'ts of being a sponsor. The NA welcome letter includes an introduction of the sponsorship coordinator, relevant specific national information and a welcome item.

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4.7   Sponsorship letters, digital content and other updates

The NA updates all sponsors regularly through periodical letters. In all sponsorship letters, we are honest, transparent and professional. We depict a lively and genuine picture of the children in our care and the life of families and children in our programmes, while safeguarding their right to privacy and dignity.

Type	Mid-year (30 June)	End-of-year (30 November)
Child	Mid-year child progress letter (incl. two embedded photos showing the sponsored child).	- End-of-year village letter (incl. two embedded photos). - End-of-year child update paragraph. - Child photo (separate, mountable photo).
Village	Mid-year village sponsorship letter (inc. two embedded photos).	- End-of-year village letter (incl. two embedded photos). - Village photo (separate, mountable photo).

Other updates include child data changes and transfers, which are initially processed in PDB. The national sponsorship coordinator writes the sponsorship communication in English, and the PSA forwards the information to the sponsor.

NAs participating in digital content production provide an annually updated set of content pieces as defined, which PSAs make available to sponsors. The annual upload schedule for NAs to IG-DAM is:

Region	Upload to IG-DAM by
EUCM, LAAM	31 August
ESAF, WCNA	30 September
ASIA	31 October

4.8   Enquiries and complaints management

Every enquiry from a sponsor is an opportunity to make the sponsor more enthusiastic about the work and professionalism of SOS Children's Villages. Questions can be received and responded to directly by NAs or PSAs, or with IG as an intermediate in cases that cannot be solved at either NA or PSA level.

MAs respond within a maximum of five business days to regular enquiries. In highly urgent cases, we respond within two business days.

4.9   Child money gifts

Child money gifts are donations, earmarked to be used for a specific child. Their correct administration, management and disbursement is imperative. See 7.2 for details.

4.10 Communication in times of change, crisis or emergency

Donor communication strategies for crisis and emergencies need to be carefully aligned among all stakeholders to ensure that the organisation is speaking with one voice and conveys a consistent message to our sponsors.

It is in the greatest interest of the federation that information is shared transparently and in a coordinated and timely manner in order to not unnecessarily jeopardize the trust and loyalty of our donors. This includes crises and emergencies as much as internal programmatic changes.

IG keeps PSAs informed and coordinates the alignment of donor messaging from PSAs and NAs in accordance with the federations overall communication strategy. IG will monitor issues that have been communicated to donors for potential follow up communication.

5   Child safeguarding and data protection

5.1   Consent for the use of personal data

Signed consent by the child's legal guardian (to the use of personal data and the use of child-created materials) is a compulsory requirement for registering a child into the sponsorship programme. The consent

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is co-signed and, hence, renewed by the child upon turning 13 and 18 years of age. The consent can be withdrawn at any time; it is, however, important for children and legal guardians to understand the benefits of being part of the sponsorship programme and how the materials will be used.

5.2   Data protection, child safeguarding and child participation

All children's and sponsors' personal data is registered at IG in Vienna, Austria; hence, both Austrian and EU data protection laws apply. In addition, each member association needs to adhere to national laws on data protection. The personal data of children and sponsors always remains confidential and is only used within our organisation. It is stored securely in systems protected against data misuse. Appropriate deletion routines are in place.

In all communication, we ensure that no child information shared with sponsors can cause harm to the child's privacy, dignity, integrity, or chances of further development.

We recognize children as key stakeholders in sponsorship activities. They have the right to withdraw their consent to the use of their data within sponsorships, have access to the sponsorship service materials collected about them upon request, and decide whether they want to write to their sponsors or not.

5.3   We facilitate the contact between sponsor and child

Personal contact between sponsors and children can be an enriching experience for everybody involved. In order to maximise the positive experience and minimize any risks, we facilitate all contact carefully.

5.3.1   Letters and parcels

Sponsors are welcome to write letters or send parcels to their sponsored children. Children are free to write or respond to their sponsors, but are not required to do so. All letters and parcels are screened and recorded by the NA, and only content that is deemed appropriate is forwarded. Sponsor's family names and addresses are removed to ensure data security. NAs inform IG if letters or parcels contain problematic content and will, together with the respective PSA, take the appropriate action.

5.3.2   Social media

As an organisation, we do not condone direct, unsupervised contact between sponsors and children. If we become aware of direct contact, PSAs will take the matter up with the sponsor in question and help them to understand their role in keeping the children safe from abuse and exploitation.

NAs raise awareness on proper use of social media and educate children to understand the power and reach of social media, and to understand the reason for our cautious policy.

It is not allowed to share photos on social media along with the real name, age or programme location, as well as private details, of the children. The sharing of sensitive information such as religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs or health status of the child or third parties such as parents, caregivers or other children, is strictly forbidden.

5.3.3   Visits

Sponsors are welcome to visit their sponsored children once a year for a day, as long as both the children and their families agree. Every visiting sponsor receives the Visitor Guide, describing the minimum standards beforehand. The signature is given in the country visited and the signed visitors' guide is then stored. Visiting sponsors are accompanied by a co-worker at all times, and are not entitled to accommodation on the SOS premises. Every sponsor's visit is documented in DSApp and possible child protection issues are reported.

Visits to sponsored children living in community-based care forms are arranged on SOS premises or in public facilities. Visits to private households outside the SOS Children's Village are not tolerated.

Invitations for children who are not yet legally adults to visit their sponsors abroad are generally declined, to protect the children from harm and to prevent disappointment due to unrealistic expectations on both sides.

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6   Quality management – tools and consequences

The Quality Management team at Individual Giving, together with the network of RDS (QAN), oversees all activities and tasks needed to maintain the desired level of excellence. They set standards and follow up on implementation. They support MAs to reach their full potential by offering systematic capacity building, sponsorship reviews, advisory services on child and data protection, etc.

6.1   Quality control and assurance

6.1.1   Bi-annual data monitoring

Twice a year, every NA executes a data monitoring exercise to ensure that all child data is correct and children who are no longer eligible for the sponsorship programme are withdrawn from it. Delayed departure notices in particular can seriously damage the reputation of our organisation and need to be proactively avoided at all cost.

6.1.2   Input to sponsorship letters

The Quality Management team and the RDS provide systematic feedback to the bi-annual sponsorship letters. The quality of the letters from previous periods determines how many letters per NA are rated. The quality rating and the timely mailing of the letters are part of the annual quality feedback.

6.1.3   Annual quality feedback

Every year, Individual Giving and the RDS review the sponsorship work of the last twelve months. Every NA then receives an assessment, and the RDS support the NA in defining the required corrective actions.

6.1.4   Sponsorship quality review

Sponsorship quality reviews are an action focused on skills, processes, systems and responsibilities in an individual NA, tailored to their specific needs and areas of improvement. Every NA can request such a review, or it can be suggested based on the results of the annual quality feedback. The sponsorship quality review includes a tailored in-situ workshop for the national sponsorship network, as well as a final report and a set of recommendations.

6.2   Consequences: temporary closure for new sponsorships

A programme or NA is temporarily closed for new sponsorships if key service elements (chapter 4) are repeatedly not delivered at the required quality level within the required timeframe, or not delivered at all. It does not apply to isolated incidents or single mistakes. Financing PSAs are informed by IG in advance.

Temporary closure can also be applied as a preventive measure if there is no national sponsorship coordinator or qualified stand-in in place, if there is reasonable doubt that the child data is up-to-date, or if there are other drastic developments that seriously endanger successful sponsorship services such as crises or emergencies.

The Quality Management team and the RDS assist the NA in solving the issue and monitor the development. Re-opening is based on a joint assessment and aligned with the national association.

7   Sponsorship Funds

7.1   Sponsorship contribution

The regular payment of sponsorship contributions is the only financial obligation for a sponsor. Sponsorship contributions count as regular voluntary gifts and are used to cover running costs of all programme units at the sponsored location. IG sets a minimum sponsorship contribution for child and village sponsorships (currently EUR 20 and EUR 25 respectively). Each PSA decides upon the amount of the sponsorship contribution in their country.

7.1.1   Sponsorship funding model

The funding model describes how sponsorship contributions are distributed:
- Minimum 40% earmarked for the SOS Children's Village of the sponsorship.
- Maximum 20% can cover administration costs including income-generating activity of the PSA.

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▪ The remaining part can be used to cover costs in SOS programmes internationally, eg. FS.

IG and FC are informed by PSAs about any planned changes in funding models, such as administration fees or other programme deductions for the next year, at the end of April at the latest.

7.2 Money gifts

7.2.1 Child money gifts

Child money gifts are donations to the organisation, earmarked to be used in the best interest for a specific child as described in the memorandum on the use of money gifts. Money gifts are saved at NA level and are used to support the child when becoming independent. The exact use of the money gift funds is determined through the child's individual development plan.

Child money gifts have to be held in a currency that best protects their value over a long period of time and must not be used for speculative assets (such as stocks or real estate). The lump sum of money gifts and earmarked donations per child is made available to NAs in Dynamics NAV.

For more information, refer to the Bank Account Policy, chapter 3.2 and the Liquidity Planning, chapter 12.

7.2.2 NA child money gift disbursement regulation

Every NA develops a binding national money gift disbursement regulation. This procedure regulates the way donors' funds are disbursed (or in exceptional cases redistributed) to children and young persons in the process of becoming independent, and defines standards for the management of these funds.

7.2.3 Monitoring the child money gifts disbursement systematically

The NA monitors the disbursement of money gifts systematically. They regularly take active measures to ensure that disbursement or re-distribution of money gifts has been taking place throughout the year.

7.2.4 Money gifts for villages

Money gifts given for the benefit of a specific SOS Children's Village are used to cover current running costs and budgeted investments, exactly like sponsorship contributions (see 7.1).

7.3 Earmarked donations

Earmarked donations from donors and sponsors with either no sponsorship relation to the beneficiary or for the portfolio of another PSA are subject to specific guidelines as outlined in the memorandum on minor donations via SPO transfers.

7.4 Legacies

Legacies to the SOS organisation, the SOS association of a country, or to a specific child are usually handled by a notary public in the sponsor's home country. Money from legacies for a child is booked as an earmarked donation, saved, and used in the same way as regular money gifts.

7.5 Money flow

7.5.1 Bookings and transfers

Sponsorship contributions, money gifts, legacies, and other earmarked donations are forwarded from each PSA to FC-Shared Treasury Services and then to each NA. For more information on the different transfer processes, please refer to the Transfer Policy. This is the timeline for accounting periods:

Accounting periods	Bookings covered	Determination of balance payment	PSAs remit balance payment	Transfer to NAs
Period 1	January to June	Before 15 July	Before 15 August	In instalments from July-December
Period 2	July to December	Before 15 January	Before 15 February	In instalments from January-June

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7.5.2 Auditing

All member associations are responsible for setting up proper auditing procedures of their accounting. For more information on the auditing of transfers, please see the [Treasury Information Management](#) policy.

Additionally, an international auditing company verifies all incoming and outgoing money flows and the related processes and systems of SOS Children's Villages International.

8 Appendix

DSApp	Donor Services Application: software for national associations to service sponsors; available on national office and programme level.
FC	Finance and Controlling: a department of SOS Children's Villages International.
FFC	Family Foster Care
FRnow	Fundraising Now: fundraising system used by Individual Giving and several PSAs.
FS	Family Strengthening
IG	Individual Giving: a department of the International Competence Centre Fund Development, located in Vienna, Austria.
IG-DAM	Individual Giving Digital Asset Management: Backend system for storing and sharing digital sponsorship content across the federation.
NA	National association
NSPO	National sponsorship coordinator
OAC	Other Alternative Care
PDB	Programme Data Base: a system tool to manage data on individual children, caregivers and communities.
PSA	Promoting and supporting association
QAN	Quality Assurance Network on donor services: a network of regional donor services coordinators and advisors, guided by the teamleader of Quality Management at Individual Giving
RDS	Regional donor services coordinators and advisors
SFC	SOS Family Care
SGH	Small Group Home
SPO LAB	Sponsorship Laboratory: a joint initiative amongst member associations for innovation in product development, coordinated by Individual Giving.
YC	Youth Care

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