



SOS BOLALAR  
MAHALLALARI  
O'ZBEKISTON

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019

SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES UZBEKISTAN  
February 2020

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## SECTION ONE: ANNUAL REPORT

### Summary of activities of SOS Children's Villages Uzbekistan activity in 2019

Uzbekistan is a densely populated country in Central Asia - according to the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan<sup>1</sup>, at the end of 2019, the resident population of the country was 33.9 million people. 33% of the population were children, and another 24% were young people aged from 18 to 30 years.

The focus of SOS Children's Villages Uzbekistan is development of the child welfare system, providing family-like alternative care for children who lost parental care and support vulnerable families at risk of separation helping to reduce the number of children in institutions. Within the programmes of SOS Children's Villages Uzbekistan in three regions, namely, Tashkent, Samarkand and Khorezm, 293 children are living in 33 SOS families and 191 families are receiving tailored psychosocial, economic and legal services at social centres.

Furthermore, SOS Children's Villages Uzbekistan initiated the development and approval of internal regulations on family care, youth care and family strengthening programmes by the government for further increase of state subsidies. The proposed regulations are currently under consideration.

#### De-institutionalisation process in Uzbekistan

In 2019, Uzbek government kept demonstrating its commitment to reforming the system of social protection and introduced numerous normative acts that carry favourable implications for vulnerable children.

In particular, in February 2019, the president adopted a resolution № 4185 on additional measures to strengthen social protection of children-orphans and children left without parental care, which acknowledged the necessity of introducing alternative forms of placement and creating favourable conditions for preparing children for independent life. This policy launched the De-I process of alternative care of children. The resolution contains measures aimed at reducing the level of social orphanage, improving state support mechanisms to orphans and children left without parental care, creating more opportunities for social adaptation of children leaving care, enhancing the work of educational institutions and intensifying activities on family strengthening. Furthermore, it ensures timely provision of accommodation for orphans and children left without parental care and increases the supervision over it. This normative act increased the role and responsibility of regional administrative units (khokimiyat) to support and endorse alternative forms of family care and placement.

According to the document, orphans and children without parental care will have to an access to prerogative mortgage loans and business loans, while the initial payment of the mortgage loan will be covered by the Development Fund of the Youth Union of Uzbekistan. From 2020, the state will build houses for sale with preferential mortgage lending for orphans and children without parental care. Besides, the Ministry of Public Education along with Youth Union will carry out systematic employment monitoring of orphans and children leaving care. What is important, the resolution came along with the roadmap that includes comprehensive measures for improving the regulatory framework to strengthen the social protection of orphans and children without parental care, increasing the efficiency of care for orphans and children left without parental care and prevention of social orphanage.

Another key policy development was the adoption of the president resolution № 4296 on additional measures for further reinforcing the guarantees of the child rights, which contributed to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and ensuring protection of child rights. In particular, it entitled orphans and children without parental care to file claims on alimony

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<sup>1</sup> <https://stat.uz/en/2-uncategorised/7163-o-zbekiston-aholisi-en>

against parents. Moreover, child rights ombudsman position has been introduced. Minimal marriage age of girls was increased to 18. It also promotes the best interests of the child in all actions concerning children undertaken by social welfare institutions, courts, administrative authorities and other relevant bodies. Crisis 'hotline' was established to provide emergency psychological, psychotherapeutic counselling. For orphans additional HEI admission quotas were secured starting from 2019 academic year. The law on the social protection of orphans and children without parental care have already undergone public discussion and envisaged to be adopted shortly.

In August 2019, the government of Uzbekistan demonstrated its firm determination on reaffirming its treaty obligations on child rights by adopting a resolution №824 on alternative care, prevention of social orphanage and deinstitutionalization. The document includes a roadmap of actions for 5 years (2019-2023) aimed at deinstitutionalization, reintegration of children to biological families and creation of suitable substitutes of childcare.

What is important, as stated in the roadmap, together with numerous stakeholders, SOS Children's Villages Uzbekistan is assigned to contribute to the formulation of alternative care standards such as "minimum standards for assessing the quality of living conditions in foster families" and "minimal compulsory quality standards for child-care agency". Moreover, Children's Villages Uzbekistan along with other partners is responsible in intensifying measures aimed at reintegration of children into biological families, by strengthening the methodical base of child reintegration with their families; developing the capacity of employees to conduct the reintegration related work, such as establishing a connection between the child and their biological families, preparing the parents and the children to reunite, assessing the needs of the family and responding to them using local resources.

Last decree also endorsed the regulation on selection and education of the foster and adoptive parents for children who lost parental care.

This year was the first year when the government expressed its political will to reform the child-care system and acknowledged the need of De-I. SOS Children's Villages Uzbekistan considered the current situation as a favourable moment for demonstrating the governmental bodies its experience (both national and international), that are unique for the country, and took several steps that were both promotional and advocative.

At the De-I kick-off conference that was organized by the Ministry of Public Education with support and participation of UNICEF right after the adoption of the above-mentioned presidential decree on De-I, SOS Children's Villages Uzbekistan presented its model of family-based care. It included the model of SOS-families integrated into community in the SOS Children's Village Urgench, as one of the alternative options in the transition period aimed to decrease the number of the children admitted in the large-scale institutions operated by the Ministry of Public Education. The principles and models of other services such as family strengthening as a prevention service and youth care were presented as well.

The model of support for care leavers, which is still unique for the country, was presented at the De-I workshop on the problems of development alternative care services that was organized by the Ministry of Public Education. At a similar workshop on the basic training for the foster/adoptive parents, which has become mandatory since the beginning of 2020, SOS Children's Villages Uzbekistan presented its system of basic and on-going training of SOS-parents.

## **Building the capacity of the main stakeholders**

As reflected in our strategic initiative 4 – advocating for children, the association undertook numerous measures to build the capacity of relevant stakeholders and partners through rolling out the best practices of alternative and sharing evidence based knowledge. In order to promote quality care for children. In particular we supported participation of the representative of the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations in the international conference "Be the Change! Partnering to improve the transition from alternative care to independent living" that took place in Bucharest (Romania), 12-13 June 2019, and was organised under the auspices of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.



Also with the support of SOS Children's Villages Uzbekistan, head of the social protection and support for children department of the Ministry of Public Education participated in the international conference "Deinstitutionalization of childcare: investing in change". The conference took place in Sofia (Bulgaria), 5-8 November 2019, and was organised under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of Bulgaria and other co-organizers.

SOS Children's Villages Uzbekistan continued its collaboration with UNICEF based on the memorandum of understanding, and was actively engaged in the work of all working groups on the child rights and social work issues, including in the meetings of Interdisciplinary Council of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. As an active actor of the alternative childcare system, SOS Children's Villages Uzbekistan provided remarks and inputs to the National Program on the child rights protection that is being developed by the National Centre of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights..

Furthermore, the youth along with co-workers of SOS Children's Villages Uzbekistan contributed with their ideas, vision and provided actionable recommendations at the workshop on multi-partner consultations on the development of a new UN Framework for Cooperation with Uzbekistan on SDGs 2021-2025. One of the major given inputs was developing the national interdisciplinary guidelines on child safeguarding.

What is more, SOS Children's Villages Uzbekistan kept contributing to the social workforce development. Thus, inputs and recommendations of SOS Children's Villages Uzbekistan were highly appreciated by the working group under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy that worked on development the professional profiles of social workers and specialist on social work. By updating the agreement with the National University of Uzbekistan, SOS Children's Villages Uzbekistan continued supporting the University by providing internship placements for the students majoring in social work.

### **Result based management**

SOS Children's Villages Uzbekistan started implementing the Result-based management (RBM) approach. In 2018, the phased implementation of RBM was launched: SOS Children's Village Urgench programme pioneered in implementation of RBM in 2018, the programmes in Tashkent and Samarkand started in 2019. Implementation of RBM contributes to the improvement of programme management effectiveness and accountability by defining realistic expected results and regular monitoring of achievements through the introduction and use of relevant tools that support working processes.

### **Extension of the project "Enhancement of vulnerable children protection mechanisms in Uzbekistan"**

European Union funded project "Enhancement of vulnerable children protection mechanisms in Uzbekistan" launched in February 2018 with the end date 31st of August 2019. Due to the liberalization of exchange policy in the Republic of Uzbekistan (Presidential decree#5177 of September 2, 2017), the project budget in national currency doubled. This has caused under-utilization of funding during the project period despite the fact that majority activities were carried out. In this regard, a request for no-cost extension for a period of 10 months (until June 30, 2020) was submitted to the EU with updated project documents (Description of the Action, Log frame, and Budget) and was approved accordingly.

## Visit of the SOS CVI President



The President of SOS Children's Villages International, Siddhartha Kaul, made an official visit to the SOS Children's Villages Uzbekistan to attend the Ring of Honour Award Ceremony to recognize the commitment of 10 SOS mothers from different countries. Out of these 10 SOS mothers, six were from SOS Children's Villages Samarqand (Uzbekistan), three from Kotayk (Armenia) and one SOS mother from Temirtau (Kazakhstan). They provided care with great dedication to ensure that the children in their respective SOS Children's Villages are safe and protected.

At the SOS Children's Village Samarqand, President Kaul was met by joyful and enthusiastic SOS children and mothers. The event took place on 30<sup>th</sup> April in Samarqand city with the participation of the president, CVI Representative Zdenko Sedlar, official representatives from the Samarqand region, partners, National Director of SOS Children Village's Uzbekistan, Gulnoza Abidova and others. During the opening remarks, President Siddhartha Kaul, highlighted the meaningful work of SOS Mothers and encouraged them to continue their work. Afterwards, SOS mothers received their Golden Rings of Honour from the President. From their side, SOS Mothers showed their gratitude to President Kaul with warm wishes.

During the visit to Samarkand, President Siddhartha Kaul has met with the governor of Samarkand region and they discussed the continuation of a strong and productive partnership and development of SOS Children's Village Samarkand programme in the Samarkand region.

## SECTION TWO: SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES UZBEKISTAN FACILITY REPORTS

### SOS Children's Village Khorezm

#### Family based care



SOS Children's Village Khorezm provides a loving home for 39 children, 18 girls and 21 boys. All of them are schoolchildren, living in six SOS family houses located in different districts of Urgench city. In 2019, eight children were admitted into the family-based care and four children were reintegrated into their biological families. One young girl married and left the care of SOS Children's Village Khorezm. During the reporting period, based on a thorough assessment of identified needs, comprehensive services were provided to the children in family-based care.

All 39 children were attending school while five of them had problems with their academic performance. According to the identified individual needs of children together with individual development plans, children received additional educational services.

Professional assistance of three qualified teachers with individual approach to learning enabled children to improve their school performance, increased self-confidence and developed competence in mathematics and other disciplines.

The progress in academic performance improved children's behaviour and their psycho-emotional state, as they became more sociable and active. Five teenagers were tutored in mathematics, literature, Uzbek and English languages to prepare for colleges and university admission. Consequently, one girl, who graduated from 11th grade of high school, successfully passed an entrance examination of the Urgench State University and were granted admission to the faculty of biotechnology.

At the beginning of 2019, Madina<sup>2</sup>, a girl that left the care of SOS Children's Village Khorezm, got married. All traditional events dedicated to the wedding were held with the participation of children, staff of the SOS Children's Village Khorezm and extended family of the girl. She continued

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<sup>2</sup> The name has been changed to protect privacy of an individual



her studies at college; Madina resides at her husband's house, preserving property rights to the housing of biological parents.

In June 2019, five youth from the SOS Children's Village Khorezm actively participated in advocacy activities of the U-Report project (UNICEF), aimed at empowering young people to interact and discuss issues that are important to them. This year, they took part in the joint event "Voice of Youth", organized by the Youth Union and UNICEF in Uzbekistan. Participation in such events empowers young people to express their views in decision-making processes, communicate with each other and be more active in the life of their communities and society. Young people received information on pressing issues, and had an access to the online platform for exchanging opinions and discussing the issues such as ongoing reforms, education, healthcare, information security, human rights, good governance and etc.

### **Child Safeguarding procedures**

The key element of supporting vulnerable children is to ensure their safety and protection. To contribute to child welfare beyond its programme dimension, SOS Children's Village Khorezm rolled out child-safeguarding concept with its beneficiaries, partners and stakeholders. Child safeguarding team has delivered special pieces of training in order to strengthen the partners' capacity in order to reduce violation of child rights, prevent child abuse, bullying and etc. Good cooperation established with partners (e.g. schools) allowed identifying and responding to child safeguarding cases and incidences in a timely and adequate manner.

In the framework of cooperation with two pilot schools in Urgench city, Commissions on child safeguarding has been created, which increased safety and protection of children at school. Child safeguarding reporting and responding procedures were introduced, which enabled children, including SOS beneficiaries attending these schools, to report about the incidents. The Commission consists of school principal, acting principals on educational issues and psychologist of the school, who has been trained to identify and respond to, cares. Members of the Commission informed pupils and schoolteachers about the inception of child safeguarding Commission and availability of anonymous boxes for reporting. Commissions in schools are registering messages, keeping minutes of meetings and monitoring the implementation of decisions on identified cases.

37 children, as well as 14 staff members (incl. SOS mothers and family assistants), received training on child safeguarding reporting and responding procedures, and learned to report abuse, neglect and other violations. Various ways and channels for reporting, including anonymous boxes in all social centres, were in place during the reporting period. In each social centre of SOS Children's Village Urgench, information stands indicating the details of the SOS child safeguarding team, names, photos, and contact details (tel., email) were available. The stand also includes a flowchart providing an overview of the processes of reporting, identification, and responding to the cases of violence.

### **Family Strengthening Services**

Two social centres of the SOS Children's Village Khorezm provide family strengthening services to vulnerable families of Khorezm region. During the reporting period, 48 families and 119 children received the support of family strengthening service. Total number of beneficiaries as of the end of 2019 were 430 (261 children; 101 families (main guardians); 58 secondary guardians; 17 brothers, sisters and house members).

The total number of people who received psychological support in accordance with their needs defined in development plans were - 170 (85 boys and 85 girls) including 13 children outside the project.

The main reasons for applying for psychological support were, inter alia, family conflicts, misbehaviour and aggressiveness of adolescents' poor parenting skills, low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence. The reasons described above undermine the relationship and healthy



environment in the family, communication between children and their parents, as well as the psycho-emotional development of children.

77 parents and caregivers received psychosocial support. According to the results noticed from family cases and observations of psychologists and social workers, as well as feedback from teachers, parents and caregivers, children increased their self-confidence, improved relations with family and peers, and became more amiable. Moreover, parents and caregivers undergone through many positive changes, which led to harmonious relationships with children, increased awareness about child issues and improved family ties.

During the reporting period, 56 families became sustainable and left the programme, after achieving the goals set up on their individual plans. Accordingly, parents learned how to be more attentive to psychological state of their children and encourage children in their endeavours as well as enriched their knowledge of hygiene, nutrition and conflict resolution.

In collaboration with the regional health department, Red Crescent Khorezm branch and local NGO "Sog'lom avlod uchun" (for the healthy generation), special trainings were organized for 94 caregivers to increase medical literacy and awareness about the importance of medical examination. According to the results of the training, parents and caregivers are aware of primary health care: what to do and how to respond at the first sign of a child's illness; they began to visit family clinics for regular medical examinations. Capacity building measures with parents and caregivers improved children's health - children were cured of various infectious and skin diseases, their nutrition became healthier and more balanced. Regular medical examinations and timely response to identified diseases contributed to the improvement of children's physical health.

## **Social Centre**



Close work with partners has improved cooperation and strengthened trust and effectiveness of the support provided to vulnerable families with children and reach more vulnerable children.

In 2019, SOS Children's Village Khorezm hold the opening ceremony of playground for children financed by locally public funded grant. The purpose of the project was to create a place

for entertainment, exercise and leisure activities of children from neighbourhood, beneficiaries of family strengthening services and family-based care services of the SOS Children's Village Khorezm and to contribute to the improvement of their socialization and communication with peers.

Key project achievements:

- All SOS Children's Village Khorezm beneficiaries as well as children from neighbourhood community have access to the playground.
- A various events and outdoor sports activities for children are organized.
- A safe environment has been created where children can play and communicate with peers.
- Joint activities contribute to better socialization of children from the family-based care and family strengthening services and improve their interaction with other children.
- A well-appointed adjacent area near the Social Centre.
- Strengthen partnership with local authorities as a result of joint efforts in construction of a playground.

### **Success story**

Her mother-in-law kicked out Laziza<sup>3</sup> from her husband's house while her husband was away for seasonal work. Laziza had no place to live with three children and had no job. Soon she found a shelter in her relative's house, it was one dirty, dusty, and not repaired room. Due to living in such conditions, children were often sick. Laziza was depressed, did not know how to live on, since her husband left to work abroad, Laziza was alone, she had to do everything by herself. She did not have enough money for food, they took clothes from relatives, children wanted toys, but they all seemed like a dream. She also could not get a job as she had a little baby.

Laziza came to social centre of the SOS Children's Village Khorezm asking for support. Social workers and other specialists conducted deep assessment of the mother and the family. The observation showed that the family needs psychological, social and legal assistance.

Laziza attended individual and group therapies and went to development classes with the children. She started attending the classes of art-therapeutic group "The Way to Herself" to relieve emotional stress, work on the life traumas, and see resources for further ways out of the crisis. She became more confident, calm and more attentive to the needs of her children.



After Laziza's husband returned, work of social workers was aimed on reunion of the family and establishing relationships with the mother-in-law. Ways to find solutions to the acquisition of housing. Working with Laziza, using her willingness to change her life circumstances, helped to create the conditions of domestic and psychological comfort in the family. Relations with the mother-in-law gradually improved. Later, Laziza started noticing that the sense of anxiety occurs less and there was less reason for concern.

Relations with the father of the children were established, the family reunited, the children are happy. Laziza and her husband were able to regain their feelings of love and affection for each

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<sup>3</sup> The name has been changed to protect privacy of an individual

other. By combining their efforts, parents started sensitively caring for their children, supporting them, establishing proper nutrition and taking care of their health.

Relations with the mother-in-law improved. After discussions with spouses and extended family members, the housing problem was resolved. The mother-in-law agreed to draw up documents of unfinished housing near her own house to her son's family. In May 2019, the family completed the house and moved to the long-awaited new home. Children now have their own rooms, beds, wardrobes etc. With a help of social workers, the family was able to appoint their second child to a kindergarten, thus providing an opportunity of employment of Laziza. Thanks to the assistance of a job placement specialist, Laziza got a job as a tailor in a factory and her family income increased and stabilized.

Laziza shared her achievements: "I would like to thank all the employees of the SOS Children's Village Khorezm. Your organization really helped my family; I may say it saved our lives. Thank you for all those events, for gifts, assistance for medicines for my children, for the sensitive attitude to our wounded feelings. We learned not only how to raise our children, but also studied ourselves, how to be parents - calm, restrained, able to solve any problem in life. How many tears were shed behind closed doors and how many confessions you had to listen to. I want to say thank you so much for being in our lives! "

**Prepared by:**

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***SOS Children's Village Khorezm Programme Director***



### Family based care



During the reporting period, 90 children were brought up in the SOS Children's Village Samarkand. Six of them were reintegrated into biological families; seven were admitted to the lyceum. After being admitted to academic lyceums, the children were transferred to the youth house of the SOS Children's Village Samarkand. Those reintegrated into their biological families, live with parents or extended family, and maintain warm relationships with their SOS mothers and siblings. At the end of the year, 77 children were living in 13 SOS family houses. In particular, 34 were girls and 42 boys.

In 2019, five children were admitted to the village, out of which three were social orphans and two orphans. As they were in crisis situation, development need assessment was carried out, and an individual plan was drawn up. Every child living in SOS families had the opportunity to grow up with biological siblings in a family atmosphere, in the care and love of their SOS mother as well as received the support of the psychological and pedagogical team of the village.

After graduating from the 9th grade of school in the academic year 2018-2019, 7 children received certificates of incomplete secondary education and enrolled to academic lyceums and colleges. Four young people were admitted to the Military construction academic lyceum, two were admitted to academic lyceum under Samarkand Veterinary Medical University, and one student were granted admission to academic lyceum under Information technologies University in Samarkand.

Out of 77 children living in the village-, 73 were studying at school and specialized school with focus on mathematics. . Six children embarked on the first grade three children were attending kindergarten and one child were receiving homebased education. Before starting the first grade, pre-school classes were organised for the children in the village. They learned the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic.

Overall the following targets of SOS care promise indicators were reached by the CVP Samarkand:

- 81% of beneficiaries (42 out of total 52 with data about family relationship) had positive relationship with family



- Total number of children in AC was 135, in particular 82 children were in SFC and 52 in YC
- 100% of (4 out of 4) children were self-reliant when exiting alternative care
- 85% (90 out of total 105) beneficiaries with data in educational performance) children and young people of AC had at least satisfactory educational performance

On May 2019, local municipality of Samarkand region built in the territory of the village and donated to SOS Children's Village Samarkand the football playground.

The following support were provided for the target group:

- 13 children over sixteen received their passports;
- 16 children received survivor benefits and savings books were issued;
- The coordinator of the SOS Children's Village Samarkand participated in a trial on the establishment of motherhood. According to the results of measures taken on restoring biological relations, the child was reintegrated into the biological family.

During the school year, in accordance with the development plan of children, conversations, trainings, seminars, trips and visits to professional colleges and universities were held for vocational guidance of pupils. In the framework of such meetings, various issues that worried children in their daily life were discussed. The social workers of the village conducted a series of trainings and seminars on communication skills and stress management.

Based on the allocated budget, necessary materials for the library of the village have been updated and purchased. Because of the established close partnership with the library of Samarkand city named after A.S.Pushkin, children had greater access to electronic resources presentations of books and meetings with writers.

During the summer holidays, a number of events were organized for the children. 28 pupils aged 7-14 years had a rest in the summer camp "Sitara" located in the mountain area. In order to enrich children's leisure during the summer holidays, outdoor activities were organized. Children and their SOS mothers visited museums, participated in a sports competitions and relays. Furthermore, 16 children had a hiking trip to mountain area and had a sleepover in tents. Two-day tour to capital city Tashkent was organised for 13 children. They have visited various attractions, amusement parks, zoo and just walked around the city.

## Youth care



In 2019, the youth care service of the SOS Children's Village Samarkand provided support to 56 young people (35 boys and 21 girls). 40 young people were under direct accompaniment and 16 were living in semi-independent setting. After becoming self-reliant, four young people left the care. Out of 56 young people, 9 were studying at professional colleges, 18 at academic lyceums and 14 were University students.

By the joint effort of the youth care coordinator and pedagogues - 7 young people of SOS family care were admitted to academic lyceums under the university of Samarkand city and moved to the youth care. This year, eight young people graduated from professional colleges and academic lyceums. Four were admitted to higher education institutions on state grant basis.. Four university graduates and four college graduates were employed and have regular income. Overall, 17 young people were employed and continue to work in a permanent job for at least 6-8 months.

Pedagogues of youth care service regularly provided support to young people; they were actively involved in daily activities of young people. Pedagogues helped young people in choosing a future profession, during their first employment, in preparing and obtaining various documents, finding a job, obtaining education, medical services, in development and improvement of knowledge and skills in various social fields.

Young people also kept in touch with their SOS families, regularly visited and shared the impressions from important events in their everyday life. Joint city tours and trips were organised for children in family care and young people from the youth care. They spend time together with brothers and sisters, especially during weekends and holidays. Furthermore, young people reached a contact and keep in touch with biological relatives. In order to integrate into the community, young people from youth care and their neighbours organise football matches and engage for cleaning the surrounding area.

With the facilitation of the employees of youth care service, two young people received housing from the government. For 11 young people, resolutions were received on the allocation of apartments in new apartments in 2020. This year, four young people entered the universities of Uzbekistan on the base of governmental scholarships. In total, 14 of young people from youth care

service of the SOS Children's Village Samarkand are university students (25% of the total number of young people in 2019). In 2019, local organizations provided financial support in the payment of a contract for training of eight young people. All young people studying in academic lyceums and universities were receiving scholarships from the state. In order to support young people, the state provided lump sum for each graduate of an academic lyceum and college, for those who could not pass the entrance examinations to universities. In 2019, two young people created their families: married and had weddings. SOS mothers, siblings, friends and biological relatives took part in the wedding preparations and celebration. Newlyweds live in their homes and have regular family income. One couple have a baby girl, our alumni became a wonderful parent and created a loving and caring environment for their own family. Youth care pedagogues keep contact with young people who already graduated from the care. They make sure that living conditions are good and young people are happy.

### **Success story**

Mokhinur<sup>4</sup> is an orphan, at the age of 13 years she lost her biological mother. As soon as Mokhinur joined her SOS family in the SOS Children's Village Samarkand she found loving home and it became obvious that the girl is a passionate and determined person. Mokhinur had one big dream – becoming a dentist.

Time went by and Mokhinur remained loyal to her goal, which lead her to the Medical College. There she was amongst the most talented students. Upon graduating from the college, the quickest way for Mokhinur to achieve her dream would be to join the University of Dentistry in Samarkand. But, that is when she came across an obstacle. Mokhinur was a few marks away from being accepted. Several hard months for Mokhinur followed. She felt like she did not live up to the expectations of the people around her. This continued until the pedagogues of the youth house get involved. They showed Mokhinur all the different ways she can still achieve her goal. They helped her find an internship at a private dental clinic. There, she obtained the necessary knowledge and working experience. It enabled her to enter the University of Dentistry.

The University moved her one-step closer to becoming a dentist, also brought her together with Dilmurod. They fell in love soon after first being acquainted and got married at the end of their first year at university. The newlyweds moved to the capital city, Tashkent and continued their education there. Mokhinur wants to become a professional dentist, to have many kids and a loving and caring family. "Dreams always come true for those, who believe in them"-says Mokhinur.



**Prepared by:**

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***SOS Children's Village Samarkand Programme Director***

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<sup>4</sup> The all names in the success story have been changed to protect privacy of individuals





By the end of 2019, there are 89 children of different ages, brought up in 14 SOS families of the SOS Children's village of Tashkent. Among them, 45 are girls and 44 are boys. During the year, 11 children (four boys and seven girls) were admitted to the family based care. Almost all of them were social orphans. After being admitted to SOS family care, children received love and care of SOS mothers along with support of the specialists. Thus, the adaptation process went smoothly for them. 80 pupils attend secondary schools and nine children attend kindergartens, which are located in the local community. One child started attending first grade.

In 2019, after graduating from ninth grade, two young people moved from the family based care to the youth care of SOS Children's Village Tashkent. The other high school students continued their education at schools. One of the graduate of an academic lyceum, who left SOS family care, was granted admission to the University of World Economy and diplomacy. After admission, she moved to the youth care. She also became the village's volunteer and organized English learning classes in two small groups.

It is worth mentioning that children were more interested in attending clubs, which were organized outside of the village - cross fit, swimming, mini football and drawing. The village's football team took part in city and district competitions, 12 children participated in the city chess competitions, where they took honourable places. In addition, three students received junior grades in chess. Kindergarten children attended classes to prepare for school, they learned basics of reading, writing, and developed their learning skills. Specialists from different educational centres of the city conducted all these classes. Children also visited various exhibitions, the Museum of Geology, the Museum of Locomotives, the Institute of Solar energy, where they learned a lot of new and interesting facts.

The group of teenage leaders that includes 20 young people was organized in the village. The objective of the group is to promote youth engagement and activism in the community. The activists took part in various conferences and seminars organized by our partners. Among the significant events in this direction, was the youth forum held by the initiative of SOS Children's



Village Tashkent. Topic of the forum was "Increasing the activity of young people in society – an effective way to their socialization". The forum became a platform where young people from various spheres and areas were able to convey their point of view on the youth's problems to the civil society and government representatives. They had an opportunity to present their innovative projects in the educational and cultural sphere.

Over the past year, many festive events have been held in the SOS Children's Village Tashkent dedicated to the celebration of national holidays. The year for our children began with the New Year celebration and the subsequent leisure time on winter holidays. During the vacation period, 12 children went to a winter camp to the mountain area. The festive concert program dedicated to women's day- 8<sup>th</sup> of March was organized, and it was followed later on March 21<sup>st</sup> by national spring holiday Nowruz. During the celebrations, children performed their dances, sang songs and read poems. A great party was dedicated to children's day on June 1<sup>st</sup>, with entertaining, fun program, animators, various games, competitions and relay races with children were held. Children enjoyed running, dancing and having fun with fiery music along with the cartoon characters. No less remarkable in the end of this day was the congratulation of the pupils and presenting them memorable gifts for good academic performance, exemplary behaviour and active participation in the life of the village.

On the summer holidays, children with their SOS mothers, relaxed in city parks, went to theatres and visited swimming pools. Sixty pupils had the opportunity to have a rest, make new friends and spend fun time in children's summer camps in a picturesque mountain area. On the autumn holidays, 10 children had a trip to ancient city of Bukhara, where they get to know many new and interesting facts about the historical heritage of Uzbekistan.

### Youth care



At the beginning of the year, 43 (24 girls and 19 boys) young people and by the end of the reporting period, 32 (20 girls and 12 boys) received support from the youth care service. 14 young people graduated from colleges and received secondary special education diplomas, 11 young people left the care and now are living independently. 12 girls and 7 boys have a stable employment

and one boy is currently in the Army. Six young people study at academic lyceums and colleges. Four young people from youth care are studying at the Universities, one youth care alumni was admitted to the university in the Russian Federation last year. Four young people from youth care and two graduates received housing from the government in the new apartments in Tashkent.

15 young people received extra education courses in the following areas: preparation for high schools (physics, mathematics, chemistry, history, and biology), language courses and driving courses, car-repairing electrician, nursing, massage therapy.

The pedagogues of youth care also organized a special course for young people living in the family based care of the SOS Children's Village Tashkent, to develop a healthy lifestyle habits and social skills, to prepare for independent living based on the results of testing.

Teenagers took a course on five modules: "I manage finances", "Health and healthy lifestyle", "Who I am", "How to successfully interact with the environment", "Caring for myself". Young person from the youth care, Anton<sup>5</sup> participated in the championship on "Ultimate Frisbee" game. The competition was held between the team from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan and other five teams of Tashkent. The boy and his team won the first place on the competition and became "Ultimate Frisbee" champions.

Another event was organized in the youth centre, in accordance with the visit program of the President Siddhartha Kaul to Uzbekistan. The President talked to young people around a festive table that was set by young people themselves, saw the process of cooking national dishes and planted a tree on the youth centre's yard.

Furthermore, a youth forum took place on December 3, 2019. Topic of the forum was "Increasing youth activity in society is an effective way of socializing them". Partner organisations such as, the Youth Union, U-Report(UNICEF), centre of academic and applied research "Oila", Ministry of Public Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the National Centre for Social Adaptation of Children (NCSAC), Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, NGO "Sen yolg'iz emassan" and others participated on the meeting. In the second part of the forum, an expert from the US Eileen Brewer held a workshop on the STEAM methodology in education and science.

The village psychologist held individual consultations and group classes with young people on their socialization. An "Agreement on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance" was signed between SOS Children's Village Tashkent and Shahrison makhalla (local community) on July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Together with representatives of the local community, an action plan was developed on cooperation between Shahrison makhalla and the youth care service of SOS Children's Village Tashkent. As a result of cooperation, special trainings were held for parents of vulnerable families on the following topics, "Child's development" , "Parent-child relationships, prevention of child neglect and delinquency, cruel and careless treatment", "family business, legal literacy", "Career guidance for children» and etc. Furthermore, youth from vulnerable families, attended workshops on the topics such as, "National, Uighur cuisine and confectionery" and "Sewing pattern". More than 25 people participated in the workshops and were taught cooking and sewing skills. After completing the courses, young people were awarded with certificates.

Children from family based care of SOS Children's Village Tashkent as well as young people from youth care accompanied by pedagogues of the youth care, visited the 18th international exhibition on education and job. During the exhibition, young people received detailed information about admissions to Universities, directions and faculties, deadlines for submission of documents, scholarships and grants.

Two teenagers from family-based care, as well as young person from the youth care participated in a brainstorming session with youth as part of the "Safe Internet Day" campaign organized by UNICEF in Uzbekistan. Furthermore, on November 19, young people participated in

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<sup>5</sup> The name has been changed to protect privacy of an individual

a consultation seminar with the participation of civil society on the planning of the new UN Program in the Framework of Cooperation in Uzbekistan for Sustainable Development during 2021-2025.

Young people actively participated in the events dedicated to the national holidays “Nowruz”, “Independence Day”, “Constitution Day of the Republic of Uzbekistan”.

During the summer holidays, young people had some leisure time visiting concerts and theatre performances. They also had a wonderful trip to ancient city Bukhara; historical buildings and museums of the city fascinated young people.

During the winter holidays, girls and boys accompanied by the pedagogues of the youth care were on a unique tour to the Institute of sun, located in the Parkent district of Tashkent region. Young people had a tour around the institute and learned interesting facts from the guide.

Our youth takes an active part in the life of the community, participating in the improvement of the makhalla(local community), at the popular "Khashars"(a social event where everybody participates voluntarily in cleaning and tidying-up nearby territories), holidays and sports events. Young people from the youth care helped the tenants of a multi-storey building to extinguish the fire and eliminate the consequences of the fire, and received gratitude from the administration of a local community for their courage.

In 2019, thanks to a hard work of the pedagogues of the youth care, biological parents of 3 young people were found. Communication with biological parents is maintained on social networks, as they live abroad. Furthermore, the preparatory process of reintegration into the biological family has begun. Young people keep in touch with their SOS mothers, siblings, biological relatives and celebrate family holidays together.

### **Family Strengthening Services**

In 2019, with a joint effort of all employees of the family strengthening service of SOS Children’s Village Tashkent, the area of the service for the vulnerable population expanded. Five social centres were organized in makhallas(local communities) of three districts in Tashkent city, “Akhilik” and “Munavvarkori” in the Mirzo-Ulugbek district, “Yashnabod” and “Yangi Davr” in the Yashnabod district as well as “Katta Chilonzor-1” in Chilonzar district. The social support was provided to vulnerable families, according to the plan for the development of the family in social centers based on these makhallas. While working with families, social workers focused on increasing the potential of families: strengthening parental skills, increasing the economic stability of families by improving professional skills of caregivers, through trainings and informing them about entrepreneurial activities.

During 2019, the service supported 175 children (100 girls and 75 boys) and 134 adults from 112 families (309 beneficiaries total). By the end of the reporting period, there are 90 families, 122 guardians, 189 children (80 girls and 109 boys) and 12 teenagers (18+). The number of those who left the service after obtaining self-sufficiency is 19 families, 40 children and 28 guardians.

With the support of specialists of the family strengthening service and representatives of makhalla , one family received social housing, 10 guardians received an additional profession after attending different vocational courses: on accounting, confectionery, eyelash extension, hairdressing sewing and computer courses. Five guardians were employed: one – as an accountant assistant, one as a cook assistant, one - as a baker and two - as operators.

One guardian used to rent sewing machine, she sews children's clothes and puts up for sale through social networks. Today, the guardian has her own client base and has already accumulated most of the money to buy a new sewing machine. As a result, 90 families raised the economic level of the family: five families increased income compared to the previous year by 100%; 26 families by 50%; 20 families - by 40% and 39 families - by 20%.

During the year, the lawyer of the family strengthening service held 17 individual consultations and 18 case consultations, in which beneficiaries received advice on the collection

of alimony, divorce proceedings, the division of property, labour migration, obtaining social housing, etc.

In order to strengthen interaction and cooperation between government bodies and civil society on issues of social support for vulnerable families and youth, a round table meeting with participation of 32 representatives of partner organizations was held.

The main success of the service was that the families participating in the project were able to keep the children in the family and avoid them getting into institutional organizations.

Psychologist services are aimed at correcting the emotional state, reducing stress, improving parenting skills and child-parent relationships, family relationships, as well as determining life goals and choosing a profession, marital relations, building communication, the psycho-emotional state of children and vocational guidance. Psychologists conducted 243 individual psychological sessions for adults and 192 sessions for children. 151 adults and 129 children took part in the sessions.

Throughout the year, the Employment Specialist and social workers conducted 5 employment trainings, in which 32 beneficiaries participated and provided 29 consultations (10 one-time and 19 case) on job search, resume preparation, family budget planning, running family business and organization of household work.

Social workers assisted 52 beneficiaries in finding jobs, two beneficiaries in housing issues, eight beneficiaries in obtaining a certificate of low income, five children in school and nine beneficiaries in training centres.

### **Success story**



After her husband left her and their three sons, Alexandra<sup>6</sup> started suffering from depression. She started resorting to alcohol. Which developed into an addiction. The mother's ability to take care of the boys deteriorated. Her own parents started to worry of Timur, Abdul and Rasul's health. In time, the boys moved in with their grandparents. One night, Timur woke up hearing voices. He

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heard his grandfather argue with Alexandra, who the boys have not seen for two years at that point. The mother brought her two-year-old son, Kiril. She wanted him to live with his grandparents and his three half-brothers.

Alexandra's alcohol problem got to a critical stage. She was always either intoxicated or in a state of severe alcohol withdrawal. After Alexandra nearly set the apartment on fire, her mother, Valeria had no choice but call services to take her daughter to a psychiatric hospital. The grandmother felt that she could not cope with all four children and her daughter. Valeria decided that it would be best for Kiril to live in a children's home. It was a very hard decision as the grandparents and the brothers were attached to Kiril.

After Kiril was moved to a children's home, Valeria made sure to visit him as often as possible. The family was also working to make the conditions in the house suitable for little Kiril. The grandparents referred to the guardianship inspector to get full custody of their youngest grandson. Unfortunately, their request was denied due to Valeria's hearing problems.

Trying to ensure that her grandson Kiril grew up in a family environment, Valeria came to the SOS Children's Village Tashkent. She received consultation from the village lawyer and social worker. They worked together with her to bring Kiril back into the family. The specialists also helped further improve their housing conditions. Valeria attended parenting trainings to help Kiril adapt to a family environment and start kindergarten. Soon, the boy was well enough to start attending kindergarten. He was able to do it as the village covered the fees too.

Valeria still participates in all the events and trainings organised by the village. She is also a part of the parents' club, and she never stops to thank the village employees. "I am very grateful to this organization and its employees for the help they provide to my family. My grandchildren would have grown up not knowing what a family is, If not the support of your organization. I bow to the ground in front of you," says she.

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