

## RESULTS SUMMARY

### Advocating for the rights of Children Without Parental Care to the African Union

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PROJECT	<b>Title:</b>	Leave No Youth Behind – Empowering youth leaving care to claim their rights in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somaliland
	<b>Partner:</b>	SOS Children's Villages Regional office Addis Abeba.
	<b>Country:</b>	African Continent - 43 African countries included in sample
	<b>Period:</b>	2022-2025

**CHANGE**

The Continental Study on Children Without Parental Care in Africa has documented comprehensive evidence on the nature and magnitude of the problem these children face, as well as the root causes and drivers of child-parent separation. Shedding light on a neglected theme, the study plays a key role as a means to establish a baseline, raise awareness among duty bearers and stakeholders, map existing policy frameworks, and make recommendations to the African Union (AU) related to the AU Agenda 2040 – to foster 'Africa Fit for Children'.

**CONTEXT**

One out of 10 African children live with neither biological parent. An estimated 35 million children are at high risk due to routinely being exposed to various forms of violence and abuse, including sexual, forced labour, trafficking, forced migration as they have lack basic protection, access to education, healthcare and nutrition. These are children that may be living in street-connected situations, in contact with the law, children with substance addiction, children with disabilities and children in institutional care and in early marriage.

**CONTRIBUTION**

SOS Children's Villages regional office and a great number of national offices contributed substantially to the continental study, including lobbying for it to be carried out, collecting data from different sources, facilitating dialogue with a large number of social actors including service providers, as well as analysing and disseminating the results. SOS DK has contributed with some conceptual feedback as well as financial input.

**IMAGES**

Launch of the Continental study at African Union, Nov.2023. Present in panel: Sahle-Work Zewde, President of Ethiopia and Dereje Wordofa, President of SOS Children's Villages

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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### ACTIVITIES

This study was done together with Unicef, the African Child Policy Forum and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. It was part of SOS Children's Villages' advocacy process to develop a General Comment on the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) – a child rights treaty signed and ratified by 50 of the 55 members States of the AU. The study applied a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods for primary and secondary data collections from over 43 African countries, involving governments, children and young people in alternative care and various organizations and stakeholders. The Committee has formally adopted the Study on the 40th Session in Maseru, Lesotho. The General Comment, when adopted, will be a monitoring tool for the implementation of child rights among member states.

### LESSONS

The continental study is the first of its kind and it helps build the evidence needed to obtain political awareness and attention to the magnitude of the problem. As such it holds a huge potential for continued lobby and advocacy by civil society organisations such as SOS Children's Villages and other child rights organisations to make sure national governments promote and protect the rights of children and youth that have lost parental care. The study clearly points to the scale and nature of the problems and also the cultural diversity in terminology and traditional practices addressing it. It also highlights the need for a much higher priority of social protection mechanisms to fight social inequality by supporting vulnerable families in order to prevent child-family separation. Finally it clearly point to family- and community-based solutions as more appropriate than institutional care and highlight the best interest determination needed for all children and youth in need of alternative care.

### EVIDENCE

African policies and legal frameworks on children without parental care are largely inadequate and the rights of these children and youth severely compromised. Based on well documented analyses, the continental study offers a comprehensive series of recommendations to be fed into the AU Agenda 2040. The recommendations include the need for agreed terminology on children without parental care, national studies and databases, normative and legal frameworks, programmatic responses, including addressing root causes and drivers, exploring benchmarking and best practices and developing targeted guidance to primary regional and national duty bearers.

### DOMAINS

<i>Development strategy priorities:</i>	Democracy and human rights
<i>Changes in the lives of people facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability</i>	-
<i>Changes in laws, policies and practices that affect people's rights</i>	X
<i>Changes in the capacity of organisations and communities to support rights</i>	X
<i>Changes in partnerships and collaborations that support people's rights</i>	X
<i>Changes in participation of groups facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability</i>	-
<i>Changes in local leadership of development and humanitarian work</i>	-