



SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES GEORGIA



About Us



SOS Children's Villages is active in 118 countries worldwide.

SOS Children's Villages Georgia has been operating in Georgia in the field of child welfare since 1989. As a member of the federation, the Association applies statutes and standards of the federation for quality child care.

We support socially vulnerable families to build their capacity so that children are well cared. We provide quality alternative care to children deprived of parental care.



WITH FUNDING FROM
AUSTRIAN
DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION



SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES
AUSTRIA



MINISTRY OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS
FROM THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, LABOUR,
HEALTH AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS OF GEORGIA

Zugdidi Family Strengthening Project



A loving and caring family is crucial for a child's physical, emotional and social development. Every child needs a family environment, which will support the child's healthy development.



In 2017, the Zugdidi Family Strengthening Project was developed with the financial support of the Austrian Development Agency, SOS-Kinderdorf (SOS Children's Villages Austria) and the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia.

The project envisaged provision of support to socially vulnerable children and their families so that children grow up in caring and safe family environment.

The project offered psychosocial and economic strengthening services to target group beneficiaries.



The main objective of the family strengthening project was the provision of support to 400 socially vulnerable children (0-18) and 160 families living in Zugdidi Municipality (Zugdidi City and Village Ingiri) in 2017-2019.



**In 2017-2019
the project provided support to 405 children
and their parents (174 families)**

Parenting Education Programme – “Strong Parents Strong Children”



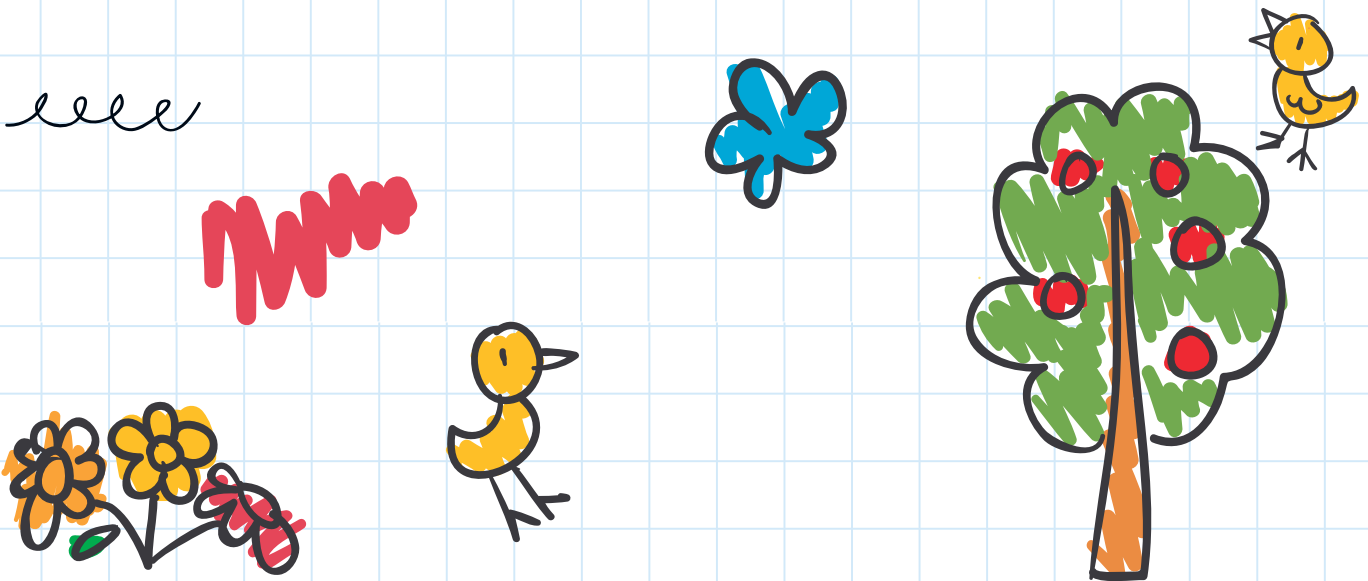
Parental skills development was one of the crucial aspects of the Zugdidi Family Strengthening Project. Thus, within the frame of the project, SOS Children's Villages Georgia in cooperation with the German Child Protection Association (Deutscher Kinderschutzbund Bundesverband e.V.) bought a license of the Parenting Education Programme “Strong Parents Strong Children”.

In terms of the project, child care specialists attended a 4-day training led by a certified trainer from Germany. After completion of the training programme, each of the participants got a license and is now authorized to deliver parenting education trainings for target group beneficiaries.

The Parenting Education Programme - “Strong Parents Strong Children” is oriented on a non-violent child upbringing method and is in line with the principles of the UN-Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The beneficiary parents actively participated in the above-mentioned training programme led by certified social workers and psychologist.

Within 2017-2019, through 216 training sessions, 210 parents increased awareness on positive parenting.



Psychological support for children and their parents



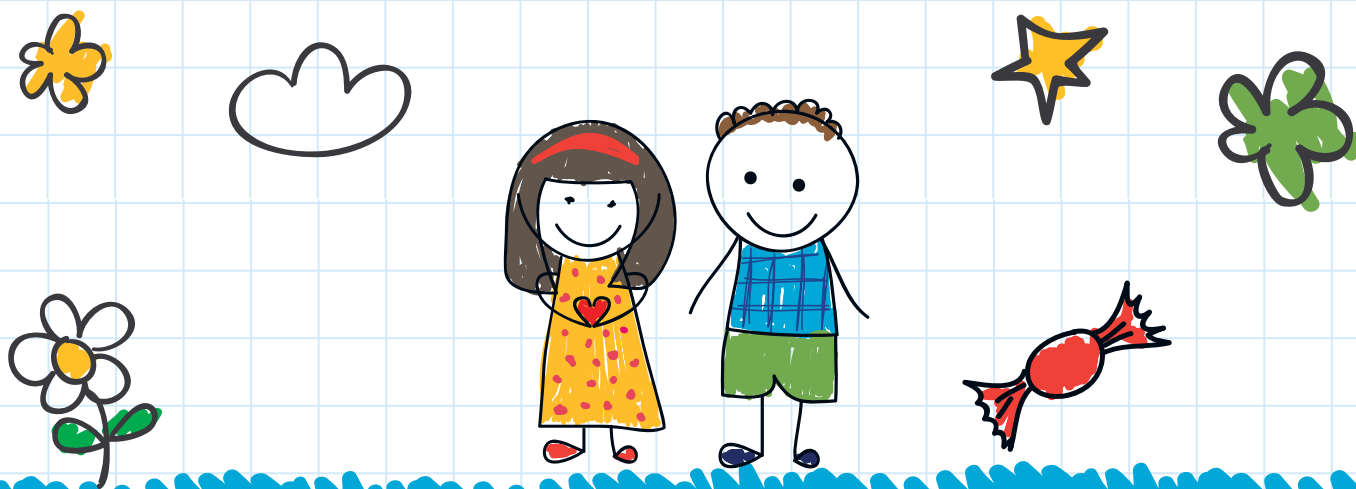
The project provides psychological support to target group children and their parents. The goal of the psychological service is to ensure rehabilitation, psycho-education and development of various skills of beneficiaries through individual and group work with the families. During interventions, various methods are applied by the project psychologist (art therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy, family therapy, etc.).

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In 2017-2019, 185 children and 163 parents were provided with psychological support service. Therefore, the project psychologist conducted psychological assessments of the beneficiaries and based on their individual needs provided individual and group counselling/activities. Individual and group counselling/activities with caregivers were focused on the development of stress and anxiety management skills and addressing the needs of families experiencing domestic violence. Individual and group work with children was oriented on increasing their self-esteem as well as decreasing aggressive behavior among children. Some of the activities also envisaged the development of different social skills (how to spend money reasonably and do some savings, the respect of gender and cultural diversity among peers) of the children.



In the course of project implementation 23 cases of physical, emotional and economic violence were identified. Consequently, complex interventions were applied by the multidisciplinary team in terms of ensuring emotionally safe environment in the targeted families. 3 cases of physical violence were referred to police and local State Social Service Agency.

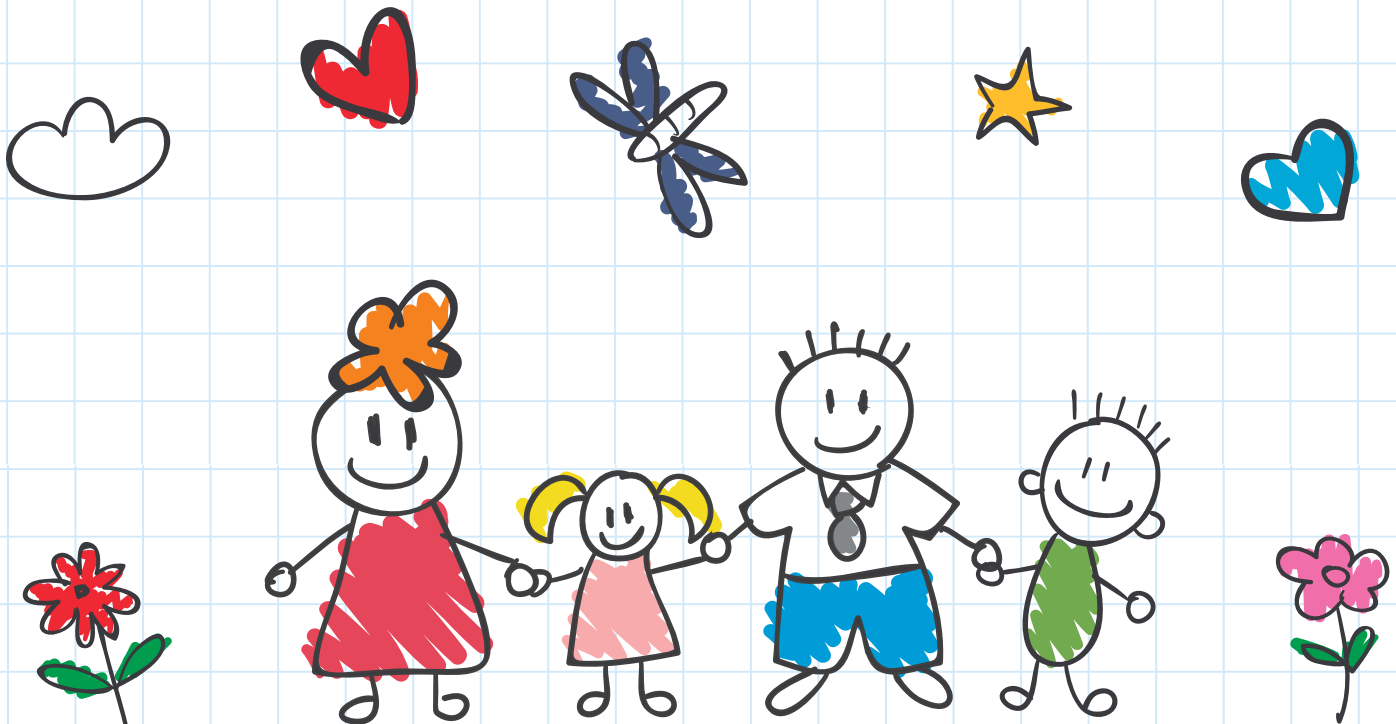


Organizing Self-help Groups



Through the project, the establishment of self-help groups for parents, who meet on a regular basis, was promoted. In 2017-2019, 12 group meetings were conducted with the involvement of 122 parents. Parents shared their experience on the following topics:

- Engagement of parents in the school life of children;
- Bullying at schools;
- Methods of children's encouragement/stimulation;
- The children's rights, physical or structural barriers for children;
- Domestic violence and referral to relevant agencies;
- Gender equality;
- Gender Stereotypes.



Economic Empowerment of Socially Vulnerable Families

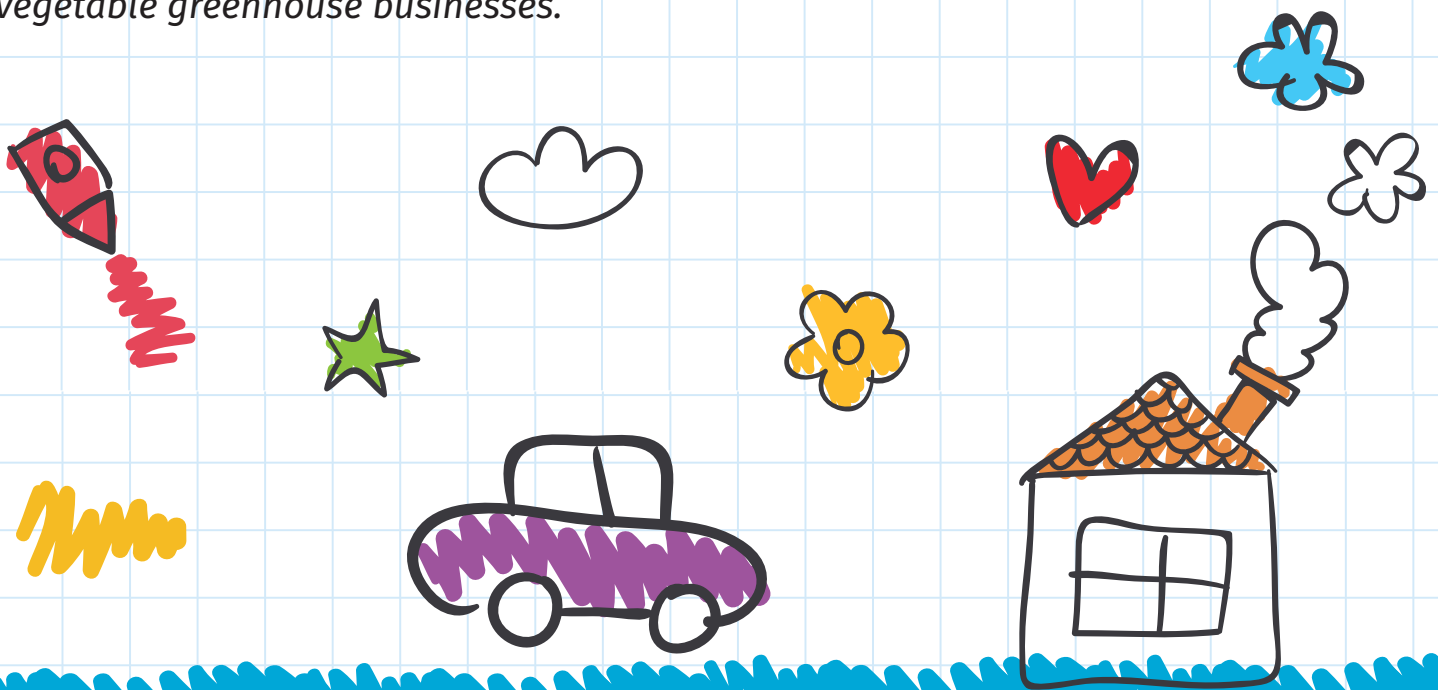


One of the approaches of the Zugdidi Family Strengthening Project is to economically empower socially vulnerable families. The organization supports beneficiaries to receive and/or improve vocational education, to find jobs, to be trained in the area of agriculture, to develop agricultural activities and to become employed. Through this support, families have the possibility to increase their income and thus be better able to meet the needs of their children.

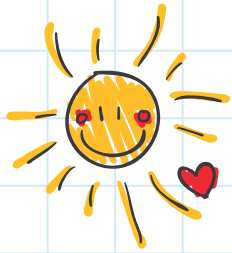
In 2017-2019, 117 caregivers/parents received individual and group counselling in regards to employment opportunities; each one of them received information on demanded professions at the labor market; in addition, they received trainings on job hunting. During the project implementation 73 beneficiaries were employed.

In the course of project implementation, 61 beneficiaries were able to gain professional qualification in various fields. 78 families living in poverty were provided with agricultural support service, which has allowed them to carrying out independent agricultural work (e.g. cattle breeding, bee-keeping and rabbit farming).

Finally, in the three years of project implementation two group businesses led by beneficiary families were established in the area of agriculture. Through the accompaniment of the project team, both group businesses received a status of a cooperative. Accordingly, 10 families are engaged in running bee-keeping and vegetable greenhouse businesses.



Day Care Center Service



Within the frame of the Zugdidi Family Strengthening Project, a day care center for children in the age range of 6-18 years provides service to 20 socially vulnerable children.

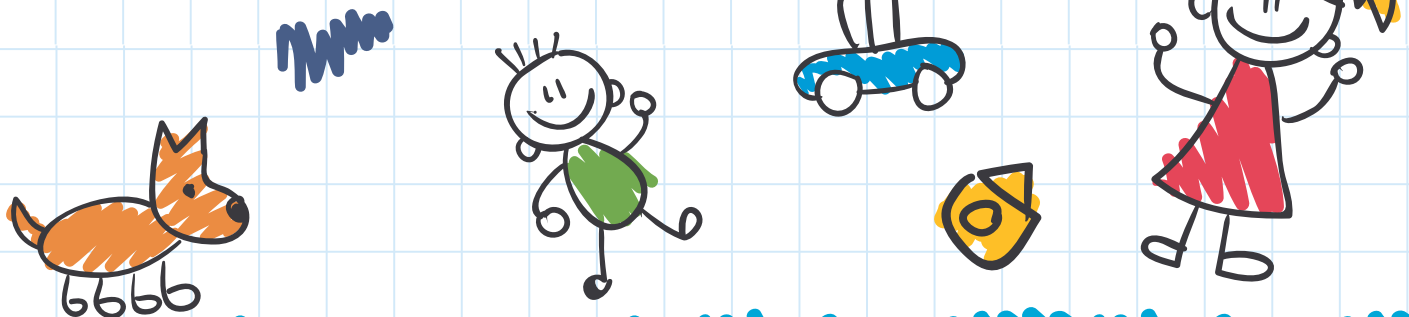
As per the child care state standards, children receive meals on a daily basis and they are engaged in various educational activities (Mathematics, English and elementary class groups).



In 2017-2019, with the help of the day care center teachers, individual educational plans were developed for each child with the goal to improve their academic achievements. Through the day care center, children had an opportunity to use the library established through the project and to get acquainted with extracurricular literature. The children's club, supported children to receive non-formal education and develop their creative and social skills. In addition, cultural activities (exhibitions, excursions, theatrical performances, movie-shows, environmental protection activities, dance classes, etc.) enabled children to develop cognitive skills and support them in socialization.

With the support of the social workers and teachers, children took active part in environment protection activities. They organized cleaning events, got acquainted with the literature on the topics of environmental protection, as well as conducted open/public lessons and workshops, and organized outdoor activities at "Eco Hub" (the meetings on environmental protection issues were organised in the space provided by Caucasus Environmental NGO Network).

In 2017-2019, 38 children benefited from the day care center services.



Capacity Building of State Social Workers and Psychologist



One of the main goals of the project is to strengthen the professional capacity of the social workers of the Social Services Agency (regional office of Samegrelo - Zemo Svaneti) in order to have a sustainable impact.

In 2017, on the basis of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Association "SOS Children's Villages Georgia" and the LEPL Social Services Agency, specialists of Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti regional center of the Social Services Agency (social workers and a psychologist) were trained in the licensed Parenting Education Program – "Strong Parents, Strong Children". The evidence-based programme is oriented on positive parenting and non-violent child upbringing methods. After completing the educational course, child care specialists received a license and are now authorised to conduct parental skill trainings with the target group beneficiaries.


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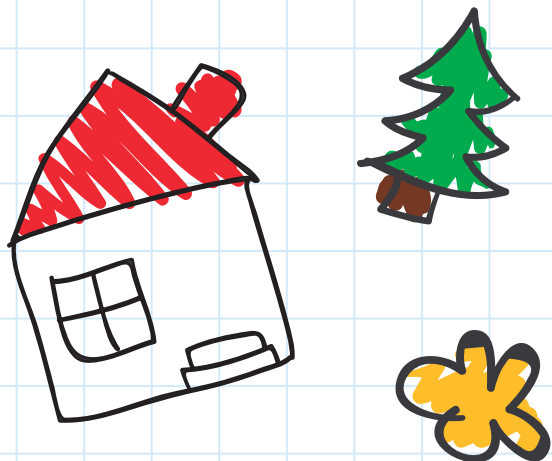
In 2018, 13 specialists of Samegrelo - Zemo Svaneti regional center of the LEPL Social Services Agency attended additional 3 capacity building trainings aimed at developing practical skills and raising the level of competence of social workers and a psychologist in three areas: (1) development of social skills of the beneficiaries, (2) adequate response in cases of domestic violence and (3) working on gender equality using various interventions.



Regional Conference



In 2018, a regional conference was held with the goal to share best practices and experience within the SOS Children's Villages Family Strengthening Projects in Georgia and Armenia. 

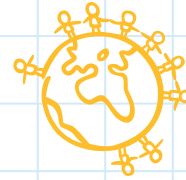


The conference participants included the staff of the Family Strengthening Projects in Georgia and Armenia, as well as the representatives of the Austrian Development Agency, Child Protection Specialists and other stakeholder organisations, such as the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia.

During the regional conference, special focus was made on the importance of the development of the Family Strengthening Project for vulnerable children and their families living in poverty, as well as the usage of holistic approaches. The participants of the conference got acquainted with the achievements within the Family Strengthening Projects in Tavush and Zugdidi. At the end of the presentations, a discussion was held on the current significant issues within the child welfare field.



Round Table Meetings



In the course of project implementation, 6 round table meetings were organised with participation of governmental and non-governmental organisations working in the area of social welfare. These meetings were dedicated to the discussions of the burning issues in regard to the needs of disadvantaged groups living in Zugdidi Municipality.

It has to be noted that meetings substantially contributed to the strengthening of interagency cooperation in terms of finding optimal solutions to the major problems of the targeted beneficiary families and preventing duplication of efforts.



Next Steps



A second phase of the Family Strengthening Project in Zugdidi will start in 2020 with the support of the Austrian Development Agency and SOS-Kinderdorf.

The new phase will continue in areas such as child care center, psycho-social support services and economic empowerment, but will have a stronger focus on promoting gender equality and preventing domestic violence.

