

*Support in the implementation of family development plans*

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| <b><u>Organisation(s):</u></b>   | SOS Children Villages  |   |
| <b><u>Country:</u></b>   | Estonia  |   |
| <b><u>Contact:</u></b>   | <a href="mailto:policy@esn-eu.org">policy@esn-eu.org</a>   |   |
| <b><u>Theme:</u></b> Choose at least one option  | <input type="checkbox"/> Ageing & Care<br><input type="checkbox"/> Asylum & Migration<br><input type="checkbox"/> Young People<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support for Children & Families<br><input type="checkbox"/> Community Care<br><input type="checkbox"/> Integrated Care & Support<br><input type="checkbox"/> Co-Production<br><input type="checkbox"/> Disability<br><input type="checkbox"/> Housing & Homelessness<br><input type="checkbox"/> Artificial Intelligence<br><input type="checkbox"/> Digitalisation<br><input type="checkbox"/> Quality Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Labour Market Inclusion<br><input type="checkbox"/> Social Inclusion<br><input type="checkbox"/> Technology<br><input type="checkbox"/> Workforce and Leadership<br><input type="checkbox"/> Social Benefits<br><input type="checkbox"/> EU Funding<br><input type="checkbox"/> Social Service's Resilience<br><input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health<br><input type="checkbox"/> Person-Centred Care<br><input type="checkbox"/> Research & Use of Evidence<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify:  |
| <b><u>Principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights:</u></b><br>Check the 20 principles here. | <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Education, training, life-long learning<br><input type="checkbox"/> 2. Gender equality<br><input type="checkbox"/> 3. Equal opportunities<br><input type="checkbox"/> 4. Active support to employment<br><input type="checkbox"/> 5. Secure and adaptable employment<br><input type="checkbox"/> 6. Fair Wages<br><input type="checkbox"/> 7. Transparent employment conditions<br><input type="checkbox"/> 8. Social dialogue<br><input type="checkbox"/> 9. Work-life balance<br><input type="checkbox"/> 10. Healthy, safe work environment         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 11. Childcare and child support<br><input type="checkbox"/> 12. Social protection<br><input type="checkbox"/> 13. Unemployment benefits<br><input type="checkbox"/> 14. Minimum income<br><input type="checkbox"/> 15. Old age income and pensions<br><input type="checkbox"/> 16. Health care<br><input type="checkbox"/> 17. Inclusion of people with disabilities<br><input type="checkbox"/> 18. Long-term care<br><input type="checkbox"/> 19. Housing and assistance to homeless<br><input type="checkbox"/> 20. Access to essential services |
| <b><u>Current status of the practice:</u></b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> Concept and Design Phase<br><input type="checkbox"/> Testing or pilot phase<br><input type="checkbox"/> Temporary practice that has terminated<br><input type="checkbox"/> Temporary practice that is ongoing and has a termination date<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Established and ongoing practice<br><input type="checkbox"/> Scaling Up and Transformation Phase<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)   |   |
| <b><u>Summary:</u></b><br>Please summarise the practice in maximum 3 sentences. This will be the   | The family strengthening service is intended for families with children who are facing difficult situations. Whether it is an overwhelming amount of daily household or financial worries, mental health issues, children's learning difficulties, addiction concerns, or any communication problems. A family strengthening service consists of a set of individual (according to each family member), tailored, preventive, empowering and inclusive activities for families.  |   |

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| <p><i>disclaimer of your project on our website.</i></p>  |  |
| <p><b><u>Context/ Social issues addressed</u></b><br/> <i>Please explain the problem you attempt to solve with your practice.</i></p>   | <p>In 2022, over 3,000 appeals were made to local governments in Estonia regarding children in need, with child protection cases involving nearly 6% of the population. Physical punishment remains common, and 310 children were separated from their families, mostly due to abuse or neglect. Additionally, 16% of children face relative poverty or social exclusion, and mental health disorders are a growing concern.</p> <p>A 2018 study revealed that 53% of parents needed support but were unsure where to turn or feared seeking help. Many families require improved parenting skills and access to services to support child development and independent coping.</p> <p>In order to support families in needs, SOS Children's Villages Estonia implements family strengthening services, aiming to empower families to meet the needs and rights of their children. These services target families with low parenting skills, at risk of separation, or lacking parental care.</p>   |
| <p><b><u>Objectives:</u></b><br/> <i>Please provide a maximum of three objectives in bullet points.</i></p>                             | <p>The service has three main objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve family functioning and parenting</li> <li>2. Combat social exclusion</li> <li>3. Prevent the separation of a child from the family if possible</li> </ol>  |
| <p><b><u>Activities:</u></b><br/> <i>Please describe the activities put in place to achieve the objectives (maximum 300 words).</i></p> | <p>Family strengthening services employ a case management approach to empower vulnerable families to meet their needs and support their children. Each family is assigned a family support worker, who builds a trusting relationship to guide and empower the family. The support worker coordinates all family-related activities from admission to departure, monitors the implementation of the family's action plan, and collaborates with other service providers involved in the family's care.</p> <p>A full-time family support worker assists up to 15 families, focusing on teaching life skills, advising on money management and budgeting, assisting with documentation, and supporting families in accessing necessary services such as healthcare. They also monitor children's school attendance and academic progress while maintaining communication with teachers and school support specialists. Occasionally, they organize activities outside the home to encourage quality family time. The support worker's role is not to perform tasks for the family but to empower them to manage challenges independently in the future. They act as a trusted guide, offering help and support during difficult times while working with all family members.</p> <p>Family support workers meet with families at least once a week through home visits, out-of-home meetings, or virtual sessions. They document all interactions in the family strengthening service database, which generates monthly reports for local government representatives.</p> <p>Family strengthening services also help families discover alternative resources and build social support networks, including friendships, neighbourhood connections, and community ties. These services aim to combat social exclusion and strengthen social capital, especially for families living in highly vulnerable situations where existing resources may not fully meet their children's needs.</p> |

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| <p><b><u>Outcomes:</u></b><br/> <i>Please explain what the results were/are so far and how you evaluated this.</i></p> | <p>The service has been implemented in one region since 2010. As demand for the service grew, SOS Children's Villages Estonia expanded its reach to four regions and 18 municipalities. By 2025, the service will cover three additional municipalities.</p> <p>Over the past five years, more than 200 families and nearly 500 children have participated in the service annually.</p> <p>The results are monitored at the individual family level. For each family, a tailored Family Strengthening Service Action Plan is developed collaboratively with the local government representative, family support worker, and the family, including the active participation of children and young people. The action plan outlines specific activities to achieve the identified goals and deadlines for these activities, aligning with the local government case plan and its action plan.</p> <p>The family strengthening action plan is reviewed and evaluated as needed, but no less than once every six months. If the goals outlined in the action plan are achieved and there is no need to establish new goals, the family can exit the service.</p> <p>Since 2024, SOS Children's Villages Estonia has implemented a new database system that allows for the electronic review of families' progress. This system also provides service managers access to data, enabling them to make informed decisions to enhance the service's effectiveness and delivery.</p> <p>Additionally, SOS Children's Villages Estonia has evaluated the service through internal evaluations, local government feedback surveys, and the AudTrain method, all of which have demonstrated positive results.</p> |
| <p><b><u>Links to supporting documents:</u></b><br/> <i>e.g. website or report of the practice</i></p>                 | <p><a href="https://sos-lastekyla.ee/meie-too/ennetustegevus/">https://sos-lastekyla.ee/meie-too/ennetustegevus/</a></p>  |
| <p><b><u>Comments and tips</u></b> <i>i.e. for people willing to use your Practice</i></p>                             | <p>By supporting families in need, we give children the opportunity to grow up with their parents in their own home.</p>  |