

The Role Of SOS Children's Village Indonesia in Improving Children's Social Welfare

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ABSTRACT

Background: Violence against children and the loss of parental care remain major issues in Indonesia. Many children experience physical and psychological violence, resulting in long-term trauma and disrupted development. Therefore, child welfare service institutions play an important role in protecting children and fulfilling their rights.

Objectives: This article aims to analyze the role of SOS Children's Villages Indonesia in improving children's social welfare and fulfilling children's rights based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Method: This study uses a literature review method by analyzing journals, books, research reports, laws, and relevant websites related to child welfare services and SOS Children's Villages Indonesia.

Result: The study shows that SOS Children's Villages Indonesia provides holistic child welfare services, including education, healthcare, nutrition, emotional support, substitute family care, and life skills training. The institution also creates safe and supportive environments that help children develop positively and become independent individuals.

Conclusion: SOS Children's Villages Indonesia significantly contributes to improving child welfare in Indonesia. Through a child-centered and family-based approach, the institution helps fulfill children's rights to protection, education, healthcare, and freedom from violence and exploitation.

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INTRODUCTION

Child welfare has recently become a major concern amid the increasing prevalence of violence against children and the loss of parental care. Violence against children is a social problem faced globally regardless of economic, political, cultural, or social development conditions (World Health Organization, 2014). Approximately 1.3 billion children worldwide were reported by Ending Violence in Childhood to have experienced family discipline based on physical and psychological violence (Global Report, 2017). Data from the Indonesian Child

Protection Commission (Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia/KPAI) showed a sharp increase in cases of violence against children, from 4,369 cases in 2019 to 6,519 cases in 2020. Rusyidi and Raharjo (2018) explained that, according to reports from the Child Protection Commission, the increase in violence against children occurred both within the family sphere (private domain) and in the public sphere. Children have become highly vulnerable targets of violence and are at great risk of losing their rights, even though they represent the future generation of the nation. The declining quality of child protection raises questions regarding the fulfillment of children's rights and the guarantee of children's survival in safe conditions (Rihardi, 2018).

The Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection (KPP-PA), together with the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Central Bureau of Statistics, conducted the 2013 Survey on Violence Against Children. The survey found that among individuals aged 18–24 years, one in two males and one in six females had experienced at least one form of sexual, physical, or emotional violence. Furthermore, data from the National Commission for Child Protection recorded 1,620 cases of violence against children, consisting of 490 cases (30%) of physical violence, 313 cases (19%) of emotional violence, and 817 cases (51%) of sexual violence. The data presented above only represent cases reported to and processed by the police, indicating that many unreported cases likely remain undocumented. Violence against children causes long-term trauma and significantly affects their growth and development. According to data from the Ministry of Law and Human Rights in August 2014, many acts of violence were also committed by children. A total of 1,441 children in conflict with the law were detained, consisting of 1,409 boys and 32 girls. Meanwhile, the number of child prisoners reached 3,154, including 3,096 boys and 58 girls.

Law No. 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection states that “The Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia guarantees the welfare of every citizen, including the protection of children's rights as part of human rights. Every child has the right to survival, growth, and development, as well as the right to protection from violence and discrimination as mandated by the 1945 Constitution” (Ramadani, 2021). Although the Child Protection Law has been enacted, child welfare in Indonesia remains far from ideal in terms of fulfilling children's rights and basic needs. During their developmental process, children require proper care to grow optimally and avoid mental, physical, social, spiritual, and intellectual impairments. Parenting styles greatly influence children's growth and development. Authoritarian parenting patterns, in which parents position themselves as absolutely correct and punish children for mistakes, often result in children becoming less open and fearful of expressing their feelings and desires. Violence against children may be perpetrated not only by strangers but also by those closest to them, who often

have greater opportunities to abuse and intimidate children into silence. Children may experience various forms of violence, including emotional abuse by parents or others, physical violence, verbal abuse, and sexual violence.

All forms of violence experienced by children can result in prolonged trauma, making the presence of child welfare service institutions highly important. According to the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, as cited in Sungkono and Khotimah (2021), child welfare service institutions, whether governmental or non-governmental, are responsible for functioning as centers for child welfare services focusing on prevention, recovery, development, and protection, while also supporting the roles of families and communities in children's development. Child welfare service institutions exist to fulfill children's rights, including the right to protection, participation, growth and development, and survival. Based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children's growth and development are influenced by the guidance of adults. Therefore, children who grow up outside their biological families should be provided with substitute families or alternative care institutions to ensure that their developmental needs are fulfilled optimally (Fitriana, 2017).

One of the child welfare service institutions in Indonesia is SOS Children's Village. According to Rohimah (2021), this institution was established to fulfill children's rights and provide loving family environments for children who have experienced violence, unsafe homes, neglect, or loss of parental care. SOS Children's Village Indonesia was first established in 1972 in Lembang, Bandung, and currently operates in nine locations across Indonesia, from Banda Aceh to Flores. The family-based social services implemented by SOS Children's Village Indonesia aim to fulfill children's rights to love and parental care, which ideally should be provided by their biological parents or extended families. Within SOS Children's Village Indonesia, children's needs for nurturing and affection are fulfilled through foster parents and foster siblings, alongside educational, vocational, and healthcare services supported by available facilities. Through this family-based care system, SOS Children's Village Indonesia seeks to support children's growth and development in ways similar to those experienced by children in general society, while also serving as an effort to prevent and address violence against children, which is often perpetrated by family members or people within the children's surroundings.

This article aims to discuss the role of SOS Children's Village Indonesia in improving children's social welfare. The main focus concerns how child welfare service institutions fulfill children's rights in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted in Indonesia. This article emphasizes the importance of the presence of child welfare service institutions in addressing various issues, particularly violence against children. SOS Children's Village Indonesia represents

one of the child welfare service institutions that plays a significant role in handling violence against children and ensuring the fulfillment of children's rights.

METHODS

This study employs a literature review method focusing on the role of child welfare service institutions in general and specifically on the role of SOS Children's Village Indonesia. A literature review is a research method conducted by analyzing articles, journals, books, websites, and other sources relevant to the research topic in order to strengthen theoretical understanding and provide references and guidelines for analyzing the research subject. The author utilized data sources from electronic books, academic journals, research reports, legislation, and websites. References were collected through Google Scholar and other journal sources available on the internet related to the role of child welfare service institutions in Indonesia.

Through this study, the article is expected to contribute additional insights and information regarding the role of child welfare service institutions in addressing violence against children, as well as provide recommendations for policy development in Indonesia concerning the importance of the presence of child welfare service institutions. The literature review approach is important because it provides a comprehensive overview of the issues, field conditions, and challenges faced in child welfare services within SOS Children's Village Indonesia. Consequently, the researcher is able to analyze and understand the role of SOS Children's Village Indonesia in improving child welfare.

In conducting the analysis, the author first examined information from various reading sources, including journals, e-books, and other relevant references, which were then summarized to formulate conclusions from the analysis. The findings are presented in the form of a narrative text discussing the role of SOS Children's Village Indonesia in improving children's social welfare.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Child Protection and Child Welfare in Indonesia

Welfare refers to a condition in which all aspects of an individual's basic needs are fulfilled, enabling them to achieve a sense of well-being and satisfaction. Children are among the groups whose welfare must receive serious attention, including their physical, mental, and social well-being, as they represent the future generation responsible for continuing the nation's aspirations. However, the condition of children in Indonesia still requires significant attention from the government and other stakeholders because many children continue to experience welfare-related problems. Numerous factors contribute to the failure to fulfill children's needs and rights, including child labor and adverse psychosocial

conditions that negatively affect children's growth and development. To reduce these problems, the government has implemented various efforts to address child labor and improve children's welfare, although these measures have not yet been fully effective. Therefore, continuous improvements are necessary because children, as the nation's future generation, must receive proper care and protection to ensure healthy development. One important aspect that requires attention is the effectiveness of the Child Protection Law, which regulates how children should be treated to ensure their welfare, protection, and proper care.

Child protection refers to efforts to guarantee that children are able to live, grow, and develop optimally in accordance with human dignity, while being protected from violence and discrimination, so that they may become high-quality and morally responsible Indonesian citizens. Child protection is the responsibility of all parties to ensure children's welfare through holistic efforts aimed at safeguarding, fulfilling, and providing welfare in accordance with children's human rights (Nur, 2017). Children must be protected, nurtured, educated, and respected because this constitutes the responsibility of the state and a fundamental principle that must be understood by society, considering that children hold a crucial role in the future (Sudrajat & Tamara, 2018). Prakoso (2018) explained that in 1979 the Declaration of the Rights of the Child was adopted and signed by 192 countries and the United Nations, which was later formalized into the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Geneva in 1989. This convention emphasized commitments to prioritize children's protection, development, and rights to survival. The Third Amendment of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia incorporated international movements aimed at strengthening children's rights in Indonesia. The constitutional basis for prioritizing and expanding children's rights is reflected in several legal provisions. The Indonesian Minister of Social Affairs was granted eight authorities related to organizing child social welfare activities, as regulated in Article 34 paragraph (1), Article 4 of Law No. 6 of 1974, Articles 11, 12, and 13 of Law No. 4 of 1979, Article 55 of Law No. 23 of 2002, Article 58, Government Regulation No. 2 of 1999, and the latest amendment concerning child protection under Article 1 paragraph 6 of Law No. 35 of 2014.

Indonesia is a country that upholds the rule of law and humanitarian values. The country has established legal frameworks and policies to protect children, particularly through Law No. 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection. Article 9 paragraph (1) states that "Children within and around educational institutions must be protected from physical and psychological violence, sexual crimes, and other criminal acts committed by educators, education personnel, classmates, or other parties." The implementation of such policies, however, cannot rely solely on the government. Society also plays a significant role, while public awareness regarding child protection policies remains relatively low. Many violations of child protection

policies still occur because people do not fully understand the substance and importance of these regulations. Protection encompasses all actions and measures that create protective effects. According to Law No. 35 of 2014, "Child protection means guaranteeing and protecting children so that they can live, grow, develop, and participate optimally in accordance with human dignity, while being protected from violence and discrimination." Children are highly vulnerable to violence, crime, and discrimination, making protection essential. Therefore, children require serious attention to prevent negative influences from their surrounding environment. Ironically, children, who are among the most vulnerable members of society, are often harmed and deprived of opportunities to express their opinions. They frequently become victims of violence and human rights violations. Consequently, parents and adults play an important role in providing positive examples for children because children often imitate the behavior they observe. In legal terms, a child refers to every individual, male or female, under the age of 18 years, including unborn children.

The Indonesian government has implemented various initiatives to address issues related to child protection and the fulfillment of children's rights, including efforts to reduce child labor in Indonesia. From the past until today, the government has continued to develop programs aimed at improving educational quality and reducing child labor practices. Other efforts to protect and uphold children's rights include:

1. Government alternative programs, such as:
 - Free issuance of birth certificates for children;
 - Educating parents and teachers regarding non-violent parenting and education;
 - Providing child healthcare services;
 - Increasing the budget allocation for primary education and implementing free basic education programs.
2. Legislative actions by the national and regional parliaments (DPR/DPRD) through the establishment of laws and regional regulations aimed at protecting children from violence and exploitation, while imposing strict punishments on perpetrators to create deterrent effects.
3. Law enforcement agencies, including the police, prosecutors, judges, and correctional officers, are expected to impose fair and firm sanctions on individuals who violate child protection laws. Violations of children's rights must be addressed without discrimination.

The Role of Child Welfare Service Institutions

Child welfare service institutions are non-profit organizations that provide services not for financial gain but for social welfare purposes (Fahmi, 2016). These institutions operate not only under government management but also through various non-governmental organizations. Orphanages, for example, are one form of child welfare institution that fulfills children's needs by caring for orphans, neglected children, and children who have lost parental care, thereby ensuring the fulfillment of their rights (Djawas & Fajrina, 2019). Furthermore, orphanages function as social institutions with missions to provide social services to neglected children through foster care assistance and physical and psychological support. The presence of a family environment significantly influences children's growth and development. Therefore, child welfare institutions play an important role in fulfilling children's needs for family relationships and affection.

Children can develop optimally as future generations of the nation if their rights and needs are fulfilled, including their rights to protection, education, healthcare, and survival, which ideally should be provided by their families. However, not all families are capable of fulfilling these rights, particularly for children who experience neglect or violence within their households (Tricahyani & Wideasavitri, 2016). In carrying out their functions, child welfare institutions adapt to environmental and institutional conditions to create harmonious family-like living patterns. The implementation of child social welfare services aims to improve children's quality of life, survival, and developmental welfare, while also restoring their social functioning so that they may achieve independence within society (Kuntjorowati, 2018).

The existence of child welfare service institutions is highly important in fostering children's independence and character development. Research conducted by Ikhwan demonstrated that child welfare institutions, including orphanages, have a substantial influence in addressing issues faced by children who experience violence, abuse, or neglect (Ikhwan, 2020). These institutions aim to develop children's independence by encouraging self-motivation, responsibility, and self-confidence in facing life challenges through the enhancement of life skills, including both soft skills and hard skills (Patimah & Sumartini, 2022).

Children who develop positively can be identified through their ability to recognize their own potential and demonstrate self-acceptance (Armita, 2016). Children, especially those who have experienced violence or neglect, require encouragement from multiple parties to recognize their abilities and strengths. Child welfare service institutions therefore play an important role in facilitating children's self-development and helping them realize their capabilities. The role of these institutions includes fostering children's abilities, encouraging self-acceptance, and helping them become better individuals who can contribute positively to society. Social institutions providing child welfare services do not

discriminate based on children's social status or backgrounds. These institutions also contribute significantly by supporting activities that positively impact children, such as training programs, competitions, motivational activities, and sharing sessions aimed at encouraging children to express themselves confidently. All aspects related to the fulfillment of children's rights become the focus of institutional roles in improving child welfare, including facilitating access to education, ensuring healthcare services, and providing protection for children.

SOS Children's Village Indonesia as a Child Welfare Service Institution

SOS Children's Villages Indonesia actively promotes the realization of children's rights, supports families in meeting essential needs, and provides safe homes for children who experience violence, neglect, or the loss of parental care. The organization was founded in Austria in 1949 and has grown into a global network consisting of 571 villages across 135 countries (Fahreza, 2023). SOS Children's Villages Indonesia was established in 1972. Agus Prawoto, an Indonesian soldier stationed in Austria, became familiar with the caregiving model and was inspired by it. The first village was established in Lembang, Bandung, in 1972. In 1984, the second village was built in Cibubur, Jakarta, followed by villages in Semarang and Tabanan, Bali, in 1991. Additional villages were later established as responses to disasters such as the tsunami in Flores and Aceh. The Flores village was founded in 1995, while villages in Banda Aceh, Meulaboh, and Medan were established in 2004. Currently, SOS Children's Villages Indonesia operates in nine regions stretching from Banda Aceh to Flores.

Talsyah and Maimun (2019) stated that the institution provides comprehensive social services for children. These services include education, healthcare, substitute family care, and food assistance. Child welfare services in SOS Children's Villages Indonesia are based on children's rights, emphasizing that every child has equal rights to education, health, and protection from violence and exploitation. The realization of children's rights constitutes the primary focus of SOS Children's Villages Indonesia (Utami, 2023).

SOS Children's Villages Indonesia provides opportunities for children to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives and offers spaces where children can express their concerns, opinions, and ideas (Anjarsari & Hartini, 2018). According to Asmara (2016), the institution prioritizes child protection in order to prevent children from all forms of violence and exploitation. The emotional and social support provided by substitute families within SOS Children's Villages Indonesia helps optimize children's growth and development, enabling them to experience a healthy and stable family environment. In addition to caregiving and education, the institution also provides social and emotional skills training that is essential for children to navigate present and future social life. Such training helps

neglected children and victims of violence build healthy relationships and manage their emotions effectively. SOS Children's Villages Indonesia has the following vision:

1. Every child belongs to a family:
"Family is the heart of society. Within a family, every child is protected, accepted, and feels a sense of belonging. In a family, children learn values, share responsibilities, and develop long-term relationships. A family environment provides children with a strong foundation upon which to build their lives."
2. Every child grows with love:
"Through love and acceptance, emotional wounds are healed and children's confidence is developed. Children learn to trust themselves and others. With this confidence, every child can understand and develop their potential."
3. Every child grows with respect:
"Every child's opinion is heard and taken seriously. Children participate in making decisions that affect their lives and are guided to play an active role in their own development. Children grow up with dignity and self-respect as part of both the family and community."
4. Every child grows in safety:
"Children are protected from violence, neglect, and all forms of exploitation, including during natural disasters and war. Children have the right to shelter, food, healthcare, and education. These are the most basic needs necessary for child development."

To realize these visions, SOS Children's Villages Indonesia carries out the following missions:

1. Creating families for children who have lost parental care:
"We create families for children who have lost parental care due to parental death, poverty, or other factors. The family-based approach implemented in SOS Children's Villages is founded upon four principles, one of which is that every child needs a mother figure."
2. Helping children build their future:
"We encourage all children to grow in environments that are informed by cultural and religious values."
3. Helping children understand and develop their abilities, interests, and talents:
"We ensure that all children receive the education and skills they need to succeed and contribute positively to society."
4. Strengthening communities:
"We support communities and respond to the social development needs of vulnerable families and children at risk of losing care. We strengthen families and work to prevent family separation. We cooperate with local communities to provide education, healthcare, and various social services."

In providing caregiving and education for children, SOS Children's Villages Indonesia not only involves families and close relatives who may positively influence children but also applies a holistic and child-centered approach. All aspects of children's needs are considered in efforts to improve their welfare, including physical, social, psychological, and intellectual needs, while still respecting the uniqueness and specific needs of each child (Setiawan, n.d.).

Fitri (2019) explained that SOS Children's Villages Indonesia applies several approaches in delivering child welfare services, including:

1. Integrated Approach

This approach is used to provide social services for children who have lost or are at risk of losing parental care, as well as for vulnerable families. The integrated approach combines various services required by children, including healthcare, education, and child protection. Through this holistic approach, SOS Children's Villages Indonesia is able to provide comprehensive services that address children's overall needs.

2. Participatory Approach

This approach actively involves children who are victims of violence, neglected children, and children who have lost parental care in decision-making processes and program implementation. Children are given opportunities to express their opinions, discuss their needs, and communicate their concerns and expectations.

3. Human Rights-Based Approach

SOS Children's Villages Indonesia applies a human rights-based approach in all of its social services. Children's rights to health, education, participation, and protection form the foundation of all programs implemented by the organization.

SOS Children's Villages Indonesia develops child protection programs to ensure that children understand their rights to live, grow, and develop safely while being protected from violence and discrimination. The institution implements various forms of child protection programs, including alternative care, family strengthening programs, and Emergency Response Programs (ERP). From protecting children against violence to helping them realize their rights and develop optimally, SOS Children's Villages Indonesia functions as a non-governmental social institution focused on child welfare and protection from all forms of violence and discrimination.

SOS Children's Villages Indonesia also has several unique characteristics, including:

1. "We provide a mom and a family for life"

SOS Children's Villages Indonesia believes that every child deserves a loving home. The organization strengthens families at risk of separation by providing support to help them remain united and resilient.

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2. "We have actual villages"
SOS Children's Villages operates more than 571 SOS Villages worldwide. These villages consist of residential homes, children's activity centers, healthcare facilities, schools, and playgrounds that provide safe and comfortable environments for children.
 3. "We provide long-term care for our children"
SOS Children's Villages Indonesia supports children until they are ready to live independently. The institution equips children with education and skills necessary to become self-reliant adults while maintaining lifelong connections with their SOS families.
 4. "Each child receives individualized care"
SOS Children's Villages Indonesia focuses on the individual needs of every child. Because children grow up in family environments, caregivers are able to understand each child personally and develop individualized growth and development plans.

SOS Children's Villages Indonesia seeks to fulfill children's rights through prevention, protection, and advocacy efforts. Prevention focuses on maintaining family unity and preventing children from being separated from their families. Protection ensures appropriate caregiving and safety for children who do not have safe family environments. Advocacy efforts aim to influence policies that improve the conditions of neglected children, victims of violence, and children who have lost parental care.

The organization implements several programs to improve children's welfare, including:

1. Family-Like Care
SOS Children's Villages Indonesia provides family-based care for children who have lost parental care. Children live together with SOS mothers, siblings, and other children in supportive family environments designed to prepare them for independent living.
2. Family Strengthening Program
Through the Family Strengthening Program (FSP), the institution supports vulnerable families through counseling, skills training, and community-based programs aimed at helping families achieve independence and provide proper care for their children.
3. Child Protection
Child safety is considered everyone's responsibility. SOS Children's Villages Indonesia is committed to ensuring children's rights to safe and comfortable homes while breaking cycles of violence. The organization seeks to minimize children's exposure to abuse, neglect, violence, and exploitation while ensuring that every child grows up in a protective and caring environment.

4. Youth Empowerment

Every young person has the right to safe and sustainable employment opportunities. Formal education, vocational training, and internship opportunities help young people develop competencies and life skills necessary for employment and independent living.

5. Advocacy

SOS Children's Villages Indonesia prioritizes and protects children's rights by participating in policy-making processes. Together with other stakeholders, the organization advocates for laws and policies that improve children's welfare and ensure that every child can grow into their strongest potential.

According to information published on the official website of SOS Children's Villages Indonesia, the organization "is committed to treating all beneficiaries, staff, volunteers, and partners based on the principle of equality without distinction of ethnicity, religion, race, intergroup identity, skin color, gender, sexual orientation, age, language, disability, or socio-economic status. SOS Children's Villages Indonesia upholds the safeguarding of children, youth, and adults who work with us, with a principle of zero tolerance for violence in any form."

CONCLUSION

SOS Children's Villages Indonesia is committed to advocating for children's rights and providing loving families and safe homes for children who are at risk of losing or have lost parental care. The organization places strong emphasis on child protection by safeguarding children from all forms of violence and exploitation. The emotional and social support provided by alternative families within SOS Children's Villages Indonesia helps children develop positively and experience healthy and stable home environments. In addition to caregiving and education, SOS Children's Villages Indonesia also provides social and emotional skills training, which is essential for daily life, particularly in building positive relationships within society. This training supports vulnerable children, including neglected children and victims of violence, in developing interpersonal relationships and managing their emotions effectively.

Child welfare services in SOS Children's Villages Indonesia are fundamentally based on children's rights, emphasizing that all children have equal rights to education, healthcare, and protection from violence and exploitation. The realization of children's rights is therefore the central focus of SOS Children's Villages Indonesia. The organization treats all beneficiaries and staff members

according to the principle of equality, without discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, race, social group, skin color, gender, sexual orientation, age, or language. The presence of SOS Children's Villages Indonesia significantly contributes to the fulfillment of children's rights and supports Indonesia's efforts to improve child welfare in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children are expected to grow into individuals who can develop positively within supportive environments and proper caregiving systems. Through programs such as *family-like care*, *family strengthening*, *child protection*, *youth empowerment*, and *advocacy*, SOS Children's Villages Indonesia strives to ensure that neglected children, children who have lost parental care, and children who have experienced violence can once again experience proper care, protection, and opportunities for a better future.

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