



The effectiveness of non-governmental organizations in enhancing social welfare services: A case study of SOS Children's Village

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in enhancing social welfare services, with a specific focus on the SOS Children's Village in the Eastern Cape province. A qualitative research methodology was employed, using semi-structured interviews with seven participants, which included staff members, caregivers, and local stakeholders involved with the organisation. The collected data was thematically analysed, allowing for the identification of significant patterns in areas such as service delivery, collaboration with government entities, and the challenges encountered by the organisation. The findings indicate that SOS Children's Village plays a crucial role in bridging the gaps left by public welfare systems, providing comprehensive care that include education, psychosocial support, and family strengthening initiatives. The study also identified several challenges, including funding instability, insufficient policy support, and coordination issues with government departments. In light of these findings, the study recommends the establishment of formal service-level agreements between NGOs' and government agencies; such agreements would clarify roles and responsibilities, facilitate improved collaboration, and enhance service delivery. The study recommends developing diversified funding strategies and capacity-building initiatives to ensure the long-term sustainability of NGOs' welfare programs. Therefore, this study contributes to scholarship by providing an in-depth understanding of how non-governmental organisations, particularly SOS Children's Village in the Eastern Cape, enhance social welfare service delivery within South Africa's mixed welfare system. It enriches existing literature by highlighting the critical intermediary role NGOs play in bridging service gaps left by public institutions and fostering child-centered, community-based care.

Keywords - Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Social Welfare services, SOS Children's Village, South Africa.

INTRODUCTION

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have emerged as a vital force in the global social welfare landscape, particularly where state-led service provision is limited, fragmented, or overstretched.¹ Operating independently of direct government control, NGOs are often mission-driven entities committed

¹ S. Swithern et al., *Rethinking Humanitarian Effectiveness: NGOs in Crisis-Affected Contexts* (London: Humanitarian Policy Group, 2025).

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to addressing specific social, developmental, or humanitarian needs.² Within the field of social welfare, their contribution has become increasingly indispensable, especially in serving vulnerable and marginalised populations who might otherwise be excluded from formal state systems.³ These organisations often function as intermediaries, filling critical service delivery gaps and advocating for systemic change.

In South Africa, the role of NGOs in child care and protection has been particularly significant, given the enduring legacy of poverty, inequality, and fragmented social support systems.⁴ A key example is SOS Children's Village, an international organisation active in several regions of the country. It provides nurturing, family-style care to orphaned, abandoned, and vulnerable children. With its emphasis on long-term development, emotional support, and community involvement, the organisation presents a strong case for examining how NGOs contribute to child-centered social welfare outcomes.⁵

Although NGOs are becoming increasingly prominent, there is still a lack of empirical research that carefully assesses their long-term impact and overall operational effectiveness. Much of the existing literature tends to focus on descriptive accounts, leaving significant questions about sustainability, accountability, and service quality largely underexplored.⁶ The NGOs often face a range of operational challenges, including inadequate funding, human resource constraints, and limited infrastructure, all of which can hinder their ability to deliver consistent and impactful services.⁷ These limitations make it necessary to assess how NGOs, such as SOS Children's Village, navigate these constraints while striving to fulfill their mandates.

This study aims to assess the effectiveness of NGOs, with a focus on SOS Children's Village, in providing social welfare services to vulnerable children. Specifically, it evaluates the quality, accessibility, and outcomes of the services provided, as well as the extent to which they contribute to improved psychosocial, educational, and developmental well-being among the children in their care. The study provides evidence-based insights to inform future policy decisions, organisational strategies, and collaborative efforts that strengthen the role of NGOs in child welfare.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of NGOs in enhancing social welfare services has garnered increasing scholarly attention, particularly in contexts characterised by limited state capacity and fragmented service delivery systems.⁸ Empirical research has increasingly focused on assessing the effectiveness of NGOs in delivering social welfare services, particularly in contexts where state support is inadequate or inconsistent.⁹ These studies contribute to a nuanced understanding of the operational dynamics, organisational capacities, and developmental impacts of NGOs such as SOS Children's Village. The literature highlights key themes including the effectiveness of service delivery, program, stakeholder influence, and child welfare outcomes.

NGO Effectiveness in Service Delivery

Empirical evidence shows that NGOs can play a pivotal role in improving the success of development interventions, particularly through their established relationships and reputational capital within communities. According to Usmani, Jeuland, & Pattanayak, a randomised field experiment conducted in

² G. Mohan and R. Sharma, "NGOs in Development: A Critical Review of the Literature," *Third World Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (2022): 234–52; J. Amidkhonova and J. Gander, *Civil Society and Development: New Perspectives on NGO Engagement in the Global South* (New York: Routledge, 2025).

³ Nicola Banks, David Hulme, and Michael Edwards, "NGOs, States, and Donors Revisited: Still Too Close for Comfort?," *World Development* 66 (2015): 707–18.

⁴ F. Theron, "The Evolving Role of NGOs in Post-Apartheid Child Welfare Systems in South Africa," *South African Review of Sociology* 54, no. 1 (2023): 88–105.

⁵ Swithern et al., *Rethinking Humanitarian Effectiveness: NGOs in Crisis-Affected Contexts*.

⁶ Banks, Hulme, and Edwards, "NGOs, States, and Donors Revisited: Still Too Close for Comfort?"; E. Mawdsley, J. G. Townsend, and G. Porter, *Trust, Accountability and NGOs: Representing Development* (London: Routledge, 2019).

⁷ N. Makwatikizo, "NGOs under Pressure: Sustainability Challenges in the African Child Welfare Sector," *Journal of Social Policy in Africa* 15, no. 2 (2023): 77–95; S. Malambo, J. Mwanza, and T. Mwange, "Assessing Resource Constraints in NGO Service Delivery: Evidence from Zambia and South Africa," *African Journal of Social Development* 33, no. 1 (2025): 101–21.

⁸ Nicola Banks and David Hulme, "The Role of NGOs and Civil Society in Development and Poverty Reduction," *Brooks World Poverty Institute Working Paper*, no. 171 (2012); Mohan and Sharma, "NGOs in Development: A Critical Review of the Literature."

⁹ H. Zeleke, "The Role of NGOs in Social Welfare Provision in Sub-Saharan Africa: Empirical Insights and Policy Implications," *Journal of African Policy Studies* 10, no. 1 (2025): 55–74.

India found that prior engagement by a locally embedded NGO increased the effectiveness of a technology adoption program by over 30%.¹⁰ This finding, known as the “NGO reputation effect,” highlights the crucial importance of trust, contextual familiarity, and sustained community engagement in achieving better outcomes. This evidence reinforces the argument that NGOs are not only service providers but also social intermediaries that shape perceptions and mobilise participation at the grassroots level.

Program Efficiency and Organisational Factors

Internal organisational characteristics have a significant influence on programme efficiency in the NGO sector. In a comparative analysis of environmental and social NGOs in China, Peng identified leadership structure, funding diversity, and stakeholder engagement as key determinants of program performance.¹¹ The study concluded that social welfare-oriented NGOs perform more effectively when they cultivate strong ties with their communities and uphold transparent governance mechanisms. These findings suggest that relational and structural factors within NGOs can enable or constrain their ability to provide high-quality, sustainable services.

Stakeholder Influence and Accountability

Accountability to external stakeholders, such as donors, governments, and the media, has emerged as both a driver and a constraint in the performance of NGOs. A growing body of empirical research indicates that stakeholder pressures can lead to improved transparency and responsiveness, but can also introduce tensions when external demands diverge from an NGO’s core mission or operational capabilities.¹² For organisations such as SOS Children’s Village, which are subject to international oversight and various donor expectations, maintaining accountability without compromising service quality or organisational integrity is a complex but critical task.

Child Welfare Outcomes

Although limited empirical research focuses exclusively on SOS Children’s Village, broader studies on family-based and community-integrated care models provide supportive evidence for their approach. Research indicates that interventions that replicate familial environments and offer long-term, stable care are associated with superior psychosocial, educational, and developmental outcomes compared to traditional institutional care.¹³ These findings align with the SOS model, prioritising holistic, child-centered approaches grounded in emotional stability and community inclusion. As such, SOS Children’s Village is a relevant case for examining the effectiveness of NGO-led child welfare programs.

The literature highlights the multifaceted role of NGOs in the development of SOS Children’s Village landscapes in the OR Tambo District. While they contribute significantly, legal constraints and the need for strategic management persist. Addressing these challenges through diversified funding, strategic planning, and collaborative partnerships is essential to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of Non-governmental Organisations in South Africa.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework underpinning this study integrates development theory, institutional theory, and social capital theory, each offering a distinct analytical lens through which the operational dynamics and impact of Non-Governmental Organisations can be understood.¹⁴

¹⁰ F. Usmani, M. Jeuland, and S. Pattanayak, “Social Embeddedness and NGO Reputation Effects: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment in India,” *Journal of Development Economics* 161 (2024): 102784.

¹¹ X. Peng, “NGO Efficiency and Organizational Design in China: A Comparative Analysis,” *Nonprofit Management & Leadership* 34, no. 3 (2024): 321–45.

¹² Mohan and Sharma, “NGOs in Development: A Critical Review of the Literature.”

¹³ M. G. Wessells, “Family-Based Care vs. Institutionalization: What the Evidence Says About Child Well-Being,” *Child Abuse & Neglect* 139 (2023): 106119; C. Lumsden and J. Black, “The Role of Family-Based Care in Promoting Child Well-Being: A Systematic Review,” *Child & Family Social Work* 26, no. 1 (February 18, 2021): 45–60, <https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12767>.

¹⁴ F. Usmani, M. Jeuland, and S. Pattanayak, “NGO Interventions and the Role of Social Capital in Program Effectiveness,” *World Development* 144 (2021): 105478; M. Woolcock, “Social Capital and Development: A Reappraisal,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 25 (2022): 153–73.

Development Theory and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

Development theory highlights the crucial role of Non-Governmental Organisations in addressing systemic inequalities and fostering inclusive socio-economic growth. NGOs are often positioned as intermediaries between underserved communities and formal institutional structures, facilitating access to essential services such as education, healthcare, and psychosocial support. Non-Governmental Organisations are uniquely equipped to deliver social services effectively due to their embeddedness within local communities, which fosters trust, enhances program legitimacy, and improves uptake.¹⁵ This approach enables Non-Governmental Organisations to tailor their services to local needs and cultural contexts, thereby increasing their relevance and sustainability.

Institutional Theory

Institutional theory provides a framework for understanding how organisational behaviour is shaped by the formal and informal rules, norms, and expectations within a given environment. Non-governmental organisations, such as SOS Children's Village, operate within a multifaceted institutional landscape that involves government regulations, donor requirements, and community expectations. Their effectiveness is often contingent upon their ability to navigate these institutional dynamics while maintaining organisational legitimacy. Non-Governmental Organisations can reduce information asymmetries and transaction costs by using localised knowledge and social networks, thereby enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery interventions.¹⁶

Social Capital Theory

Social capital theory highlights the value of social networks, trust, and reciprocal relationships in achieving development outcomes. Non-Governmental Organisations generate social capital by promoting participatory governance, strengthening community ties, and empowering beneficiaries. This relational dimension is particularly pronounced in the SOS Children's Village operational model, which is rooted in family-like care, emotional support, and community integration. The organisation's emphasis on stable, trust-based relationships among caregivers, children, and the broader community is instrumental in sustaining long-term developmental outcomes.¹⁷

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A case study design facilitated a more comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the problem under investigation. This methodological approach enabled the researchers to gain a context-specific and holistic understanding of the effectiveness of implementing social welfare services by non-governmental organisations. The case study allowed for methodological flexibility, allowing researchers to pose various open-ended questions that elicited rich and detailed responses from participants. Through this immersive process, the study captured diverse perspectives and lived experiences, improving the understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Research approach

This study employed a qualitative research approach to investigate the effectiveness of non-governmental organisations in implementing social welfare services. Interpretivism was particularly suitable for this inquiry, as it facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the subjective experiences, meanings, and social contexts within which non-governmental organisations operate. Specifically, the paradigm facilitated an in-depth examination of how SOS Children's Village contributes to enhancing social welfare services, highlighting the perspectives of those directly involved and affected by these interventions.

¹⁵ Banks and Hulme, "The Role of NGOs and Civil Society in Development and Poverty Reduction"; Usmani, Jeuland, and Pattanayak, "Social Embeddedness and NGO Reputation Effects: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment in India."

¹⁶ Usmani, Jeuland, and Pattanayak, "NGO Interventions and the Role of Social Capital in Program Effectiveness."

¹⁷ Woolcock, "Social Capital and Development: A Reappraisal"; Swithern et al., *Rethinking Humanitarian Effectiveness: NGOs in Crisis-Affected Contexts*.

Population and Sample

The population for this study consisted of participants associated with SOS Children's Village, a non-governmental organisation located in the Tambo District of the Eastern Cape, South Africa. The sample was drawn from both staff members and beneficiaries of the organisation. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select individuals who provided rich information, allowing the researchers to intentionally target those considered representative and knowledgeable about the phenomenon under investigation. The final sample consisted of seven participants, including social workers, caregivers, and a program coordinator.

Data Collection

The data collection instruments used in this study included semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Both are consistent with a qualitative research methodology. Semi-structured interviews provided a flexible yet guided framework for data collection, allowing participants to express their views openly while allowing the researcher to probe for deeper understanding. The interview questions focused on key themes, including social services, service delivery effectiveness, and lived experiences of beneficiaries. In addition to individual interviews, focus group discussions were held to facilitate interactive dialogue and capture collective perspectives. This method allowed the researcher to explore group dynamics, shared experiences, and the social construction of meaning among participants. Focus group interviews allowed a deeper interpretation of participant responses by moving beyond surface-level facts to uncover the contextual and experiential meanings behind them. Together, these instruments enhanced the richness and depth of the qualitative data collected.

Data analysis

Data collected from focus group interviews were studied and analysed to uncover hidden insights and identify emerging themes. The researchers maintained their unique perspectives throughout the data analysis process and relied solely on the information provided by the participants. Patterns were identified and categorised, and various units and categories were established. The transcripts of the recorded themes, sub-themes, and responses were analysed thematically.

Ethical Considerations

Before embarking on this study, several ethical considerations were strictly observed to ensure integrity, confidentiality, and the protection of all participants involved. Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant institutional review board to authorise the conduct of the research. Formal permission was also sought and granted by the management of SOS Children's Village, allowing access to organisational data and engagement with staff and beneficiaries. Informed consent was obtained from all participants after they had understood the purpose, scope, and voluntary nature of the study. Participants were assured that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw at any stage without any repercussions. To maintain confidentiality, no personal identification was recorded or disclosed and all data collected was stored securely and used solely for academic purposes. Furthermore, ethical principles of respect, beneficence, and non-maleficence guided all interactions, ensuring that the rights, dignity, and welfare of participants were prioritised throughout the research process.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Data analysis revealed key themes that illustrate how SOS Children's Village contributes to improving social welfare services for vulnerable children. These findings highlight the range of services offered, the collaborative frameworks in place, and the factors that enable effective service delivery. Thematic analysis further shows that both organisational capacity and community partnerships play a crucial role in achieving sustainable child welfare outcomes. The following table provides a visual summary of the main themes that emerged from the study.

Type of Social Welfare Services Provided to Children by the SOS Children’s Village	Factors Enabling NGOs in Enhancing Social Welfare Services Delivery		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention and early intervention 	Financial Resources	Human Resources	Collaborations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable finding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledgeable staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychosocial support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversified funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO networks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundraising initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community involvement

The following themes emerged during data analysis and are discussed:

- Type of social welfare services provided to children by the SOS Children’s Village.
- Factors enabling NGOs in enhancing social welfare services delivery

Types of social welfare services provided to children by the SOS Children’s Village

Prevention and early intervention are delivered through outreach programmes. The level of service delivery focuses on improving and increasing service users' ability, self-reliance, and resilience, while addressing individual, environmental, and societal elements to create settings that enhance or support wellness. Services are designed to prevent development needs from becoming social difficulties or hazards. This level of service delivery encompasses the developmental services outlined in the White Paper for Social Welfare, which emphasises a shift from traditional welfare to a developmental approach that promotes human capacity, social inclusion, and proactive support systems.¹⁸

“The outreach initiative is part of our preventative and early intervention programs for vulnerable children... a range of services is very essential with children, including outreach work, drop-in centres, shelters, and kitchen soups, we get sponsor from Shoprite, Spar and Pick n Pay during kitchen soup day, where they visit the SOS Children’s Village and have activities that the children participate in. This is an inspiring moment for children as they express themselves and have fun.”(Participant A)

“NGOs provide broader psychosocial counselling and practical advice, designed to assist children in managing their situations and the challenges they face in their everyday lives. We interact with children who have diverse cultures and religions. We try our absolute best to build the children’s low self-esteem, lack of self-confidence, a sense of worthlessness, shame, and stigmatization. Through individual inputs and participation in programmes designed to increase their life and coping skills, they must be supported to develop a positive self-image and the capacities to manage their situation.”(Participant B)

“We help children and homeless people who need food, bath, emotional development, vocational training, a bible study group, and life skills. We offer educational programs, primary health care, art, and sport as a drop-in Centre. Since the drop-in centres are closer to the children, we must report the cases to social workers. We have an art gallery or station, which allows children to dance, sing, or draw. Prevention services aim to ensure that vulnerable communities, families, groups, and youth are identified and intervention is implemented before a crisis status is reached. In contrast, early intervention is a level of intervention after assessment, which includes intensive support, capacity building, social relief, home-based developmental support, and therapeutic programmes”(Participant C).

The findings revealed that social welfare services are provided through a collaborative network comprising government institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), qualified social service professionals, and community-based volunteers. This integrated framework aims to provide comprehensive

¹⁸ Department of Social Development (DSD), *White Paper for Social Welfare: Principles, Guidelines, Recommendations, Proposed Policies and Programmes for Developmental Social Welfare in South Africa* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 2022).

support to individuals, groups, and communities vulnerable or at risk due to socio-economic, psychological, or structural challenges. The primary objective of these services is to promote social justice, protect human rights, and improve the well-being of marginalised populations by addressing their immediate needs while fostering long-term development and resilience. This multi-sectoral approach ensures that social welfare interventions are inclusive and responsive to complex and evolving needs of society.

Factors enabling NGOs to improve the delivery of social welfare services delivery

Effective delivery of social welfare services to children within the SOS Children's Village depends primarily on the availability and efficient management of enabling resources, particularly financial capital and human resources. Financial resources form the backbone of programmatic sustainability, supporting various services, including shelter, education, healthcare, psychosocial support, and community outreach. Consistent and sufficient funding ensures that essential services are maintained and expanded to meet the growing and diverse needs of vulnerable children. Inadequate or unstable financing, often resulting from donor fatigue or economic downturns, poses a significant threat to continuity and quality of care.¹⁹

"Department of Social Development is our funder, and we also get assistance from other suppliers, such as Pick n Pay, Checkers, Shoprite, KFC, and many more." (Participant C)

"We also receive government funding, though it is limited due to a lack of coordination, quality, monitoring, and evaluation of services provided to street children by both NGOs and the government." The absence of cooperation between and among government departments and civil society organisations results in financial rivalry."(Participant D)

"Churches and the Department of Social Development support us. As part of a subsidy, every child receives money from social development".(Participant E)

Although the government provides partial financial support to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the primary responsibility for securing the bulk of operational funding rests with the NGOs. This is typically achieved through fundraising initiatives and the request for donations from international and domestic donors. NGOs are widely recognised for their pivotal role in the delivery of essential services and programs for children, particularly in early intervention and prevention and the persistent challenge of underfunding significantly impedes their effectiveness. Inadequate financial resources constrain service coverage, limit programmatic innovation, and compromise the overall quality and sustainability of interventions aimed at safeguarding the well-being of vulnerable children. Consequently, funding shortfalls compromise NGOs' objectives, revealing a critical gap between policy intent and practical implementation.

"As someone working in the field, I can say that the shortage of social workers is a serious problem. We are expected to manage extremely high caseloads, and there are not enough of us to meet the growing demand, particularly in child welfare and early intervention services. What makes it even harder is the poor working environment. We often lack basic resources; something as simple as stationery or a proper office with furniture is a luxury in many places. Many of us have to share limited office space, which makes it challenging to conduct private and confidential sessions with clients, especially children who require a safe and quiet environment to open up. Supervision is also lacking. In many cases, we are left alone without adequate support or guidance, which puts us and the service users at risk. We need professional oversight not only for compliance, but also for emotional and ethical support. The same goes for technology. Some offices do not even have working computers or internet access, making report writing, case tracking, and communication with stakeholders extremely inefficient."(Participant F)

"We work closely with other organisations, especially regarding food support, accessing funds, and making referrals for specialised services we might not offer directly. Collaboration helps us fill in the gaps and stretch our resources further. For example, there are times when another NGO may assist us with emergency food parcels, or we may refer one of our children for psychological support if we do not have an in-house professional available. In terms of funding, a significant portion of our sustainability stems

¹⁹ Makwatikizo, "NGOs under Pressure: Sustainability Challenges in the African Child Welfare Sector."

from the contributions we receive. We do fundraising activities throughout the year, thankfully, we also have loyal donors who support us financially. Each girl in our care receives a subsidy from the Department of Social Development, which helps cover some basic needs, but is insufficient to meet all the costs. We also receive support from local churches, supermarkets, and community members. Some sponsor a child monthly, while others donate groceries or school supplies. The supermarkets sometimes donate goods near expiration or run special drives on our behalf. The churches provide funding and emotional and spiritual support, which are equally important in helping girls feel connected and cared for. All of this support, while deeply appreciated, is still insufficient to meet the growing demand. However, these partnerships and acts of generosity keep us going and provide stability for the girls in our care." (Participant G).

The responses above show that all the participants agreed. The participants above indicate that Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) frequently experience high levels of staff turnover, particularly among social workers who often seek employment within the government sector, where workloads tend to be more manageable and remuneration packages are substantially more competitive. Additionally, some professionals leave the social welfare field entirely, either migrating to other countries or pursuing alternative career paths. This attrition is driven by a combination of factors, including excessive caseloads, institutional inefficiencies, and the emotionally demanding nature of social work, which collectively contribute to elevated levels of workplace stress, anxiety, and burnout. In severe cases, these pressures may result in professional malpractice. Despite the complex and crisis-driven nature of the work, which requires experienced and well-trained personnel, many NGOs lack adequate resources to support continuous professional development. Consequently, insufficient training and support mechanisms exacerbate staff dissatisfaction and turnover, undermining the overall effectiveness and sustainability of service delivery in the sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, it is recommended that the Department of Social Development, in collaboration with SOS Children's Village management, organise targeted capacity-building workshops to educate beneficiaries of social welfare services supported by SOS Children's Village. These workshops should provide comprehensive guidance on the objectives and processes of improving social welfare services, fostering shared understanding within communities, and promoting active engagement. Additionally, SOS Children's Village, in collaboration with the Department, should provide community members with opportunities to attend informational sessions on the Department's and the organisation's policies, operational frameworks, and formal grievance procedures, thereby ensuring greater transparency and accessibility.

Additionally, it is recommended that SOS Children's Village, through its programme and advocacy units, actively engage and mobilise relevant stakeholders, such as faith-based organisations, child rights advocates, and civil society actors, to collectively advocate for increased government funding. Enhanced financial support would enable SOS Children's Village and similar NGOs to design and implement sustainable, long-term child welfare programs that are responsive to community needs.

To address the persistent challenge of staff attrition, particularly the migration of social workers from NGOs such as SOS Children's Village to government agencies, it is imperative that SOS Children's Village, in partnership with the Department of Social Development and other NGOs, ensure equitable compensation in all sectors of the social welfare profession. Standardising remuneration packages would promote retention and professional parity. Moreover, SOS Children's Village management should take proactive measures to address the uneven distribution of workloads and the critical shortage of qualified social workers, which contribute to professional burnout and a decline in service quality. Addressing these systemic problems is essential to strengthen the overall capacity and effectiveness of SOS Children's Village and the broader social welfare sector.

CONCLUSION

The authors of this paper have explored the effectiveness of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in enhancing social welfare services. The findings highlighted the critical role of NGOs in addressing various social issues, particularly where government resources are limited. Through targeted interventions and

community engagement, NGOs have demonstrated their ability to create significant positive impacts on social welfare outcomes. The analysis revealed that collaboration among NGOs, government entities, and local communities can lead to more sustainable solutions and enhanced service delivery. While challenges remain, such as funding constraints and varying degrees of organisational capacity, the overall contribution of NGOs to social welfare is undeniable. The ongoing evaluation of NGO practices and sharing best practices will ensure continuous improvement in social welfare services.

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