

A DECENTRALIZED ORGANIZATION MUST HAVE A STRONG DIGITAL BACKBONE



The Organization

SOS Children's Villages is an independent, non-governmental, social development organization that provides care and support for children and disadvantaged families. Active in 136 countries and territories, it advocates the concerns, rights and needs of children. Additionally the NGO helps families shape their own future and contributes to community development.

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Oliver Vavtar, Team Leader Network Services SOS Children's Villages

THE CHALLENGE

- Visibility in a global network
- Decentralized organization that uses shared applications
- Need professional infrastructure on tight budgets

THE SOLUTION

- Open Systems Managed SASE
- 24x7 operations and security monitoring by level-3 engineers

THE RESULTS

- Full service transparency
- Digitalization of many projects made possible
- More time to focus on strategic business

THE CHALLENGE

The main goal of SOS Children's Villages is to be as useful as possible to the beneficiary – the child in need. To achieve this, its country subsidiaries and territories work with a great deal of autonomy, in some cases even operating as independent legal bodies with their own boards and statutes. All the national organizations are members of the international umbrella association SOS Children's Villages International, which coordinates global initiatives and uses regional offices to support country subsidiaries in the areas of finance, fundraising, IT and communications.

Every day, NGO staff work to ensure that children can grow up in a loving, caring family environment. Global networks and the use of standardized applications play an important role in their success. After all, a decentralized organization that uses shared applications and processes must have a strong digital backbone.

The organization maintains a Network Services team that helps it with a wide range of applications and solutions, bookkeeping, and financial software – Microsoft Office 365 is used globally. "Although we are dealing with really tight budgets, we want to serve our colleagues in a professional manner," says Oliver Vavtar, Team Leader Network Services. It means providing connectivity and a high-performance infrastructure. He goes on to talk of his team coming to the realization that doing this well on their own would not be efficient.

SOS Children's Villages collaborates closely with other NGOs as part of a network called NetHope which joins the world's largest nonprofits with leading technology innovators. That's where the Network Services team of SOS Children's Villages heard about Open Systems.

THE SOLUTION

Visibility

"Visibility was really key. Before we started with the implementation, we knew we didn't want a black box."

Oliver Vavtar is happy about the full transparency of all Open Systems services, which is very important for discussions with the NGO's regional offices. He reminisces about the days before working with an IT security and network partner, "I remember back in

former years, it was something of a ping-pong in terms of 'the problem is here; no the problem is there.'" With the Open Systems Customer Portal for keeping an eye on how the SD-WAN is running, Oliver's team can see the same data and statistics from both sides, so they are faster at finding errors as well as solutions.

Cybersecurity

For NGOs, cybersecurity is just as much a challenge as for corporations. "Attackers are very organized nowadays. The attacks are very sophisticated. And the threats are more dangerous than ever before," explains Oliver Vavtar.

The SOS Children's Villages organization has been focusing for many years on three pillars: (1) Technology, (2) Procedures & Processes, (3) People – the human part of cybersecurity being the most important for the NGO to address by itself. For Oliver Vavtar it's good to know that the technology pillar is in safe hands with Open Systems as a partner.

THE RESULTS

"We have a very reliable digital backbone that's centrally managed by Open Systems," remarks Oliver Vavtar. With the support of NOC and SOC engineers in Mission Control, his Network Services team is ready to tackle the many digitalization projects in his organization's pipeline, such as the rollout of an ERP solution, as well as O365 services that the NGO wants to continue using. "Now we can focus on projects to digitalize and support the training of our SOS mothers and caregivers."

No Financial Surprises

"We have recognized that talent shortage, especially for very remote locations, is an important topic," says Oliver Vavtar, "and it's even worse if you try to keep those talents after investing a lot of money in their very specialized training. So for us it was clear that we should have an integrated solution where everything was covered – services and connectivity 24x7 all fixed into one yearly fee, with no financial surprises at the end."

More Time for the Business

Due to the operational support of Open Systems, the Network Services team at SOS Children's Villages has more time for a major strategic dialog with the business and can be recognized as a business factor rather than a cost factor.