

Institute of Development Studies
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CURRENT EMPLOYMENT: PhD Researcher / Evidence and Learning Advisor, SOS Children's Villages International

DATE OF BIRTH: 24 / 07 / 1987

NATIONALITY: Austrian / British

LANGUAGES: English, German, Spanish, French (intermediate), Arabic (intermediate), Armenian (basic)

THEMATIC EXPERTISE: Child wellbeing, refugee and migrant children, child protection, family support & policy

GEOGRAPHICAL EXPERTISE: Middle East / Caucasus

OVERVIEW

I have more than 10 years of experience as a research and development practitioner in local and international NGOs, in contexts such as Austria, Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Lebanon, and South Africa. I joined the *Institute of Development Studies (IDS)* as a postgraduate researcher in 2020. My doctoral research employs child-centred participatory and ethnographic methods to explore the wellbeing of Syrian-Armenian refugee children and their families in Armenia, in the context of family support services. I also work as Evidence and Learning Advisor at SOS Children's Villages International, where I focus on designing, commissioning and carrying out research activities and delivering trainings in evaluations and research with children. I hold two Masters degrees, one in Social and Cultural Anthropology, and one in Spanish and French language studies, and have been studying the Arabic language for many years.

EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

2020 – 2024 (expected)	PhD in Development Studies Institute of Development Studies, Sussex University, United Kingdom Thesis title: <i>“Exploring the wellbeing of Syrian-Armenian refugee children and their families in the context of family support services in Armenia”</i>
2006 - 2011	Magister of Philosophy (equivalent of BA+MA) in Social and Cultural Anthropology University of Vienna, Austria
2006 - 2010	Magister of Philosophy (equivalent of BA+MA) in Spanish and Romance Language University of Vienna, Austria
2005 - 2006	Visiting student - Spanish Foreign Politics, Spanish language University of Complutense, Spain

RECORD OF EMPLOYMENT

2012 – PRESENT	Evidence and Learning Advisor, SOS Children's Villages International Evidence and Learning Advisor, Programme Development, International Office. Vienna-based, including 70% travel Previous positions: Programme Advisor in regional office CEE/CIS, Programme Research Coordinator in CEE/CIS, Programme Assistant in CEE/CIS. <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Conducting, managing, coordinating, and commissioning research and evaluations with children and young people○ Consulting and technical research expertise (including delivery of trainings)○ Ethical research with children and young people (trainings, review and development of guidance)
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- Systematic and rapid evidence reviews, and evidence gap maps
- Data consolidation and analysis, writing, publication, and presentation of research findings (incl. in journals & academic conferences)
- Developing and driving the global research agenda
- Setting up research partnerships with universities
- Certified Results-Based Management Trainer
- Developing quality standards, audit approaches, and indicators for social services

2014 – 2016

Editor, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Austria

Editing of various publications at the Institute of Social Anthropology

2012 – 2012

Internship (3 months), Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Lebanon

2011 – 2012

Internship (5 months), SOS Children’s Villages International

Programme development, Regional Office CEE/CIS

2009 – 2009

Internship (6 weeks), Institute for Peace Support and Conflict Management,

Austrian National Defence Academy

2008 – 2009

Administrative Assistant (replacement for three months on several occasions)

Austrian League for Human Rights (NGO)

PUBLICATIONS

Journal articles

Slocker, L., Idoiaga-Mondragon, N., Axpe, I., Willi, R., Guerra-Rodríguez, M., Montserrat, C., and F. del Valle, J., 2023, Systematic Review of the Evaluation of Foster Care Programs. *Psychosocial Intervention*, Ahead of print, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5093/pi2023a14>

Willi, R., Reed, D., Houedenou, G. 2020, ‘An Evaluation Methodology for Measuring the Long-Term Impact of Family Strengthening and Alternative Child Care Services: The Case of SOS Children’s Villages’, *International Journal of Child, Youth & Family Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 4.1, pp. 7-28, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18357/ijcyfs114202019936>

Book chapters

Willi, R. 2023, “*Who defines wellbeing? And for whom?*” *Exploring child wellbeing understandings*, in: A collection of forewords by Robert Chambers. *Forthcoming*. Institute of Development Studies.

Willi, R., Preckel, K., 2012, ‘The Role of Civil Society in the Universal Periodic Review: Human Dignity, in your hands?’ in: Nowak, Manfred, *European Yearbook for Human Rights*.

Reports

Willi, R. 2023. What does it mean for a child to be doing well? Exploring child wellbeing understandings in the context of social work services targeting refugee communities in Armenia, In: Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth Annual Report 2022/2023, University of Sussex, pg. 20-21. <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=circy-annual-report-2022-23.pdf&site=387>

Gale, C., Willi, R., Purcell, M., Oberzaucher, N. 2023, Strengthening families. Preventing the unnecessary separation of children from their families in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. SOS Children’s Villages International. https://www.sos-childrensvillages.org/getmedia/f3f423bb-4285-4682-b0bd-a31fb7c4d90b/Strengthening_families-External-publication-2023.pdf

SOS Children’s Villages 2020, Children’s consultation with children receiving family strengthening services and in alternative care, https://www.sos-childrensvillages.org/getmedia/472cb70e-fd21-4cc8-b318-605958ffdf99/Consultation-with-children_FINAL.pdf

Willi, R., Reed, D., Houedenou, G., 2019, 70 years of impact: Improving the lives of children without adequate parental care’, SOS Children’s Villages International https://www.sos-childrensvillages.org/getmedia/6bc4dad4-d496-4761-aa0f-e1fa572e428f/SOS_70_years_of_impact_report_SPREADS-WEB.pdf

Willi, R., Reed, D., Houedenou, G., 2017, Social Impact Assessment at SOS Children’s Villages International: Approach and Methodology, SOS Children’s Villages International https://www.sos-childrensvillages.org/getmedia/f9e99f56-041f-4074-87a1-423365d7438a/SOS-Children-s-Villages-Social-Impact_Methodology_2017.pdf

Willi, R., Reed, D., Houedenou, G., 2017, Impact insights: results of social impact assessments across seven programme locations, SOS Children's Villages International https://www.sos-childrensvillages.org/getmedia/63337584-9c9d-40fd-9282-c8c6e472aad9/SOS-Children-s-Villages-Social_Impact_Insights_2017.pdf

Recent conference contributions

- September 2023** **EUSARF, European Scientific Association on Residential and Family Care for Children and Adolescents, Brighton, UK**
"Exploring child wellbeing in contexts of mobility and child welfare interventions among Syrian-Armenian ,returnees' in Armenia"
- June 2023** **Development Studies Association (DSA) conference, Reading, UK**
"Exploring the wellbeing strategies of Syrian-Armenian children and their families in the context of mobility, displacement, war, and a pandemic"
- May 2023** **Expert group on family wellbeing and population ageing (UN DESA & IFFD), Torunn, Poland**
["Strengthening care across generations: mitigating risks of family separation through recognition"](#)
- November 2022** **American Anthropological Association, Seattle, USA**
Speaker on panel: *"Evaluating Interventions in Child Welfare & Families Across Contexts"*, with four other scholars (Brown University, University of Wisconsin, University of Illinois, University of California)
- September 2022** **Vienna Anthropology Days Association Conference, Vienna, Austria**
"Using a wellbeing lens to study children's mobilities: methodological and ethical challenges"
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CERTIFICATIONS AND TRAININGS

- January 2018** **Results-Based Management training and certification**
SOS Children's Villages International
- September 2016** **European Programme for Development Evaluation Training**
IDEAS, Prague, Czech Republic
- August 2015** **Participatory Leadership and Facilitation Training & Art of Hosting**
European Forum Alpbach
- June 2015** **Communities of Practice Training**
SOS Children's Villages International
- March 2014** **Project Management training**
SOS Children's Villages International
- April 2013** **Understanding Children's Human Rights**
London School of Economics
- March 2011** **Specialisation Course on Electoral Observation and Assistance and International Civilian Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding Training**
Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution