

## SOS Children's Villages in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Public Foundation "SOS Children's Villages Kyrgyzstan" is a nongovernmental charitable organization providing services for children without parental care and children at risk of losing parental care. The public foundation was founded by International Foundation "SOS Kinderdorf International" in 1996, which supports children in 136 countries over the world nowadays.

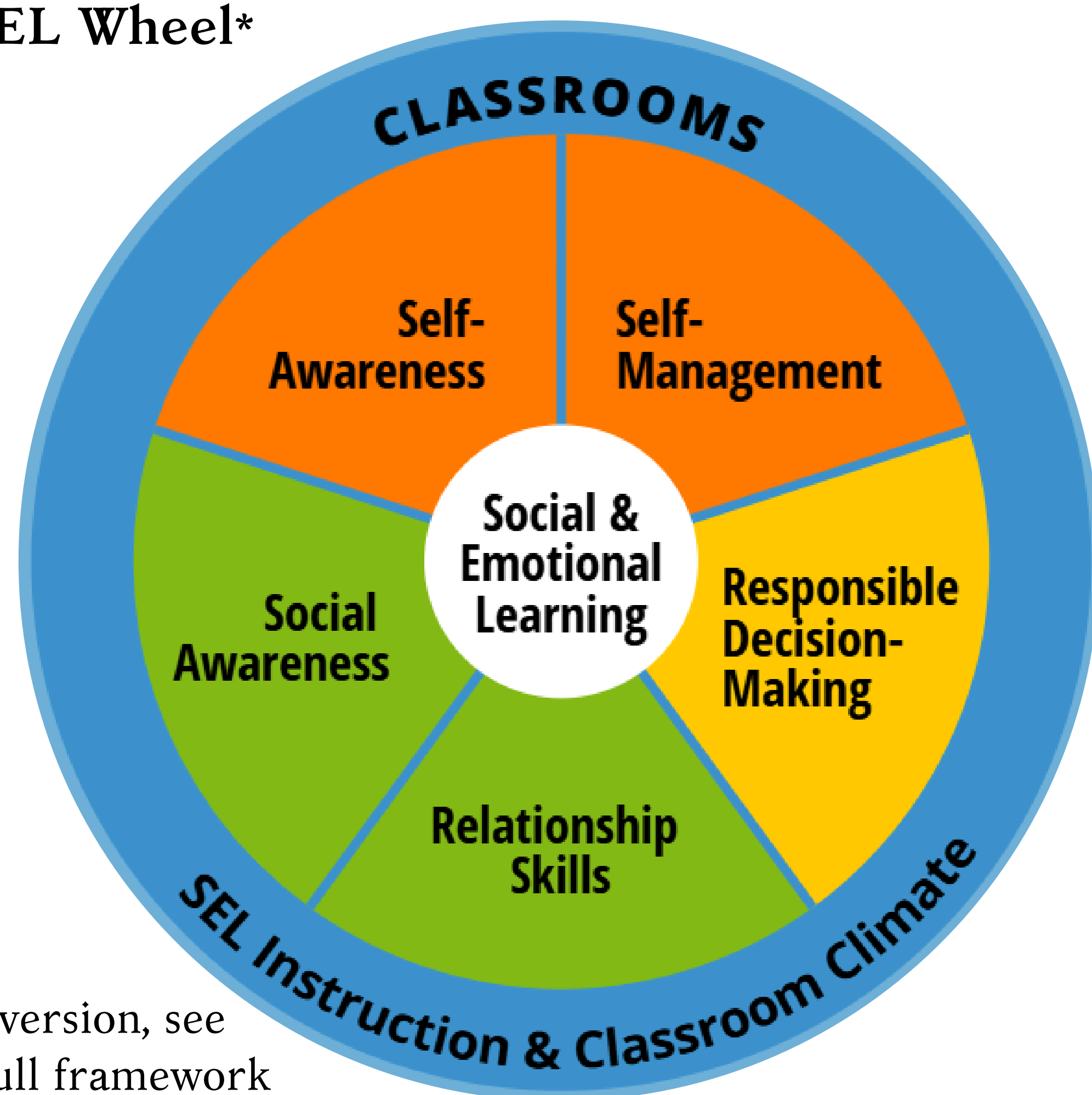
SOS families live together, forming a supportive village environment where children enjoy a happy childhood. The families share experiences and offer one another a helping hand. They also live as integrated and contributing members of the local community. Through one's family, village and community, each child learns actively participate in society.

## Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

**Social and emotional learning (SEL)** is an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) recognizes five interrelated areas of competence as the building blocks of SEL: **self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making.**

The CASEL Wheel\*



\*condensed version, see [casel.org](https://casel.org) for full framework

## SEL Program

### Project Timeline:

Initiation — Development — Execution — Conclusion

**Initiation:** December 2025 - I reached out to SOS Kyrgyzstan and proposed the SEL program idea. I met with the organization's psychologist at her office in Bishkek, and we came up with a tentative development timeline.

**Development:** May - June - During this stage, I reviewed relevant literature, including peer-reviewed articles on child development, library collections, and popular media from educational and developmental NGOs and independent authors, to brainstorm and identify relevant sources and materials for the program.

### Program goals:

- Create and support a comfortable environment for children's learning and development;
- Introduce students to key SEL skills and areas of competence proposed by CASEL in an engaging, age-appropriate way;
- Design and lead 18 interactive SEL lessons using picture books, animated cartoons, collaborative and individual activities, and group discussions.

**Execution:** June 21 - August 17. I worked with two groups of students - a children's group with 4 boys aged 7-10 and a teenagers' group with 3 girls aged 11-14. The program lasted 6 weeks, with two weeks of a break due to children's traveling. Throughout the 6 weeks, we met three times a week for 1-1,5 hours with each group. During the early lessons, the organization's psychologist was present to assist with children's engagement and comfort. A detailed observational report was filed by me as the instructor following every lesson.

**Conclusion:** August 21 - the final report was presented to the supervisor.

### Activity examples



## Program Content

The first and final lessons included the **Social Emotional Response and Information Scenarios** interview to assess for baseline social-emotional attitudes and potential changes after the program.

### Lesson topics:

1. Introduction, five senses, and first SERAIS interview
2. Emotions - why do we need them?
3. "Inside Out" (younger group) and "Inside Out 2" (older group)
4. "I am bigger than my emotions" - emotion regulation part 1
5. "Here and now" - emotion regulation part 2
6. The importance of teamwork
7. Friendship part 1 - What makes someone a good friend?
8. Friendship part 2 - Understanding each other
9. How to ask for help and support others through challenges
10. Personal space
11. How to respect and protect personal boundaries
12. Conflict resolution - how to find compromise with friends
13. Personal identity - What makes you you
14. Self-love part 1 - How do we show love to ourselves?
15. Self-love part 2 - Self-esteem
16. The purpose of life - What gives your life meaning?
17. "Soul" (older group) and "Iron Giant" (younger group)
18. Conclusion, reflection, and second SERAIS interview

## Main takeaways

- Positive impact takes time and commitment and is not always noticeable right away. It may not immediately seem like the children are learning and retaining information, yet it is often in the small interactions, like conversations between group members or writing activities, that learning may be seen.
- Every child and adolescent needs an individual approach that is informed by their age, developmental background, social environment, and personal history.
- It's important to understand that one lesson, or even 18 of them, may not make someone drastically change their lifestyle and behaviors, yet recognize that a relationship built and nurtured by offering consistent support and presence to someone can make a difference in their life on its own. Sometimes it's the feeling of being cared for that matters.

## References

SOS Children's Villages Kyrgyzstan. *About Us*. <https://sos-kyrgyzstan.org/en/about/fond>  
The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. *What is SEL?* <https://casel.org/what-is-sel/>  
Kim, H. Y., & Tubbs Dolan, C. (2019). Social emotional response and information scenarios: Evidence on construct validity, measurement invariance, and reliability in use with Syrian refugee children in Lebanon. Technical working paper. New York, NY: NYU Global TIES for Children. DOI: [10.13140/RG.2.2.23945.60007](https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.23945.60007)