

TAKING A STAND

**Ensuring that gender equality
benefits all women,
including those most
marginalized**



For 40 years, Groupe SOS hosts, accommodates and supports thousands of vulnerable women in its social and medico-social facilities.

Groupe SOS makes 10 recommendations, so that gender equality can benefit all women.



Manifesto

Gender equality

Our 10 recommendations

Social support and accommodation meeting the specific needs of **women in vulnerable situations**

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Introduction

For 40 years, Groupe SOS has welcomed, accommodated and accompanied thousands of **vulnerable women** within its social and medico-social facilities, ranging from care centers for drug addicts to emergency accommodation shelters for homeless and migrant women. **This engagement makes us one of France's main players in this field.**

These women, whose career paths are often characterized by precariousness, are also confronted with a **multitude of additional inequalities: exposure to violence, difficulty in accessing care, obstacles to social and professional integration...**

As a major player for social cohesion, Groupe SOS is firmly committed against the exclusion of the most vulnerable in our society.

We consider it unacceptable that exclusion is reinforced due to gender.

Through all our mechanisms, and through our various cross-sector programs, we fight against these inequalities, pursuant to the same objective: supporting all these women so that they regain their agency.

By relying on our expertise and our transversality, we are building global responses geared towards all women. This commitment led us, in 2020, to include **gender equality among Groupe SOS' priorities, both for the beneficiaries we welcome into our structures, as well as for our employees.**

Proud of the progress and aware of the road ahead, Groupe SOS will keep up its efforts and **take the position for gender equality to truly benefit everyone, including the most excluded women, by formulating our 10 recommendations.**

Our non-profits and social enterprises running projects to promote gender equality and women's rights

GroupesSOS
Solidarités

GroupesSOS
Jeunesse

GroupesSOS
Santé

CREscEndo
GroupesSOS

YSS
l'Homme en mouvement
GroupesSOS

check
point
PARIS
GroupesSOS

Mezi
MAORE
GroupesSOS

FERMES
D'AVENIR
GroupesSOS

Wpulse
GroupesSOS

GERMINAL
GroupesSOS

SANTÉSUD
GroupesSOS

CREATIS
GroupesSOS

PLANETE
URGENCE
GroupesSOS

PPI
GroupesSOS

PLAY
INTERNATIONAL
GroupesSOS

J
Joséphine
GroupesSOS

atelier
fara frontiere
GroupesSOS

CONSULTING
GroupesSOS

IMPACT
TANK

and'es
LES EPICERIES SOLIDAIRES
GroupesSOS

SANTÉ
PLURI
ELLES
GroupesSOS

Le VAN 64
PLURI
ELLES
GroupesSOS

Meeting the specific needs of vulnerable women

With

4,9 MILLION *

women living below the poverty line, compared to 4.3 million men, women are the most affected by precarious situations in France. The vulnerability of these women is often accompanied by overexposure to situations of gender inequality - fully taken into account in the solutions we put forth, in providing spaces for these women to find security, time and resources to recover.





Recommendation 1

For social support and accommodation adapted to the specific needs of women in vulnerable situations

Poverty is getting worse, and increasingly affecting women. This is illustrated by the growing number of homeless women: in 2012, according to INSEE, they accounted for just 2% of homeless people in the Paris metropolitan area; during the « Nuit de la Solidarité » (Solidarity Night) in 2020, this figure rose to 12%, according to the Samu social de Paris. At Groupe SOS we offer accommodation, housing and support solutions adapted to the most vulnerable women.

Let us help vulnerable women recover, through unconditional care and targeted social support, specifically designed to meet their needs.





Adjusting our mixed-gender facilities, and creating dedicated spaces.

Lacking security and privacy, women steer clear from a number of shelters. The outcome is unequal access to the most basic care solutions. To counter this issue, we integrate designated spaces and times for women into the operations of our mixed-gender facilities. We are vigilant about the way living spaces are organized and configured, to ensure that women feel safe there.

In our reception centers for asylum seekers (CADA), we organize women's cafés, spaces of kindness, where expression is open and teams are present to give advice. Having noted, moreover, that women struggled to feel like they belonged in addiction treatment centers, we established reception times dedicated exclusively to them.



Promoting their self-esteem and well-being

Behind every spell of homelessness, every precarious situation, we find women whose self-confidence has been harmed, sometimes totally destroyed. To regain the strength and energy to launch personal and professional projects, they must first reconnect with their self-esteem. This is what the Joséphine association provides, thanks to an innovative and unique approach around beauty care, provided in its Paris salon. Women, once again regarded in high regard, change the way they perceive themselves, and regain their power to act.



Recommendation 2

Accompany single mothers towards social inclusion

According to Secours Catholique, in 2023 in France, 83% of single-parent families were made up of single women with children. Furthermore, one million single mothers live below the poverty line². The overlap between single parenthood and insecurity should not be a foregone conclusion. If Groupe SOS' actions primarily address women, regardless of situation and background, they also fully address the issues encountered by those who are mothers.

**Let's give everyone the desire
to move ahead to find their
place in society, and provide
the means to do so while
being a mother.**





Accompanying single mothers in dedicated facilities

When the responsibility of being a mother is added on to an already fragile life path, socio-professional integration can become impossible to fulfill alone. In our accommodation centers, we include spots for single mothers and their children, adapting our social support to offer them comprehensive educational support.

In our spaces welcoming women leaving maternity wards, childcare assistants complement the educational team, to support the new mothers and provide the required care for the infant.



Accompanying single mothers in dedicated facilities

For some women, the birth of a child occurs in particularly complex situations: violence, traumatic circumstances, addiction, early motherhood, etc. Which requires accommodation and support solutions catering exclusively to them. This is what our maternal center La Voie Lactée offers, thanks to a multidisciplinary team that supports them, from the 7th month of pregnancy until the child is 3 years old.

In Essonne, our shelter le Trait d'Union, for its part, accommodates underage mothers. In this living space, these young women find all the support necessary for parenthood, regardless of the difficulties encountered prior. In Nîmes, Groupe SOS accommodates mothers experiencing addiction in therapeutic apartments and helps them fight withdrawal, while preparing for reintegration, all while accounting for the mother-child relationship.

A global struggle against violence towards women

Groupe SOS has been committed to supporting women victims of violence

FOR OVER 20 YEARS

when it opened its first accommodation center, to accommodate couples sent by the Samu Social.

Since then, we have increased our actions so that each woman victim of violence in our network finds a solution for accommodation, shelter and dignified support. To combat violence at all levels, we advocate for a comprehensive approach that also integrates the care of co-victims and the training of our professionals on these issues. In order to avoid recurrence of violence, we also direct part of our actions towards the perpetrators.





Recommendation 3

Provide respite to victims of domestic violence

According to the Nous Toutes collective, 147 women died because of their gender in 2023. In addition, nearly 220,000 women report being victims of violence every year, not counting those who, to this day, are afraid to speak out. Figures continue to increase.

This unbearable observation drives us to prioritize the care for women victims of violence, by providing suitable accommodation solutions and supporting them towards their recovery.

Let us shelter all women who are victims of violence, alone or with their children.





Welcoming them to our emergency accommodation centers

A violent situation generally requires an urgent departure from home, to find respite elsewhere. In our Emergency Accommodation Centers (CHU) and in our Accommodation and Social Reintegration Centers (CHRS), we hold places for women victims of violence, whether they are alone or with their children.

In Marseille, we dedicate around a hundred spots to them within our Familles Parenthèses CHU. In Bordeaux, the CHU Domercq offers an immediate shelter solution for women forced to leave their homes without an accommodation solution. Considering that, in addition to security, it is essential for them to find appropriate support, we appoint “Violence against women and intra-family” points of contact in all of our social and medico-social facilities.



Creating dedicated spaces for comprehensive support.

Violence has dramatic consequences both physically and psychologically. To help women and their children cope, we manage various sites conceived as ‘resource-spaces’, to ensure appropriate treatment and support.

In our Mont-Saint-Martin hospital (Meurthe-et-Moselle), a team has been mobilizing since spring 2024, to provide comprehensive medical, psychological, social and legal care for victims of domestic and sexual violence, in coordination with its partners. In Orne, the Ysos association organizes daily service to victims of domestic violence.

Focal Point

Since 2015, the Reconnect association has been developing digital solutions to ensure access to rights and dignified life for vulnerable groups. Among them, the creation of digital safes, allowing women victims of violence to protect their legal documents, so they can quickly leave their home, with the certainty of accessing all their documents from any location.





Recommendation 4

Train social professionals on the issue of domestic violence.

Violence can take many forms, whether physical, sexual, moral, financial, psychological, verbal... With victims often confined by their attackers in a code of silence preventing them from asking for help. To break it, social and medico-social action professionals must be equipped.

**Let us support our teams
to better identify and
strengthen social support
for victims and co-victims
of violence.**





Training on the issue of identification

There are three times better chances of detecting a violent situation if the professional addresses the victim directly. Questions that should only arise in proper times and circumstances.

This is why, at Groupe SOS, we have started a process of training our teams on the issues of violence within couples and within families, in all of our facilities. Furthermore, 20 employees of Groupe SOS Solidarités completed the University Diploma on “Violence against Women” at Paris 8 University in 2023-2024.



Integrating care for victims of domestic violence to our support system

Around 400,000 children live in homes where violence exists. In the absence of correct care, they develop serious and lasting psychotraumatic conditions, affecting their physical and mental health in the long term. By combining the expertise of our Youth sector and our Solidarity sector, we have integrated support for child victims into the training of professionals in these two fields of activity.



Focal Point

Avoid repeat offenses by supporting the perpetrators of violence.

Facing the explosion of domestic violence situations during the confinements linked to the Covid 19 crisis, Groupe SOS is committed to a logic of prevention, through the action of treatment centers for perpetrators of domestic violence (CPCA), intended for perpetrators sentenced to small or suspended sentences. These centers promote the prevention of the act and avoid repeat offenses. By distancing perpetrators, they also allow victims to continue to live in their home if they wish, so as not to find themselves without housing.

Access to healthcare for all women

In France,

64%

of people who postpone or forgo care are women, according to the High Council for Equality between Women and Men.

Worldwide,

287 000

women died in 2020 during childbirth, according to a report published in 2023. The worsening of the state of health combines with worsening states of vulnerability. These spirals, of which women are the primary victims, must be broken.

Whether in France or internationally, Groupe SOS fights to promote access to care for all women.





Recommendation 5

Improving access to healthcare for women in vulnerable situations

For women, economic precariousness is often compounded by physical and psychological trauma linked to experiences of violence and a poor state of health. We develop responses integrating those dimensions, so that their support is as comprehensive as possible.

**Let us promote access
to care for women in
precarious situations,**





To give them the means to be fully involved in their health journey

At the origin of the **Santé Plurielle** network, one observation: social referents working daily with women in precarious situations lack the tools and resources to support them towards recovery. By relying on the richness of a cross-sector dynamic, Santé Plurielle has launched a network capable of responding to the specific needs of women, systematically taking into account the violence for which they have suffered. Since its creation in 2016, 115 accommodation centers have benefited from the program through awareness raising and trainings, targeted at professionals and sheltered women, in terms of mental, social, physical, sexual and reproductive health.



Fighting menstrual insecurity

It affects up to 1 in 3 women in France and yet remains misunderstood and therefore poorly supported. By collaborating with **Règles Elementaires**, the first French association to fight against menstrual insecurity, we provide the young women in the Groupe SOS youth centers awareness workshops, which aim to break the taboos around periods and give them all the necessary information on the subject. For its part, the **IMPACT TANK**, the first think tank dedicated to the positive impact economy in France, has combined academic expertise and field experience. Through the creation of a working group and the production of a report with concrete recommendations, the **IMPACT TANK** has presented key success factors, results and levers for scaling up promising solutions to fight against menstrual poverty. With a well-defined objective in mind: make society more inclusive for those who menstruate.



Thanks to specialized treatment for endometriosis

According to the Ministry of Solidarity and Health, endometriosis affects **1.5 million** people in France; 14 million people in Europe according to the WHO. However, the diagnostic delay for the disease is 7 years on average. At the Creusot Hospital (Saône-et-Loire), our endometriosis treatment center offers women a comprehensive solution: early diagnosis via a questionnaire and extensive clinical examinations, medical therapeutic management (primary care), non-drug treatment (psychologist, sexologist, physiotherapist, osteopathy, sophrology) and, if necessary, surgical treatment. A framework in which all the professionals who are experts on the subject in the region collaborate to provide women complete and adapted responses.



Recommendation 6

Strengthen the skills of professionals to improve access to care.

The WHO has recognized gender as a factor towards health inequalities, both on its own and in association (the phenomenon of intersectionality) with socio-economic conditions, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, etc. This is why better care involves fully integrating gender equality into the medical care of vulnerable women. At Groupe SOS, this has led us in particular to initiate training actions aimed at professionals, in France and internationally.

Let's make sure gender equality is a cornerstone of medical care for all women.





Strengthening international health skills

In some countries, simply being a woman increases health risks, with limited access to basic care, particularly sexual, reproductive and maternal and child health services. In such a context, the role of health professionals is crucial and strengthening their skills is essential. The Santé Sud association is working on this, through ten programs deployed in Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, Mali and Burkina Faso. Everywhere, its teams pursue the same goals: integrate their actions into the country's ecosystem, assess needs to build responses capable of helping all local communities and actors, and remove the obstacles that persist in terms of access to care. In Mauritania, for example, Santé Sud has launched several programs to strengthen the skills of midwives in order to improve the care of mothers and their children.



Training health professionals in gender equality

Socio-cultural inequalities hinder women's access to care and expose them to increased risks of experiencing gender-based violence. In Burkina Faso, for example, 56% of women have suffered at least one act of violence during their lives. In Tunisia, they are 48%. Thanks to the SentinELLES program, Santé Sud works to promote health, sexual and reproductive rights and gender equality in Tunisia, Morocco and Burkina Faso. Through training activities for health professionals and civil society actors, the association fights to strengthen access to care, care for victims of gender-based violence and effectiveness of the sexual and reproductive rights of populations.



Helping trans people to not forego care

In France, trans people face significant obstacles to access care: economic and administrative barriers, lack of training for caregivers, discrimination in the health system, etc. The High Authority for Health recalled in 2020 that “Surveys show that one third of trans people forego care “because of prejudice from healthcare staff”, and that 75% have already been uncomfortable with a doctor for a reason linked to their trans identity.” In light of this situation, our **Checkpoint-Paris** space has developed a healthcare service specialized in the care of trans people, particularly transfeminine people, with support from a health mediator and professionals trained in their needs: transition care offering, access to rights, navigation and follow-up in sexual health....

A culture of gender equality throughout one's lifetime

70%

of women believe they have not received the same treatment as their brothers in family life and almost half of 25-34-year olds believe this was also the case at school. Two alarming findings, revealed by the High Council for Equality between Women and Men, in its 6th report on the state of sexism in France. By inducing differences in treatment from a very young age, gender puts people in very specific and generally unequal social roles. This is why Groupe SOS acts at all stages of life, with its teams, beneficiaries, partners and the public, to deconstruct gender stereotypes.





Recommendation 7

Overcome gender injunctions from childhood.

At four years old, 70% of children are convinced that the masculine dominates the feminine. Despite younger generations becoming more aware of gender inequalities, many of them still reproduce these stereotypes. Society as a whole conveys very gendered patterns (clothing, gender-assigned traits, toys, cartoons, films, etc.), even unconsciously, into the way children are educated. To deconstruct them, our actions should target children and young people, as well as the adults around them.

Let us innovate to include gender equality in the education of children and young.





Fighting against inequalities from the first years of life

According to an IGAS study, the construction of gender stereotypes occurs before the age of four. Considering that we can teach about equality, we have developed the Epicènes program to train early childhood professionals in the identification of gender stereotypes. Supported by Crescendo, our network of solidarity daycares, this program is based on a true pedagogy of equality benefitting both our daycares welcoming children and several centers accommodating families in difficulty. Better equipped, parents and professionals integrate into their education an egalitarian vision of children's skills: by teaching them to evolve according to their desires and not according to their gender.



Working with children and young people to deconstruct gender stereotypes

In its 2022 report, the High Council for Equality between Women and Men draws on the example of playgrounds, most often occupied at 80% by sports facilities, ultimately used by older, athletic boys. To address such stereotypes, we must provide children and young people with the means to develop their critical and independent thinking. This is what our association Play International does through programs dedicated to gender equality in France and worldwide. Play, by creating a space for dialogue without judgment, is a wonderful lever for getting children to think and change their outlook on gender differences.



Recommendation 8

Gender equality, everywhere, for all.

One in three women live in rural areas - 11 million French women, and 47% of feminicides take place there. In 2021, a Senate report entitled "Women and rural areas: putting an end to the white zones of equality" pointed out the "double punishment" for these women. Victims of violence, they resort less to emergency help and outreach systems due to lack of awareness, or difficulty in accessing information and resources.

Let us inform and raise awareness among all civil society actors on the issues of gender equality.



Encouraging forward-looking approaches

This is what the Ysos association is doing with Le Van Plurielles, which goes out to meet residents of rural areas of the Orne (Normandy), to raise awareness of issues on gender equality, affective life and relationships, menstrual insecurity, professional integration, access to health and the fight against violence towards women.

The mobile system offers a space for listening, information and guidance towards support structures located nearby. Each resident can freely consult the professionals working there to discuss all questions – health, prevention, rights, and violent situations – with them. Le Van Plurielles, crisscrossing the territory since 2022, has already been able to raise awareness and guide 1,365 residents from 40 municipalities.



Increasing large-scale awareness campaigns

Each year, we commit to a theme by relying on our distribution channels and mobilizing our partners to reach as many people as possible. Our objective: to inform civil society as a whole about the most alarming findings and the major issues in the fight for gender equality.

Real economic and social equality for women

GENDER EQUALITY

remains very fragile in the labor market. However, employment plays a key role in the fight against precariousness, particularly for the most vulnerable women. Groupe SOS helps them re-mobilize, renew their self-confidence and find the resources to move towards stable employment, or to launch an entrepreneurial project.





Recommendation 9

Strengthening socio-professional integration of the most vulnerable women.

An essential issue of social justice, the socio-economic integration of women is subject to inequalities still too strong, even more pronounced for women in precarious situations. It is therefore essential for us to help them recover before starting the process of professional reintegration.

Let us make gender equality concrete and real within the economic and professional spheres .



Deploying adapted programs for the integration and empowerment of women

Through our Estim'emploi program, the Joséphine association has supported, since 2021, 186 women residents from underprivileged neighborhoods in the city of Paris, through a path of social and professional integration, thanks to an innovative approach using socio-aesthetics and well-being as a lever for remobilization towards a professional project. To fight against global precariousness, particularly when affecting women, we rely on programs promoting socio-economic inclusion in a sustainable manner.

This is the case of PPI – People Power Inclusion, which supported in 2022 2,300 women suffering from a lack of economic independence and network to develop their activity. We design our programs on a logic of socio-economic inclusion integrating dimensions of education, entrepreneurship, and financial autonomy, supporting women excluded from traditional circuits of education and employment.

By developing integration programs in medico-social, social and health professions

In 2022, only 34% of the budget for integration through economic activity (IAE) benefited women. This figure, which is grossly insufficient, can be explained by the preponderance of integration structures positioned in professions historically perceived as “masculine”. However, healthcare and social professions, which also suffer from a gendered image, in this case feminine, allow for lasting professional integration. This is why, in line with our professions, we have developed integration programs in these sectors. Even if failing to achieve gender diversity objectives (employing 90% women), these programs actually make it possible to balance Groupe SOS' share of women benefiting from pathways to skilled integration, with the possibility of professional development.



Focal Point

In France, nearly 7 million people experience mobility impairment, and 28% of people undergoing professional integration give up their job or training for mobility reasons. These difficulties particularly affect women living in rural areas, especially when their economic situation does not allow them to obtain their driving license or buy a vehicle.

For 25 years, the Wimoov association has defended a vision of inclusive mobility, accessible to all and adapted to people in fragile situations for cognitive, material or financial reasons. All women in vulnerable situations can contact one of Wimoov's mobility platforms to find essential solutions for traveling and accessing employment.



Recommendation 10

Support women's access to entrepreneurship.

If 49% of women entrepreneurs consider creating a business as a path to independence, many obstacles persist and prevent them from getting started. These obstacles can come from themselves, from socio-economic difficulties or from an inadequacy of the support offered to them in light of their constraints.

As such, gender inequality is reflected in entrepreneurship, leading far too many women to abandon their project.

Let's transform entrepreneurship so that it is inclusive and accessible to all women.



*Data from the Barometer of women entrepreneurship (based on 625,745 companies registered with the Trade and Companies register) - May 2023.



Offering support solutions dedicated to women

Through PULSE, an association that supports impact entrepreneurship in France, Europe and internationally, Groupe SOS is involved in actions specifically aimed at women, such as #EllesEnsemble, a free program intended for female entrepreneurs in Seine-Saint-Denis and Marseille. Or Girls in Business, a program that inspires girls to become innovative women who will lead and change the world in South Africa. Taking fully into account the 66% of women who make up the ranks of the entrepreneurs it supports, PULSE integrates all gender-related issues into all of its programs, from the selection of applicants to the support for the female entrepreneurs in the program.

Focal Point

Avec le projet “Fostering Women Social Entrepreneurship in Europe” (FoWoSE), financé par le programme Erasmus+ de l’Union européenne, PULSE a développé des outils en partenariat avec des acteurs au niveau européen (dont Empow’Her) permettant d’encourager l’intégration du genre au niveau opérationnel et au niveau des programmes pour les structures de soutien de l’écosystème entrepreneurial.



Fighting under- representation of women in management roles at companies in the cultural and creative sectors

Through its Source program, our incubator **Creatis** inspires women's callings, diversifies content creation, facilitates meetings that can be critically beneficial, and generates confidence... And removes the barriers that stand in front of women, preventing them from growing and leading projects with a **strong social impact**.

Focal Point

According to the most recent data, while 71% of employees in the nonprofit sector are women, they nevertheless represent only 35% of the sectors' presidents. At Groupe SOS, gender equality is an integral part of our governance with parity on our management board and 5 of existing 10 directors chaired by women.

**The progress
made is evident,
and everywhere.
Our commitments
remain solid.**

**The determination
of those in the field
to see practices
evolve is firm.**

However, the challenges of making gender equality a reality for all women remain high.

Collectively, let us act on all levels. Let us multiply all initiatives aimed at improving gender equality, let us encourage partnerships to develop appropriate solutions, regardless of the women's backgrounds, let us encourage the emergence of transversal approaches to innovate where the answers do not yet exist. Let us advocate for egalitarian educational approaches, let us ensure that every woman, and in particular the most vulnerable among them, can be protected, cared for, assert their rights, use the necessary assistance, get a job and a roof over their heads. Let us commit to ensuring a life of dignity, equality, shelter and security. Let us give everyone the means to regain their power to have agency over their lives.



Let us never give up on the challenges that need to be overcome.

**Essential struggles for all women.
Essential struggles for society as a whole.**

Let's join forces to work on the field, combat, innovate on this issues.

Contact

102C rue Amelot
75011 Paris
01 58 30 55 55
info@groupe-sos.org
groupe-sos.org





 groupesos
 groupe-sos
 groupesos
 groupe_sos
 groupe_sos

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Written by Morgane Dereeper, the Groupe SOS Gender Equality Group and the Communications Department of Groupe SOS.

Le Groupe SOS

Groupe SOS, founded in 1984 during the AIDS crisis, is a **major non-profit force of social cohesion, both in France and worldwide.**

Groupe SOS is mainly active in the fields of solidarity, youth, health and senior citizens, managing facilities for marginalised people, as well as day-care centres, hospitals and nursing homes open to all, **guided by the belief that these sectors should not be profit-driven.**

Groupe SOS is aware that exclusion takes many forms and is therefore also active in the areas of ecological transition, regional exclusion, sustainable businesses and culture for all. Groupe SOS is also a leader in integration through employment. It offers people in difficult situations the opportunity to enter employment or training within its entities.

With its 22,000 strong workforce and field expertise, Groupe SOS regularly **takes a stand on social and environmental issues.** At present, it has no match among non-profit organisations **in terms of size, scope, and range of operations.**

750 facilities and services, associations, and social businesses, 22,000 employees, 2 million beneficiaries, 50 countries.



PROFESSIONAL ACTIVISTS