

# BUILDING SUSTAINABILITY



*In Kenya, young participants in ChildFund's Regreening Africa project share their artwork depicting the environmental damage they see in their communities.*

CAPACITY STATEMENT



**ChildFund International, USA**  
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# ABOUT US

ChildFund is a child-focused global nonprofit that works to connect children in vulnerable communities with the people, resources and institutions they need to grow up healthy, educated, skilled

**“It's important for young people to take the lead in protecting the environment because they are the ones who will inherit the planet and face the long-term consequences of environmental degradation.”**

– ChildFund Philippines eco-scout program participant, age 18

## OUR COMMITMENT

Founded in 1938, ChildFund works in marginalized communities facing multiple crises, including the triple planetary crisis, across 23 countries in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Our approach to sustainability is twofold, focusing on adaptation and environmental care, and infusing both throughout not only our programs but across all our operations.

This approach supports our vision of a world where children are healthy, educated, skilled, and safe. Recognizing the triple planetary crisis as a major risk, we aim to make our programs sustainable and resilient to environmental shocks and stressors and advocate for positive adaptation at all levels so families can not only recover from disruptions to their livelihoods, education, and health, but also lead sustainable transitions from practices that harm nature to create a clean, safer and more sustainable world – for and with children and youth.

**24.3 Million**

children and family members were reached by our programs in 2024

**100%**

of partners engaged in co-creation

**Over 70%**

of our operating countries rank high for children's exposure to environmental hazards

<https://www.childfund.org/our-work/sustainability/>



# OUR APPROACH



*Drawing from a 13-yr-old boy in Kenya on how extreme weather is impacting his community.*

## Child- and Youth-Centered

ChildFund prioritizes children's rights, particularly in relation to the right to a clean and sustainable environment (CRC/GC/26). Children and youth help lead environmental efforts through established youth advisory boards and networks, community and school-based initiatives, and participation at national and international forums. We work to improve access to environmental knowledge and solutions within our existing community and school-based programs. We aim to help prepare a generation that is equipped to handle the triple planetary crisis and participate in creating solutions. Our action focuses on protecting children and ensuring **their** access to clean air, fresh water, and healthy environments, enabling them to attend school, play and thrive.

## Local Leadership

ChildFund has been actively partnering with local organizations since the 1980s to improve children's lives, and currently works with **nearly 200** grassroots organizations. These local partners lead over 80% of ChildFund programming because they are best positioned to effect local change. Our decentralized operating model ensures that funding and programming decisions are made locally. Over 80% of our staff members are based in country or regional offices, meaning they collaborate with partners in the communities where they live and work. ChildFund and local partners work together to integrate local knowledge, strengthen capacity, advocate for local priorities, and build systemic sustainable solutions that address the local child-specific risks and needs.

## Strategic Partnership for Systems Transformation

ChildFund is well-positioned to bring the perspectives of children and youth to sustainable action. We seek to expand partnerships with environment-focused organizations working in adaptation, just transitions, tech, and regenerative ecosystems approaches. By leveraging the local knowledge, enthusiasm, creativity, and dedication of children and youth, we can mobilize systematic change to achieve global goals. Together, we can ensure both children and the planet thrive.

## Doing Our Part

ChildFund is actively implementing sustainable solutions, doing our part for future generations. For example, in our Sierra Leone and Brazil offices, we have adopted solar power, ensuring clean energy operations. In the Philippines, we have a zero-waste kitchen and have participated in the Global Coastal Cleanup for almost a decade. Additionally, in Sri Lanka and Indonesia, our offices have started transitioning to using hybrid vehicles.

# Building Sustainability in Practice

## AFRICA REGION



*Philipa Cride-Dole and peers living in Koinadugu District participating in child-led World Environment Day tree planting campaign to support the #GenerationRestoration movement.*

Across the region in Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Mozambique, Zambia, The Gambia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Senegal, participants in ChildFund Africa programs experience extensive environmental challenges. With over 65 years of experience in this region, we aim to enhance programming on child and youth-centered initiatives, from core programs such as health, education, protection and livelihoods to advocacy – to ensure that young people can not only positively cope with the current environmental challenges but be part of just transitions in society.

ChildFund supported over 200 children and youth to amplify their voices on environmental challenges at the **2023 Africa Climate Summit and led the first ChildFund delegation to COP at COP28 in Dubai as well as 04 COP29 in Baku**. Each August, ChildFund collaborates with local partners to mobilize over 7,000 youth for the Youth Day of Service, a weeklong Pan-African, youth-led campaign focused on environmental action.

**In Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, and Sierra Leone**, ChildFund is integrating sustainable solutions into existing health, education, and livelihood programs to help communities combat drought and transition from harmful land-degrading practices. Examples include energy-saving stoves, solar water pumps, and solar lights for schools, and partnering with tech startups to enable access to innovative solutions for just transitions within rural communities. Particularly in Ethiopia and Kenya, our sustainable agriculture techniques and alternative livelihood solutions support local adaptation to harsh drought periods and act as a child protection mechanism.

**In The Gambia, Guinea, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Senegal**, ChildFund is mainstreaming nature as a solution via reforestation and agroforestry in existing child development programs. This is achieved through different strategies, including youth-led skills building in nursery techniques, such as “tree growing” programs with the premise that planted trees are protected and grow healthy like our children. Recognizing the importance of nature's role in contributing to child development, tree growing (not planting) provides multiple benefits to communities and children, and economic opportunities for youth through regenerative land practices.



**ChildFund®**

For more information about ChildFund's Sustainability portfolio, please contact Keeva Duffey, Senior Sustainability Advisor, at [kduffey@childfund.org](mailto:kduffey@childfund.org)

<https://www.childfund.org/>



# Building Sustainability in Practice



ASIA  
REGION

*Imasha (5, L) and her friend, Ishel (4, R), play together on a playground at a ChildFund-supported ECD center after receiving a meal at the Community Kitchen in Monaragala District, Sri Lanka February 2023. Photo by Jake Lyell.*

With over **70 years of experience in the Asia region**, ChildFund's work has focused on building resilience among vulnerable families at the forefront of multiple challenges, including environment-related risks in **Indonesia, India, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand**. We aim to enhance programming across the region on child and youth-centered sustainable actions grounded in our innovative Asia Pacific Theory of Change for addressing the growing challenges in the region where “children, youth and nature thrive within inclusive, sustainable and equitable climate-resilient systems.” To reach the regional vision of child-centered resilience, three domains and priority outcomes shape the regional programming: Child, Family, and Community Resilience; Child and Youth Inclusive Policy and Engagement; and Environmental Justice and Equity.

ChildFund's programs in the **Philippines, Sri Lanka and Indonesia** have established child and youth environmental clubs (Eco-Scouts, Nature Lovers and YVN), which aim to build capacity and skills in advocacy and environmental conservation. Youth have led local campaigns to end plastic waste in their communities, among other harmful land degradation practices, working with elders in the community to mobilize community change.

**In India, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka**, ChildFund enhances sustainable-smart livelihood practices in communities. We train smallholder farmers, particularly women and youth, to raise their awareness and knowledge on best practices to adapt for harsh weather seasons, including kitchen gardening, organic composting, and other food systems strengthening practices in and around schools as a mechanism to cope with harsh periods of food scarcity.



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# Building Sustainability in Practice



## AMERICAS REGION

*This year's drought in Sierra Puebla de Norte limited Salvador's family's corn harvest, but they maintained a productive kitchen garden and chicken coop to provide staple meals and some income through the challenging times. With chickens, seeds, supplies, and training from ChildFund, they were able to lessen the drought's impact.*

*Photo by Jake Lyell*

With almost **60 years of experience working across the Americas in Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and the United States**, ChildFund strives to support children growing up healthy, educated, skilled, and protected. Our work in the region has primarily focused on combating poverty due to the challenges of social inequality, of which the triple planetary crisis is an important contributing factor. Children and families already at high risk of social inequality are some of the most vulnerable to environmental risks; therefore, regenerative environmental actions can help overcome some of these challenges.

**In Bolivia**, the Guardians of Water, a youth-led environmental campaign, produced over 60 videos created by students from various public schools on sustainable water management and led to mobilizing community awareness on improved water management practices. **In Mexico**, ChildFund is working with our local partner organizations on strategies to scale investment in local knowledge and experiences regarding sustainable actions to support local youth-led initiatives that will benefit children and youth.

**In Brazil**, ChildFund has led the Youth Network in Defense of their Social Rights (REJUDES) for almost 10 years. REJUDES is a network for youth aged 15-24 to build youth development capacity around their social rights, with a particular focus on environmental rights and entrepreneurship in the green and circular economy. In Brazil, we also implemented environmental education projects in highly socially vulnerable territories.

**Across all regions, ChildFund is working to reduce all risks and improve disaster response by enhancing community preparedness to safeguard vulnerable communities against all forms of threat as part of our disaster risk management efforts. Building Sustainability programming is a critical component in the long-term resilience building of communities.**



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