

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## OUR APPROACH

The world is changing for children. The COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, migration and violence threaten recent gains in child health, education, and safety. Since 1938, ChildFund has worked with local partners, government, and other partner organizations to create the safe environments children need to thrive. As a child-focused international non-governmental organization, ChildFund seeks to: help vulnerable children around the world by improving their lives and helping them become adults who bring positive change to their communities, and to promote societies that value, protect, and advance children's worth, protection, and rights.

In 2020, we worked with **240 local partners** to make a difference for **13 million people** in Africa, Asia, and the Americas.

Our work involves direct programming and service delivery in communities — and **growing connections that:**

- Strengthen relationships within families, communities, and government systems.
- Strengthen communities in support of child protection and child development.
- Enhance children's voices and agency.





# OUR 2020 IMPACT REPORT

In 2017, we affirmed our commitment to ending violence against children by placing **child protection** at the heart of our organizational strategy, *Destination 2020* — and thus, across our programs and organization.

Reflecting on the body of work and contributions of our *Destination 2020* strategy period, and as we move forward into a new strategy period, our **2020 Impact Report:**

- **Shares our cumulative contributions to positive change from our evaluated interventions** for children, adolescents, and youth for key outcome areas: child protection, education, skills development, and health.

- **Shares our global experiences and results in responding to humanitarian crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic**, in Africa, Asia, and the Americas.

- **Identifies our contributions to key United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets** related to child protection, education, skills development, and health — and across our humanitarian response efforts.

- **Seeks to promote and elevate our thought leadership** in niche and emerging areas as we begin our 2030 strategy, *GROWING CONNECTIONS*.



**“Now, my brothers and I can listen to radio lessons and study at home. I love mathematics and would like to be a teacher when I grow up.”**

— Adolescent girl (left), Kenya

This adolescent girl is among more than 700 recipients of a solar-powered radio and reading lamp as part of ChildFund’s COVID-19 response. With little sunshine, the radio can charge itself and run for almost 6 hours. Besides providing reading light and lowering household energy costs, these lamps protect households against illnesses caused by inhaling smoke from kerosene lamps.

# OUR GLOBAL IMPACT

## HOW WE DEFINE “IMPACT”

We characterize our impact in Africa, Asia, and the Americas using four key dimensions: (1) the **positive change we see in our core outcomes** as measured by performance data — our global monitoring of key indicators and our programming evidence; (2) by the **feedback we receive** from children, families, sponsors, partners, and stakeholders on how our work with them has made a positive difference in their lives — and in their communities; (3) **how we apply learning** about what works well and does not work well in our programs and strategies to improve outcomes; and (4) **how we contribute to global, collective outcomes** for children and their families — the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>1</sup>.

Our work contributes to **10** of the **30** SDGs — and **14** specific SDG targets.



We surveyed **nearly 50,000 caregivers, children, young adolescents, and youth** across all three regions to learn about their knowledge, attitudes, practices, and experiences related to key child protection, education, skills development, and health indicators. This survey was part of our global M&E effort in 2019.

**For the first time, we examine our evidence generated from our evaluated programs** (2012 to 2020) in Africa, the Americas, and Asia – across a total of 101 evaluated interventions (our “**Evidence Repository**”). Based on level of rigor, we categorize our evidence for specific outcomes as either **preliminary**, **promising**, or **effective**.

<sup>1</sup> Adopted by the United Nations in 2015, the SDGs represent a “universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity”.

## OUR GLOBAL IMPACT BY OUTCOME AREA

We present key highlights of our work we do with our local partners supporting positive change in child protection, education, youth skills development, and health outcomes, as well as in the humanitarian response arena.

**Our full report contains much more data**, including data visualizations, and analysis.



## Child Protection

**THE CHALLENGE:** 50% of children experience violence each year<sup>2</sup>.

**OUR GLOBAL PROGRESS:** We see progress in our contributions to making children’s worlds safer — more caregivers, children, and youth are perceiving their communities to be safe, with an increased likelihood to report harms. We have **over 50 programs across 18 countries showing at least preliminary evidence of positive change for child protection outcomes** in all three regions.



Globally, from 2017 to 2019, **we saw positive changes in caregiver perceptions of their communities often or sometimes being safe for children** — with an increase of **19%**. In 2019, 85% of caregivers felt that their communities were often or sometimes safe — and 11% of caregivers reported that their communities were never safe.

**PROGRAM EVIDENCE SNAPSHOT FOR CHILD PROTECTION:** Through our **Jukumu Letu (“Our Responsibility”)** project in **Kenya** (2018-2021), we saw an **increase in children’s involvement in their own protection:** The highest increases were in children’s voices being considered on protection issues affecting them (about 91%), children empowered to actively speak out about child abuse (about 90%), and creation of avenues for children to air grievances and give their opinion on issues affecting them (about 82%). This increased involvement is just one of the project’s positive child protection outcomes.

**OUR SDG CONTRIBUTIONS:** Goal 1: No Poverty, Goal 5: Gender Equality, Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

<sup>2</sup> Hillis, S., Mercy, J., Amobi, A., & Kress, H. (2016). Global prevalence of past-year violence against children: A systematic review and minimum estimates. *Pediatrics*, 137(3), 1–13.



## Education

**THE CHALLENGE:** Worldwide, 58% of children and adolescents are not reaching minimum proficiency levels in mathematics and reading — with the lowest proficiency levels seen in **Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia and Southern Asia, and Western Asia and North Africa**<sup>3</sup>.

**OUR GLOBAL PROGRESS:** We have **more than 35 programs across 12 countries showing at least preliminary evidence of positive change for education outcomes** across all three regions for children and young adolescents ages 0 to 14. ChildFund is making a global impact in moving critical education outcomes forward, including improvements in: caregiver knowledge and skills to support early learning and development; school enrollment and attendance; child developmental milestones; and school performance. However, our regional-level findings echo those identified above in “the challenge.”



**We saw global increases from 2017 to 2019 in both reading fluency and basic math skills.** A larger proportion of children in the Americas achieved reading (67%) and math (42%) competency compared to children in Asia and Africa. In Asia, 57% and 34% of children achieved sufficient reading and math skills, while in Africa, only 40% and 27% of children achieved the same.

**OUR SDG CONTRIBUTIONS:** Goal 4: Quality Education.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) (2019). *Every child learns: UNICEF education strategy 2019-2030*. New York, NY: Author.



## Skills Development

**THE CHALLENGE:** In 2020, more than one in five young people worldwide aged 15–24 was not employed, in job training, or in school — and two out of three of these were young women<sup>4</sup>.

**OUR GLOBAL PROGRESS:** We see progress in our contributions to enhancing youth (ages 15 to 24) work readiness and critical life skills. As more adolescents and youth graduate from business and technical skills training, we can see that **more than 35 programs across 13 countries show at least preliminary evidence of positive change for skills development outcomes** across all three regions in which ChildFund works.



Globally, around 1/3 of youth participated in skills training (28% in Africa, 21% in the Americas, and 34% in Asia) and from 2017 to 2019, **we saw a 14% increase in youth who graduate from basic business and technical skills training** (from 9% to 23%). Across all regions in 2019, we found that girls were slightly more likely to drop out of skills training programs than boys (51%, 53%, and 52% of those who dropped out in Africa, the Americas, and Asia, respectively), even in Asia where the majority (55%) of skills training program participants were girls.

**OUR SDG CONTRIBUTIONS:** Goal 4: Quality Education, Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

<sup>4</sup> O’Higgins, N. (2019). *Young people not in employment, education, or training*. Geneva: International Labour Organization (ILO).



## Health

**THE CHALLENGE:** In 2019, an estimated 5.2 million children under 5 years worldwide died mostly from preventable and treatable causes. The leading causes of death for older children, adolescents and youth are also preventable and/or treatable<sup>5</sup>.

**OUR GLOBAL PROGRESS:** Working across our three developmental life stages, we see progress in our contributions to improving the physical health and well-being of children and their families with **over 50 programs across 14 countries showing at least preliminary evidence of positive change for health outcomes** in all three regions in which ChildFund operates. Some examples of positive change include:



One of our safe drinking water projects in **Kenya helped to increase household use of water treatments** by 53% (from 46% to 99%) and one of our child nutrition enhancement projects in Sri Lanka helped to increase the rate of children ages 0 to 5 reaching appropriate age weight by 55% (from 37% to 92%).

**OUR SDG CONTRIBUTIONS:** Goal 2: Zero Hunger, Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being, Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

<sup>5</sup> Requejo, J. & Diaz, T. (2021). Rise, respond, recover: Renewing progress on women's, children's and adolescents' health in the era of COVID-19. UNICEF, The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health, and WHO.



## Humanitarian Response

**THE CHALLENGE:** During the past five years, it has been estimated that, globally, nearly one in four children live in countries affected by humanitarian crises, often without access to health care, proper nutrition, clean water and sanitation, education, or protection<sup>6</sup>.

**OUR GLOBAL RESPONSE:** Crossing program sectors (child protection, education, health, skills development) and life stages, we see progress in our contributions to help reduce the impacts of disasters, and help build child, family, and community resiliency in emergencies. We have **over 30 programs across 9 countries showing at least preliminary evidence of positive change for disaster risk reduction (DRR) and/or livelihood strengthening outcomes** in areas of the world where children and their families are experiencing humanitarian crises. We also see the contributions, and important cross-sector lessons learned, of our **COVID-19 response activities**, which have **reached over 4.8 million children** across our four response priority areas (health, livelihoods, safety, education). Some examples of our positive change include:



One of our DRR programs in **Kenya helped to increase community knowledge of the main risks associated with floods** by 44% (from 26% to 70%), and another DRR program in **Indonesia helped to increase the DRR knowledge of young children** (ages 5-6) with 63% of the program children able to name at least one type of natural disaster and 43% able to identify a safe place to go in a disaster, compared to 9% and 6% among comparison group children.

<sup>6</sup> UNICEF. (2016, December 9). Nearly a quarter of the world's children live in conflict or disaster-stricken countries [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/nearly-quarter-worlds-children-live-conflict-or-disaster-stricken-countries>.

**Our COVID-19 response actions have included:**

- More than 96,400 kits with essential hygiene supplies delivered to families and more than 1,500 handwashing stations built to protect children and their families from disease.
- \$6,099,820 in direct cash and voucher assistance provided to 176,958 families to help them fight hunger.
- Over 7,050 adolescents and youth received text and voice messages with information on violence prevention, including where to report violence.
- Over 93,300 students supported with at-home educational materials (learning kits) to continue learning at home.

**PROGRAM EVIDENCE SNAPSHOT:** Through our **Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCov) CFK Integrated Response program** in Indonesia (2020) that established community hand-washing stations and delivered health communication materials, awareness messaging, and emergency cash assistance to families, we saw a **decrease in household hunger**: moderate hunger decreased by 10% (24% to 14%) for a sample of 3,901 households.

**OUR SDG CONTRIBUTIONS:** Goal 1: No Poverty, Goal 2: Zero Hunger, Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being, Goal 4: Quality Education, Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, Goal 13: Climate Action, Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions





As we close our **Destination 2020** strategy and move into our 2030 strategy, we see evidence of promise in our impact — and the potential for enhanced and new connections.

**Our work contributes to the SDGs**, by reducing poverty and hunger, fostering good health and well-being, promoting quality education, and ending violence through peace, justice, and strong institutions.

Conditions such as the pandemic, climate change, migration and violence threaten recent gains in child health, education, and safety. Millions of children have been orphaned due to the pandemic. Rates of extreme poverty for children are expected to increase.

**Studying our contributions and learnings shared in this Impact Report, we see new areas to explore and develop as we move into our 2030 strategy *GROWING CONNECTIONS*.**

It is in response to the changing world — and with scaled impact in mind — that we set an ambitious goal for our new strategy period: **By 2030, local partners and ChildFund will reach ~100 million deprived, excluded, and vulnerable children and family members annually to help children grow up healthy, educated, skilled and safe.**

Over the next 10 years, we will reach more children by adding new program approaches and by evolving our role in international development.

Our key programmatic strategies to support this transformation and journey include strengthening our collective, global evidence base for our programs, enhancing our ECD programming and policy support, and digital delivery of programming as well as:

■ **Expanding our global M&E platform to create an organizational culture that is connected — and informed — by data.** This includes system enhancements to integrate and aggregate data so that we can support knowledge generation and have greater insight into our work and learning and to expand our global M&E indicators to reflect our 2030 strategy **GROWING CONNECTIONS** and SDG target indicators.

■ **Deepening our programmatic capacity to keep children and youth safe online.** We increasingly see through our work, particularly with the onset of COVID-19, the importance the internet in facilitating social connections and how the growth in internet connectivity is accompanied by a substantial increase in online sexual exploitation and abuse of children (OSEAC). We will, thus, focus on developing innovative programmatic interventions, expanding our advocacy efforts, and identifying new partnerships for increased reach and impact.

■ **Measuring our child protection advocacy results.** With 90% of our country offices having advocacy plans in place with issues identified, our next step is to develop, test, and identify best practices so that we can measure — and learn from — the outcomes and impact of our policy reach and change.

■ **Growing connections through new partnerships.** The social connections we have developed through community-level partnerships played a crucial part in our rapid COVID-19 response. To increase our reach and impact, we seek to develop similar “connections” with other types of partners, including donor and research partnerships to support our evidence generation and impact.

**GROWING CONNECTIONS** means more children participating in proven programs supported by trusted partners. ChildFund is making a bold commitment to foster more and stronger connections with children, communities, partners, sponsors and donors to ensure that children **grow up healthy, educated, skilled and, above all, safe** so that their development can come to fruition.