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Helping Vulnerable Children Around the World Survive COVID-19:

ChildFund directs nearly \$80 million to help stop the virus' spread, provide nutrition and educational support, and prevent violence as countries around the globe continue to see a spike in cases

Richmond, Virginia | December 16, 2020 Six months after launching an ambitious [COVID-19 response plan](#) in April 2020, ChildFund is directing nearly \$80 million to relief efforts reaching more than 5.6 million children and family members in more than 60 countries. This includes more than \$44 million in new funds raised and more than \$35 million in sponsored funds that ChildFund member organizations repurposed in the wake of the global health crisis.

The need could not be more urgent. While there has been good news in recent weeks about the success of several vaccine trials, the global pandemic has already fundamentally altered the health, economic, educational and political landscape of our world. Moreover, it will be a daunting process for hundreds of countries to approve, distribute and administer the vaccines to billions of people.

According to the World Health Organization, as of 15 December, the world had more than 71 million confirmed cases of COVID-19, with more than 1.6 million deaths attributed to the virus¹. In addition, the World Bank estimates the pandemic will push as many as 115 million more people into extreme poverty this year². Meanwhile, school closures are disrupting the education of hundreds of millions of children³.

For many of the world's most vulnerable populations, the growing economic uncertainty of the past several months has resulted in numerous negative impacts on children. The crisis has increased threats of violence against children and the risk of child labor, child marriage and child trafficking. Further, at least a third of the world's children are unable to access remote learning⁴.

To help minimize the negative effects of the pandemic and make sure children and families remain healthy, educated and safe, ChildFund's COVID-19 Response Plan focuses on four key priority areas: stopping COVID-19 from infecting children and families, getting children the food they need, keeping children safe from violence both physically and emotionally, and helping children to continue their learning.

"We knew going into the pandemic that children would be hit hardest," says Anne Lynam Goddard, President and CEO of Richmond, Virginia-based ChildFund International. "The lockdowns instituted to halt the virus' spread meant that families began quickly losing what fragile financial stability they had built. Typically, one day's earnings cover the next day's food, and there is little if anything in reserve.

¹ <https://covid19.who.int/>

² <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/10/07/covid-19-to-add-as-many-as-150-million-extreme-poor-by-2021>

³ <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>

⁴ <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/covid-19-least-third-worlds-schoolchildren-unable-access-remote-learning-during>

Food insecurity like this puts families in a terrible position. As one mother told us, ‘If you buy soap, you won’t eat.’

“And then imagine the resulting stress,” she adds. “With families confined in close quarters, not knowing where their next meal will come from and facing myriad other stressors, the risk of violence against children multiplies.”

ChildFund Alliance Secretary General Meg Gardinier notes, “As many countries are experiencing yet another peak in the number of COVID-19 cases, it is all the more vital to reach those who are suffering as a result of the significant economic hardships this pandemic has triggered. The collateral damage from the pandemic will have long-lasting impacts if we don’t take aggressive action to stop the spread of the virus and mitigate its harms to children.”

ChildFund has been installing community handwashing stands; educating communities about symptoms, hygiene measures, and locations for testing and treatment; distributing essentials such as soap, gloves and masks; and creating child-friendly spaces. To make sure children get food and other essentials they need, ChildFund is providing cash for families most in need and, where possible, is distributing food and basic household items directly. In all of its activities, ChildFund is carefully abiding by COVID-19 protection measures.

ChildFund’s U.S.-based member so far has provided nearly \$5 million in monthly cash transfers to nearly 132,000 vulnerable households worldwide. Where cash transfers were not viable, the organization provided food baskets, supported family gardens and launched poultry initiatives. In addition to these and many other initiatives under the response plan, ChildFund International is working across many countries to address online sexual exploitation of children (OSEAC), which has burgeoned since the advent of the pandemic.

With 80 years of experience and operations in more than 70 countries across 12 members, ChildFund is well-equipped to make a meaningful difference in the lives of the world’s most vulnerable children, during and after this pandemic. You can read or [download the plan](#) or visit our website (insert link to the location on your ChildFund site where visitors can learn about your COVID-19 response efforts). Learn more about how you can help at [ChildFund’s website](#).

About ChildFund

Founded in 1938, ChildFund is a child-focused global development organization that helps nearly 16 million children and family members in more than 60 countries. Twelve child-focused development agencies are part of the global network ChildFund Alliance. The members work to end violence and exploitation against children and to overcome poverty and the underlying conditions that prevent children from achieving their full potential. We work in partnership with children and their communities to create lasting change, and the participation of children themselves is a key component of our approach. Our commitment, resources, innovation, knowledge and expertise serve as a powerful force to transform the lives of children.