

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **ChildFund launches second-wave COVID-19 response in India:**

*Child-focused organization aims to reach half a million children and family members*

**Richmond, Virginia | May 7, 2021** As a new, fast-spreading coronavirus variant continues to devastate India, ChildFund International is urgently mobilizing to relieve the suffering of vulnerable children and families, promoting vaccination for all who are eligible and providing other lifesaving support in the communities it serves. The organization's second-wave COVID-19 response aims to reach 500,000 people in 1,000 villages across 15 states.

"The situation has spiraled out of control," says Ben Phillips, director of ChildFund's Emergency Management Unit. "Despite the best, most heroic efforts of health providers, the system has reached a breaking point. Very sick people are unable to get treatment because hospitals just don't have space available. ChildFund is rushing to purchase equipment and supplies to help the government handle overflow, and we're also supporting accelerated vaccination campaigns to slow infections."

ChildFund's COVID-19 current response plan builds on its first pandemic response last year but adds an immediate emphasis on supporting India's struggling health system, including vaccination access and delivery. The organization is:

- Working with the government to support the equitable rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Fighting hunger by delivering food baskets to vulnerable families.
- Distributing hygiene kits and information so families can protect themselves from the virus.
- Connecting families with psychological support, from broadcast messages on social-emotional well-being to direct, preventive emotional first aid and intensive professional care.
- Sharing accurate and timely information to ensure families' understanding of how and why to get the vaccine and address any myths around its safety and efficacy. We will reach out to children and families in hard-to-reach areas, including mobile and marginalized populations.

"This surge in COVID-19 cases places millions of children and families in great jeopardy," says Neelam Makhijani, ChildFund's country director for India. "But I must hold on to hope that our pandemic response over the last year – reaching over 400,000 people across 15 states with information,



*Lija, 3, is enrolled with ChildFund in India's Odisha state. Photo by Daytona Lee Niles for ChildFund.*

hygiene supplies, food, PPE, educational and livelihood support – has left families in a position to weather the impacts of this revived crisis. We intend to ensure that children continue to stay safe for as long as the crisis lasts and beyond.”

More at <https://www.childfund.org/india-covid-crisis/>

**About ChildFund**

*Founded in 1938, ChildFund works throughout Asia, Africa and the Americas — including the United States — to connect children with what they need to grow up healthy, educated, skilled and safe, no matter where they are. Last year, we reached 13.6 million children and family members in 24 countries. About 200,000 Americans support our work by sponsoring individual children or investing in ChildFund programs. Find out more at [www.ChildFund.org](http://www.ChildFund.org)*