Project Proposal
India & Indonesia: Prevent the Trafficking of Infants & Young Children

REQUEST FOR SUPPORT
ChildFund International is honored to share with you a unique opportunity to stem one of the most heartbreaking and appalling crimes of our day. With a leadership gift, you can help prevent the trafficking of thousands of infants and toddlers in India and Indonesia who are tragically exploited in their youngest and most defenseless years.

In both nations, estimates vary wildly on the number of children abused by traffickers. Even more elusive is an accurate picture of victims younger than 5. And while tremendous resources have rightfully been channeled toward the prevention of trafficking in older children, equal attention must also be paid to the plight of the youngest and most helpless victims – some of them just hours old. Few organizations have accepted this challenge, making ChildFund one of the first. But in order to lead this crucial task, we urgently need your help.

Over the next three years, we plan to expand our proven Early Childhood Development (ECD) model to ensure that trafficking prevention is a core goal. In India and Indonesia, this will require a total investment of $1.16 million. While ECD inherently addresses many of the underlying factors that contribute to the trafficking of infants and toddlers – and even older children – it is essential that we gain a clearer understanding of the players involved and prioritize the constraint of this growing threat. Together, we can pioneer the research and pilot the intervention models that will finally start bringing an end to infant and young child trafficking. We invite you to partner with us as a lead donor in the fight against one of the world’s most egregious crimes.
THE CHALLENGE
Overview

According to the UN, child trafficking involves any “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation.”¹ For many of us, this definition primarily takes two forms: child labor and sexual exploitation. By nature, these crimes tend to affect school-age children and teens, but they rarely impact infants and toddlers. As a result, we often overlook the fact that children under 5 can also be trafficked when they are targeted for illegal adoption or false institutionalization. In these cases, traffickers play on impoverished parents’ desires to give their children a better life by painting visions of wealthy adoptive families or well-funded orphanages full of warm beds, nutritious meals, education and a chance to break the cycle of poverty.

Sadly, no global organization has turned the spotlight onto infant and young child trafficking so that we might understand more about what fuels it or the steps we can take to curb it. At present, one-off media reports are all that we have, highlighting stories like that of a woman in Indonesia in 2006 who was caught selling 880 infants to adoptive parents abroad;² or the rescue of nearly 600 young children in India who were being trafficked between falsified orphanages in May of this year.³, ⁴ In India and Indonesia (and in high-risk nations worldwide), experts can only estimate that the number of victims under 5 is in the tens-of-thousands per nation, per year. Torn from their families at such an early age – some in their very first moments of life – the smallest and most helpless victims of trafficking are neglected, abused and denied their basic human rights. Throughout the course of their lives, they bear physical, emotional and psychological scars that forever inhibit their ability to thrive.

Despite the unfortunate lack of research, we do know that the conditions that contribute to infant and young child trafficking are complex and multifaceted. Because ChildFund has been working in India and Indonesia since 1951 and 1958, respectively, we have a strong sense of the factors that are most crucial for the families with whom we work:

Poverty & Lack of Awareness

ChildFund works in many of Asia’s most deprived and undereducated communities, where the families who are most susceptible to trafficking are often those who are least aware of it. Often, traffickers will pose as agents of legal adoption agencies or child care facilities to convince impoverished parents that they can give their child a better life. In Indonesia specifically, midwives may work as ‘middlemen’ in this process since they are in a uniquely powerful position to help traffickers identify parents who are most vulnerable to coercion.

³ Kerala incident is a huge violation of child rights’. Rediff News. 16 June, 2014.
Unwanted Pregnancies Among Unmarried Youth (Indonesia only)

In Indonesia, young, unmarried mothers are heavily targeted by infant and young child traffickers. Unfortunately, early and unwanted pregnancies are on the rise. By the age of 17, one in three Indonesians has become sexually active, yet few understand the associated risks. Reproductive health is a taboo topic, and children conceived out of wedlock are a source of intense shame. This severe social stigma forces many young mothers to abandon their infants, sometimes committing to giving a baby away before he or she is even born.

Limited Childcare Options (India only)

In rural India, traditional extended families are quickly being replaced by nuclear ones, leaving parents without reliable childcare options. Without fully understanding the danger of doing so, working parents will often leave infants and toddlers in the care of older siblings or at home alone. Far too often, this leads to cases of ‘lost’ or ‘missing’ children. This issue is particularly pressing for poor families who migrate annually for work, as childcare is even more difficult when they are so far away from their home villages. While the Indian government has established hundreds of thousands of anganwadi (childcare and development) centers across the country, many are poorly staffed and badly run. Few parents trust them enough to enroll their children – even when the alternative is to leave them home by themselves.

Inadequate Government Services & Oversight

When they are not targeted for illegal adoption, trafficked infants and toddlers are often kept at illegal and abusive orphanages where it is the ‘caretakers’ who benefit most. According to UNICEF, Indonesia has one of the highest rates of child institutionalization in the world, yet many facilities are informal and ‘community-run,’ operating without any formal oversight. In India, media reports suggest a similar situation, yet there is no reliable data on how many orphanages operate outside the government system. In both countries, ambitious plans have been developed by the government to create child protection systems from the village up to the national level, but implementation has been slow and uneven.

SOLUTIONS WITH CHILDFUND

Our Approach

Together with our partners, ChildFund is committed to protecting every child’s right to safety, security and wellbeing – and to reaching the most deprived and marginalized young lives. Our experience tells us that the trafficking of infants and young children stems first and foremost from the economic and social challenges that parents face in providing for their families – challenges that push them to give their babies up or maintain dangerous childcare practices that

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5 Issue Briefs: Responding to HIV and AIDS. UNICEF Indonesia. 2012. PDF
7 Kerala incident is a huge violation of child rights'.
separate little ones from the adults who want to keep them safe. As a leader in child protection, family strengthening and early childhood development, ChildFund is well positioned to take the lead in addressing this growing challenge. With your help, we can gain a much clearer understanding of what drives infant and young child trafficking and use it to pilot intervention models that prevent many of the youngest and most defenseless victims from ever becoming victims at all. We can mitigate the factors that make families vulnerable, strip traffickers of their leverage and put power back where it belongs: with parents, communities and children themselves.

Goal & Objectives
The goal of this three-year initiative is to protect infants and young children (ages 0-5) in high-risk areas of India and Indonesia from exploitation and trafficking. Together, we can reach that goal by pursuing four key objectives:

- Gain an in-depth understanding of the nature and scope of infant and young child trafficking.
- Ensure that families, service providers, child protection bodies and local authorities understand child rights, child development and child protection – particularly in relation to young child trafficking.
- Create sustainable solutions for families and communities to address the root causes of young child trafficking.
- Ensure that these solutions are part of a comprehensive model for early childhood development that fosters children’s holistic physical, cognitive and psycho-social growth.

Project Activities: Year 1
To date, the child protection community has failed to gain a comprehensive understanding of how child trafficking specifically affects children under 5. That’s why, in Year 1 of this three-year project, ChildFund will complete an in-depth situation assessment in India and Indonesia to provide breakthrough insight into the issue. You can pioneer this crucial research, opening many new doors not only for ChildFund, but for child protection leaders across the globe. Once Year 1 funding is secured, project implementation will begin within three months, following the hire and onboarding of project-specific staff.

In India, an independent researcher will carry out the assessment in remote areas of five states: Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Rajasthan (see map in Annex A). Here, young children are at a particularly high risk of being trafficked due to chronic poverty, low education, weakening family structures, frequent migration and lagging government services. In Indonesia, ChildFund staff will conduct a situation assessment in three semi-urban districts of Central Java and one municipality: Banyumas District, Cilacap District, Semarang District and Semarang municipality. Here, deep poverty, traditions that promote large families, and strong social stigmas against unmarried parents, all create conditions that tend to foster infant and young child trafficking.
In leveraging the benefit of internal assessment specialists, ChildFund Indonesia will substantially reduce total project costs, and will also benefit from a relatively small assessment area (Central Java covers a total of 12,660 square miles, whereas our five target assessment states in India span 404,000 square miles).

Also in Year 1, preparation will begin for the implementation of pilot activities in Years 2 and 3. This will include the development of materials for awareness, education and training, as well as actual training sessions for local partner staff and community volunteers.

Project Activities: Years 2 & 3

The pilot activities that ChildFund will implement during Years 2 and 3 will be greatly informed by the findings of our two situation assessments. As such, they will not be finalized until the assessments are complete. But with decades of experience working in Asia’s most marginalized communities, ChildFund has a keen understanding of what it takes to empower families to keep their youngest members safe. Below is a summary of the activities that we anticipate will form the core of our pilot work. Annex B describes each activity in greater detail.

**India**

From within the five states included in ChildFund India’s situation assessment, two sub-districts will be chosen for project implementation. Within those sub-districts, we will pilot comprehensive anti-trafficking efforts in a total of 10 villages. While they are not yet finalized, we are confident that the following activities will address many of the vulnerabilities of the families we serve – poor households living in extremely remote communities with high rates of migration and limited government services.

- **Stimulate income generation:** By providing families in rural India with training and startup materials in high-demand trades, we can reduce their financial vulnerability to young child traffickers, as well as their need to migrate for work (which puts very young children at higher risk of being left unsupervised).

- **Establish 10 model anganwadi centers:** While parents work, our 10 model facilities will provide safe childcare and holistic early childhood development services, revolutionizing the role of anganwadi centers in these regions. Over the long term these centers will become self-sustaining under the management of trained Parent-Teacher Associations.

- **Encourage the use of anganwadi centers:** Using culturally appropriate outreach and advertising, we will invite parents to visit model anganwadi centers, learn about the value of their services and reconsider their previous experiences with poorly-run facilities.
- **Strengthen families through parenting education:** In rural India, few parents feel empowered to fully provide for their children’s needs. Our ECD program does just that, partially through income generation and also through one-on-one parenting education that builds confidence and elevates parents’ ability to be advocates for and champions of their children’s needs.

- **Strengthen Village Child Protection Committees:** The government of India has developed robust plans for village-level Child Protection Committees, but has asked NGO partners like ChildFund to help extend them into the most remote communities. With your help, these Committees will be on the front lines of preventing child abuse, neglect, exploitation and trafficking.

### Indonesia

After conducting a situation assessment in three districts and one municipality of Central Java, ChildFund Indonesia anticipates piloting the anti-trafficking interventions below in a total of eight communities – areas where chronic poverty, unwanted pregnancies and weak child protection measures leave far too many infants and toddlers vulnerable to exploitation.

- **Stimulate income generation:** In Indonesia, ChildFund will reduce families’ vulnerability to traffickers by providing training and startup materials in high-demand trades. We will focus on poor families and young, single mothers with three or more children.

- **Raise community awareness:** ChildFund will build awareness around young child trafficking using print media like posters and leaflets, and will educate parents about safe, legal options that they can consider if they find that they cannot provide for a child.

- **Prevent early & unwanted pregnancies:** ChildFund will introduce culturally appropriate reproductive health education to young men and women enrolled in our programs, helping them understand the risks of sexual activity and prioritize healthy choices.

- **Strengthen Child Protection & Child-Friendly Village Committees:** At the local level, our Child Protection Committees are crucial to preventing abuse, neglect and exploitation. With your help, we will link these bodies to the government’s Child-Friendly Village Committees, leveraging the strengths of both in tandem. We will also petition district officials for their long-term support of these (and other) child protection and anti-trafficking measures.
**Project Participants**

In Year 1 of this three-year initiative, we estimate that more than 6.2 million young children, family members and community members will lend their voices to our two national assessments on infant and young child trafficking.

During Years 2 and 3, our pilot activities will be extremely focused, concentrating greater resources in fewer locations. This will allow us to closely monitor the impact of your gift and document our learning. During this period, we anticipate that you will directly touch the lives of nearly 1,000 children under 5, as well as 6,000 parents, community members and service providers. Over time, we anticipate that your generosity will continue to reach even more children and families as ChildFund India and ChildFund Indonesia refine, expand and share their trafficking prevention models.

**MONITORING & EVALUATION**

In India, day-to-day project monitoring will be managed by a village-level Project Monitoring Committee and a Project Coordinator based in ChildFund’s area office. Our National Office team will oversee these efforts and submit annual reports to headquarters, which will be shared with our donors. In Indonesia, daily project monitoring will be carried out by village-level Community Management Committees, our local partners and a Project Officer from ChildFund’s zonal office. This Project Officer will report up to the National Office team who will, in turn, submit annual reports to headquarters and to project donors. Annex C provides additional details on key indicators of success that we will track in each country.

**SUSTAINABILITY**

To combat the complex economic and social conditions that propel the trafficking of infants and young children, sustainable solutions are fundamental – solutions that empower families to independently shape and guide their children’s wellbeing long after ChildFund is gone. In India and Indonesia, organizations like UNICEF are building essential capacity on the national stage, but ChildFund is the only global organization seeking to fight young child trafficking at the grassroots level alongside individual families and communities. We believe that sustainable solutions are a natural outgrowth of programs that target the underlying conditions which drive a particular issue. That’s why combatting infant and young child trafficking is about much more than awareness-raising and Child Protection Committees (though these are crucial pieces of the puzzle). Equally important are:

- Higher, more stable household incomes;
- Empowered and confident parents;
- Fewer teen pregnancies;
- Community-based childcare, child development and child protection resources (that also serve as blueprints for replication by the government);
- And local governments’ commitment to ongoing funding and support.
In these ways, we will lay the essential foundations for sustainability. We will make families stronger and more resilient; unite communities around a shared responsibility to protect every child’s wellbeing; and complement and strengthen government programs without replacing them. Over the long term, we anticipate that this approach will not only combat young child trafficking, but all child trafficking. Whether children’s lives are shattered by illegal adoption in their very early years, or forced labor or sexual exploitation later on, behind the scenes are many of the same economic and social conditions that leave them so vulnerable. Together, we have an opportunity to get ahead of the curve – to deprive traffickers of the opportunities they prey on and protect young lives from their earliest days on.

**JOIN US TODAY**

In the poorest and most marginalized corners of the world, the trafficking of infants and young children is a major threat. Hidden from the spotlight, this unspeakable crime has yet to provoke the outrage it deserves. At ChildFund, we refuse to allow it to continue unabated, and we hope that we can count on your support. With your gift, you can help us lead the fight against young child trafficking and issue a vital call to action across the globe.

In India and Indonesia, ChildFund has been a leader in child protection and early childhood development for more than 50 years. With our proven ECD model, we emphasize sustainable solutions that empower individual families and communities to give their children their very best. Now, we are investing $1.16 million over the next three years to ensure that the prevention of young child trafficking is a core priority. In two countries known to struggle with trafficking of many kinds, we will conduct groundbreaking research and pilot a set of holistic activities that is customized to each country’s unique context. In doing so, we will strike at the conditions that leave children and families most vulnerable.

ChildFund has the experience and expertise needed to take on this challenge, but your partnership is essential. We hope that you will join us now in our efforts. We appreciate your generous consideration of our request, and thank you for your unwavering commitment to our shared mission.

**QUESTIONS**

Should you have questions or would like additional information, please contact Ebony Mosley, Department of Philanthropy, via phone or email, (804) 545-3620 or emosley@childfund.org.