



# LOOKING FORWARD OUR NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

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Photo by Jake Lyell



## WHERE WE HAVE BEEN

As we close our *Destination 2020* strategy and move into our 2030 strategy *Growing Connections*, we have **increasing evidence of our program results** — and the potential for enhanced and new connections and scaling our impact.

Our most recent **global M&E data** highlight the positive changes our partner organizations and we have made in helping to create safer environments for children and in improving important health, education and skills development outcomes.

These data show improvements in:

- Perceptions of community safety;
- Knowledge of where to report harms;
- The physical health and wellness of children and families;
- Engagement of young children in early learning activities;
- Literacy and numeracy levels for school-aged children; and
- Youth graduating with business/technical skills.

Our **programming evidence** shows positive change in our core outcomes within specific life stages. In addition, many of our programs are directed towards and build evidence for key **outcomes across our three life stages**, emphasizing a holistic, “whole child” approach to our programming. As we move forward, incorporating this whole child perspective will allow us and our partners to better serve children and their families in our programs, throughout the life stages and across sectors.



Photo by Jake Lyell

 **CHILD PROTECTION**

The outcome area for which we have generated the most evidence — child protection — points to the collective success and impact of our **Destination 2020** strategy with its focus on protecting children from harm and integrating this focus across our programs and life stages.

Our strengthening of child protection systems through our community-based child protection (CBCP) mapping work reaffirms that a shared understanding of harms is a prerequisite for taking effective action to keep children safe.

Through CBCP mapping we have learned, and we will continue to learn, about some of the most marginalized groups of children in society. This participatory research helps us, and our partner organizations, respond to the protection challenges that children and youth face in communities around the world. We are also able to use the deep, community-level social connections it builds to help us rapidly respond to humanitarian crises such as COVID-19.

 **EDUCATION**

Our interventions in early education and supportive environments for learning continue to show positive and promising results, particularly through the data we have captured in our early childhood development (ECD) programs. Our local partners have seen increased engagement among caregivers in the first — very important — 1,000 days of their child's life. More caregivers are engaging in enriching play and learning activities and less punitive parenting techniques, and fewer caregivers are leaving their young children unattended.

For primary school-aged children, we see more engagement among caregivers in their children's learning and school affairs, leading to overall improvements in reading and math. More work must be done, however, especially in reducing regional disparities — more children overall in the Americas were attaining reading and math proficiency compared with those in Africa and Asia.

 **SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

We have also seen positive changes in skills development among adolescents and youth. Significant changes have been seen through our data collection among youth who have graduated from business and technical skills training programs, although girls overall are still more likely to drop out.

We and our local partners have seen improvements among older children and adolescents in self-esteem and self-confidence, as well as increased leadership skills, which will bolster their ability to lead productive, healthy, and economically stable lives, and become active participants in their communities.

 **HEALTH**

We see a growing evidence base in support of our programs that target health and hygiene practices and services, particularly for those programs that focus on maternal and child health and WASH. More caregivers are knowledgeable about pre- and post-natal care, infant and child nutrition and caregiving. Improvements have also been seen among adolescents and youth in their knowledge of sexual health and reproduction.

Across the life stages, more families have clean drinking water, access to sanitation and better hygiene practices. Our contributions in the health arena, and our local partners' adaptation of past and current health programming, were also evident in our COVID-19 response work.

 **HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE**

The pandemic has threatened to disrupt gains in all areas of our work, but our ability to pivot our interventions, thanks to our local partners, has helped to ameliorate these disruptions and continue supporting the children and families in our programs. Our COVID-19 response has shown how nimbly we can address needs — and respond to them across 20 countries — using our social connections at the community level and wrap rapid research and evaluation around our response work to connect learning to action.

Our humanitarian response programs have led to enhanced disaster preparedness for children, families, and/or entire communities, providing families with livelihood strengthening support through food security and cash assistance, and supporting the children's mental well-being and protection through psychosocial support programming and child safe spaces.

**Our work helps children improve their lives and supports the agenda of institutions committed to the well-being of children. 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.**



# CHILDREN'S VULNERABILITY — AND WHERE WE ARE GOING



Photo by Jake Lyell

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**.

**The world is changing for children.** The COVID-19 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. There have been roughly 10 million additional child marriages, 9.3 million children will suffer from malnutrition, and an estimated \$30 billion has been lost in future productivity. As a global community, we also must acknowledge the severe and long-lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on children, their families, and their communities.

Additionally, the increased reliance on digital technology for learning and entertainment brings with it new dangers for children, even as it offers new opportunities. To combat these evolving threats to children, and to make a difference in their lives, organizations like ours need to evolve as well.

## Deepening connections to support the world's children: Our Next Steps

It is in response to this changing world, **GROWING CONNECTIONS** begins with an inspiring, big-picture, long-term goal to generate organizational direction and action<sup>1</sup>: **By 2030, local partners and ChildFund will reach ~100 million 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.

This ambitious goal grew out of our vision of a world where every child realizes their rights and achieves their potential. Our ~100 million number is an order-of-magnitude aspiration to provide substantial impact for many more deprived, excluded, and vulnerable children, and our 2030 strategy provides the pathways for pursuing and achieving this goal.

<sup>1</sup> Jim Collins and Jerry Porras introduced the term Big, Hairy, Audacious Goal or "BHAG" in the book *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*.

## Key programmatic strategies to support this transformation and journey include:

**1 Enhancing and scaling our ECD programming and policy support.** We see the promise, progress, need, and potential of our work on responsive, protective, and playful parenting, community mentors and ECD centers for proving children with a strong foundation. Thus, we will prioritize: (1) Building an evidence base for positive parenting and nurturing and protective home environments for children ages 0 to 5; (2) Engaging community leaders and government representatives to create support systems for very young children; and (3) Exploring ways in which ECD centers can both support the delivery of caregiver skills development and provide very young children with access to pre-primary education.

## 2 Deepening our programmatic capacity to keep children and youth safe online.

Our response to the challenges children and their families face to sustaining their education, livelihoods, and family cohesion with the onset of

COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of social connections and the importance of the internet in facilitating these connections. But we also saw that the growth in internet connectivity was accompanied by a substantial increase in online sexual exploitation and abuse of children (OSEAC). In response, we will: (1) Increase our programmatic capacity and develop innovative programmatic interventions to address OSEAC; (2) Expand our advocacy efforts; and (3) Identify and initiate new partnerships that will allow us to increase our reach and impact.

**3 Digital delivery of programming.** In response to COVID-19, our local partners pivoted existing, relevant resources and activities to online platforms and encouraged children, youth, communities, and stakeholders to engage in a new online world. This learning has informed our focus on identifying and implementing best practices in digital program delivery in varied contexts and for different target groups.

**4 Building and strengthening our collective, global evidence base for all outcome areas.** ChildFund is developing — and testing the fidelity and effectiveness of — a select set of **program models** to improve the delivery quality, efficiency, and collective evidence of specific, integrated sets of interventions to sustain and increase all core outcomes for children within and across life stages.

**5 Expanding our global M&E platform to create an organizational culture that is connected — and informed — by data.** This includes system enhancements to: (1) Increase our capacity for program monitoring; (2) Integrate and aggregate data so that we can support knowledge generation and have greater insight into our work and learning; and (3) Expand our global M&E indicators to reflect our 2030 strategy **GROWING CONNECTIONS** and SDG target indicators.

**6 Measuring our child protection advocacy results.** Our country-based advocacy efforts expanded during **Destination 2020**, with 90%

or our country offices having plans in place with issues identified. Next, we must develop, test, and identify best practices so that we can measure — and learn from — the outcomes and impact of our policy reach and change.

**7 Growing connections through new partnerships.** During **Destination 2020**, it became apparent that 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 will develop similar “connections” with other types of partners. These partnerships will take many forms: resource mobilization, thought leadership, research and evidence generation, program and policy influence, and developing innovative methods to reach more children, including through digital delivery. ChildFund will evolve to be an agency that has dynamic and impactful relationships with different types of strategic partnerships to reach our **GROWING CONNECTIONS** goals.

## GROWING CONNECTIONS 2030: THE PATH FORWARD

**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.

We hope you join us on our ambitious path to support children and families around the world.



Photo by Jake Lyell