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ChildFund’s Global Survey of Children in Developing Nations Finds Them Hungry to Learn – and Just Plain Hungry

- ChildFund Alliance surveyed close to 3,000 children in 30 developing countries.
- If they were president they would provide education for all children.
- One in three children goes to bed hungry at least one night a week.

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE, NOV. 17, 12:01 a.m. EST

Richmond, Va. - Nov. 17, 2010 – Most 10-to-12-year-olds in developing nations say that, if they were president of their country, their first order of business would be to provide education to all children by improving their schools or building more of them. One in three goes to bed hungry at least one night a week. More than one quarter work half a day outside of school each day. And for many, their greatest fear is snakes.

The findings are part of an ambitious multinational survey of children in developing nations. [A summary of survey results can be found at the end of this document.] The Small Voices, Big Dreams survey polled close to 3,000 children ages 10 to 12 in 30 countries throughout Africa, Asia and the Americas – from Afghanistan to Zambia. The results are being released in concert with the United Nations’ Universal Children’s Day on November 20.

The survey was sponsored and conducted in the field by ChildFund Alliance, a global alliance of child development organizations, and compiled and tabulated by Ipsos Observer, an international research company. The survey is the first of its kind for the Alliance, whose roots extend back more than 70 years.

“Our mission is to improve the lives of children in poverty around the world – a mission that starts with listening to the smallest voices among us,” said Anne Lynam Goddard, president and CEO of ChildFund International, the U.S. member of the global alliance. “While our broader efforts take place on a community level, organizing and empowering communities so that they can sustain their own development, we at ChildFund are particularly attentive to the needs of children. This survey serves to amplify their voices so that we can direct our work in the most appropriate way.”

The survey found an overwhelming sentiment among the world’s poorest children toward improving their lives through education. More than half of those
surveyed (57%) said that, were they the president of their country, they would educate all children, improve the quality of schools and/or construct more of them. When asked what they need most in their lives, one in three (34%) said more or better education.

“This emphasis on education among these young children speaks to their wisdom as well as their understanding that learning holds the key to a better future,” Goddard said. “In such countries as Ecuador and Zambia, ChildFund is working on developing new ways to increase enrollment, keep children in school longer, and better engage their parents in their children’s education.”

While most children are hungry to learn, the survey found that a great many of them are just plain hungry. When asked what they need most, one in three (33%) said food. To the question, “what would you spend a dollar on?” almost half (45%) said food and/or water. As president, one in five (19%) said they would help people get food.

The emphasis on food is understandable given this finding: one in three children (32%) say they go to bed hungry at least once a week.

“Food shortages around the world, a challenge made worse by the downturn in the global economy, are being felt at a human level,” Goddard said. “ChildFund is working in many different ways to help communities improve their agricultural production and nutrition and food security programs.”

The survey also sought to quantify the amount of time children throughout Asia, Africa and the Americas work outside of school. Twenty-six percent of the boys and girls surveyed said that they spend at least half a day each day working on household chores or other work.

To the question of what they fear most, there were a broad range of answers, some reflecting their youth and others the inherent dangers within their daily lives. Three in 10 (30%) said that were most afraid of animals, with snakes (15%) topping the list. Almost one-fifth (20%) said they feared death and/or disease, and 15 percent said they were fearful of falling victim to war or violence.

U.S.-based ChildFund International also works with children living in poverty in the United States. A sampling of those children also participated in the survey, and their responses were largely similar to the answers from children around the world. American 10-to-12-year-olds also put improving education atop their list of presidential priorities (31%) and a similar percentage (29%) said that what they needed most was food. Fifty-five percent said that, given a dollar, they would spend it on food. And like other children around the world, they most fear animals.
American children living in poverty are strikingly similar in both their attitudes and needs as those from throughout the developing world,” Goddard said. “Their hopes for a better future are likewise grounded in education, exhibiting a maturity and perspective well beyond their years. Unlike children throughout Africa, Asia and the Americas, however, schooling for American children is free and much more accessible. Even so, they recognize that their studies are essential to a better life.”

The biggest departure from the global results was in the amount of time U.S. children spend working beyond their school work. While one in 10 American children (11%) spend at least half of each day at work, the percentage of children in developing nations who do so is more than double (26%).

“The voices of these children may be small but their words should resonate around the world,” Goddard said. “As perhaps only children can do, they deliver an honest and unvarnished sense of what it is like to be young and living in poverty. And what this survey makes clear is that, irrespective of their country, such children around the world share a common sentiment, attuned in a chorus of hardship and hope.”

** About the Small Voices, Big Dreams Survey**
The Small Voices/Big Dreams Survey was undertaken by the ChildFund Alliance from July through September 2010. Identical six-question surveys were administered on a one-on-one basis by ChildFund staff to approximately 100 children ages 10 to 12 in 30 developing nations in Africa, Asia and the Americas. A total of 3,288 children were surveyed, which includes 2,970 children in developing countries and 318 children in Australia, New Zealand and the United States. (Four of the six questions were open-ended.) ChildFund translated and submitted the results to Ipsos Observer, a global research firm, which tabulated and compiled the results. The margins of error, at 95 percent confidence, are: total surveys (+/- 1.7%), developing countries (+/- 1.8%), and developed countries (+/- 9.1%).

**About ChildFund Alliance**
The ChildFund Alliance is a network of 12 child development organizations whose work encompasses more than 15 million children and their families in 58 countries. With a focus on child-centered development programs that are undertaken in partnership with more than 1,400 local communities, the Alliance puts more than $503 million (USD) to work each year to help deprived, excluded and vulnerable children. The programs seek to bring positive outcomes for children in every stage of their lives, from infancy to adulthood. ChildFund also responds to humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters with precise focus on the special needs of children in the midst of crisis.
About Ipsos Observer
Founded in Paris, France, in 1975, Ipsos is the only independent, publicly-listed research company that is controlled and managed by research professionals. Ipsos is a leading global research company focusing on six core specializations: Advertising, Marketing, Media, Opinion and Customer Relationship Management research, and Data Collection and delivery. With offices in 64 countries, Ipsos conducts research in more than 100 countries. Working both on a global scale and in local markets, our expert teams give our clients the benefit of high value-added business solutions including qualitative, forecasting, modeling, market knowledge and consumer insights.

About Universal Children’s Day
First proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1954, Universal Children’s Day was established to encourage all countries to institute a day to promote mutual exchange and understanding among children as well as to initiate action to benefit and promote the welfare of the world’s children. The day takes place each year on November 20.

Summary of Survey Results
[Note: because many children responded with more than one answer, the total responses will exceed 100 percent. The Overall column is for developing countries only and do not average in U.S. results. Results listed reflect percentages of the whole survey sample.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>Americas</th>
<th>Asia</th>
<th>United States</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What would you do as president?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve education</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Make more food available</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Help children</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arrange for more clothing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve healthcare</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve housing/shelter</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td><strong>What do you need most?</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Food</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>Clothing</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>Family/friends</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entertainment/recreation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td><strong>What do you fear most?</strong></td>
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<td>Animals/insects</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
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<td>32</td>
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<td>Death/disease/accidents</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>War/terrorism/violence</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ghosts/supernatural</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td><strong>How would you spend one dollar?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Food/water</td>
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<td>Medical care</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td><strong>How long do you work outside of school?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than one hour</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>57</td>
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<td>More than one hour/less than half a day</td>
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<td>34</td>
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<td>Half a day</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Between half a day and full day</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>All day</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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