

Disaster Preparedness and Response Policy

Version 1.3

Introduction

ChildFund Australia focuses on hazards that are hydrometeorological¹, geophysical², biological³, and conflict related, and acknowledges climate change as a phenomenon that exacerbates the frequency and severity of hazards and increases the disaster risk associated with them. Through its Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) initiatives, ChildFund Australia seeks to reduce disaster and climate risk, however, it acknowledges that there will always be residual risk: “The disaster risk that remains in unmanaged form, even when effective disaster risk reduction measures are in place, and for which emergency response and recovery capacities must be maintained.”⁴

Given the inevitable presence of residual disaster and climate risk in the contexts in which ChildFund Australia is operational, ChildFund Australia is committed to improving disaster response outcomes through strengthening its disaster preparation and response operations and programming, particularly in the thematic areas of child protection, education, health, and food security. “Effective, efficient and timely response relies on disaster risk-informed preparedness measures, including the development of the response capacities of individuals, communities, organizations, countries and the international community.”⁵

ChildFund Australia works to reinforce local systems, leadership and decision making rather than creating parallel systems. It supports early/anticipatory action through investment in innovation, data and risk analysis, strengthening partner capacity in early action in the form of contingency planning based on early warning triggers, and advocates for strategies such as forecast-based financing. Through risk-informed programming, ChildFund Australia seeks to bring its development and humanitarian programming together to manage both disaster and climate risk through risk reduction, preparation and response initiatives.

Women, children, those with disabilities, older people, people with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity, and others who are vulnerable in times of peace, are exposed to disproportionate levels of disaster and climate risk. ChildFund Australia prioritises these groups through a rights-based approach that informs humanitarian principles and international standards, the entitlements of the affected population, and, ultimately, ChildFund’s preparation and response programming. The rights-based approach underpins the accountability to affected populations mechanism that ChildFund Australia has developed and seeks to strengthen.

¹ **Hydrometeorological hazards** are of atmospheric, hydrological or oceanographic origin. Examples are tropical cyclones (also known as typhoons and hurricanes); floods, including flash floods; drought; heatwaves and cold spells; and coastal storm surges.

Hydrometeorological conditions may also be a factor in other hazards such as landslides, wildland fires, locust plagues, epidemics and in the transport and dispersal of toxic substances and volcanic eruption material. [Hazard | UNDRR](#)

² **Geological or geophysical hazards** originate from internal earth processes. Examples are earthquakes, volcanic activity and emissions, and related geophysical processes such as mass movements, landslides, rockslides, surface collapses and debris or mud flows.

Hydrometeorological factors are important contributors to some of these processes. Tsunamis are difficult to categorize: although they are triggered by undersea earthquakes and other geological events, they essentially become an oceanic process that is manifested as a coastal water-related hazard. [Hazard | UNDRR](#)

³ **Biological hazards** are of organic origin or conveyed by biological vectors, including pathogenic microorganisms, toxins and bioactive substances. Examples are bacteria, viruses or parasites, as well as venomous wildlife and insects, poisonous plants and mosquitoes carrying disease-causing agents. [Hazard | UNDRR](#)

⁴ UNISDR, available at <https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/terminology>

⁵ [Response | UNDRR](#)

Frameworks

ChildFund Australia is guided by the following:

- Sendai Framework 2015 to 2030
- The Paris Agreement
- The Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific
- The Humanitarian Charter
- The Protection Principles
- The Core Humanitarian Standard
- Humanitarian Standards Partnership Minimum Standards
- The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit – Agenda for Humanity
- The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGO's in Disaster Relief, as endorsed by the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).

Principles

Sovereignty of the state: ChildFund respects the sovereignty of the state and the duty of governments to coordinate and direct national responses to disasters and conflict through government institutions such as the National Disaster Management Office and relevant ministries. Whenever required, ChildFund works in partnership with national and sub-national government to complement their preparation and response initiatives.

Rights and responsibilities: Disaster Risk Management (DRM) is a responsibility of the state, as a duty-bearer for the realisation and enjoyment of rights. The work of other stakeholders – including civil society actors - is complementary to, and enabling of the relationship between right-holders and communities. Outside of supporting response where it may be required, ChildFund and our partners have an important role in ensuring that communities are aware of the rights⁶ and entitlements of affected populations.

Need/vulnerability: ChildFund works with government, civil society organisations and communities to identify those communities and individuals that are most affected and most in need of protection and assistance when responding to disasters and conflict. These individuals include women, children, people with disabilities, and older people, given the disproportionate levels of disaster risk that they face.

Humanitarian imperative: ChildFund affirms “the primacy of the *humanitarian imperative*: that action should be taken to prevent or alleviate human suffering arising out of disaster or conflict, and that nothing should override this principle.”

Localisation: Adopting a ‘local as possible, as international as necessary’ approach, ChildFund Australia work with national and sub-national government, civil society organisations and communities to strengthen local structures, processes and capacity to move disaster preparedness and response decision-making closer to vulnerable communities so as the protection and assistance needs of people affected by disaster or conflict are met.

Link Disaster Risk Reduction, Disaster Preparation and Response: Acknowledging the development/humanitarian nexus, through its DRM, child protection, education, health and SEL sectors, ChildFund works with communities exposed to high levels of disaster risk to reduce their

⁶ The rights to protection and assistance reflected in the provisions of international humanitarian law, human rights and refugee law - [The Sphere Handbook | Standards for quality humanitarian response \(spherestandards.org\)](#)

vulnerability, improve their capacity, and reduce their exposure, so as to improve community resilience; and to prepare for and respond to disasters and/or conflict.

Policy Statement

Through preparedness actions, ChildFund Australia will build Country Office and local partner capacity to carry-out emergency response initiatives, focusing on child protection in humanitarian action, education in emergencies, and NFI and food distribution. ChildFund and its partners will respond in communities where they are operational through development work and through response partners in communities where neither ChildFund nor its development partners are operational.

ChildFund Australia's response will link to that of its civil society, sub-national and national government, and inter-governmental partners. It will build on and utilize local capacity building and existing emergency preparedness plans whenever possible. ChildFund Australia will ensure compliance with the ACFID Code of Conduct in all its emergency funding activities.

Where aligned to our strategic intent, ChildFund Australia will support the response to major disasters and conflict around the world through its various ChildFund Alliance and disaster response partners.

Policy Commitments

ChildFund will:

- Ensure that ChildFund Australia Country Office and partner staff and the communities in which they work - particularly those that face the highest levels of disaster risk - are aware of: 1) the rights and entitlements of affected populations; 2) the feedback and complaint mechanisms that have been established, ideally, through consultation with them.
- Support ChildFund Australia Country Offices and partners to develop Emergency Preparedness Plans (EPP) that detail priority scenarios, contingency plans that contain response strategies enabling a response to priority scenarios, and a plan that details actions to be taken to address capacity gaps in key functional area.
- Plan, budget, dedicate the human resources, and establish the structures and processes at both Sydney and Country Level so as ChildFund Australia and partners have the capacity to implement the Emergency Preparedness Plans.
- Participate in: 1) relevant fora to influence national, ChildFund Alliance, regional and global decisions to improve disaster preparation and response policy, strategy and practice and protect child rights in crisis; 2) disaster response coordination fora (e.g. national government working groups, UN clusters, etc.).
- Through an understanding of disaster risk, prevent and reduce disaster risk through its education, child protection, SEL and health sectors in development contexts; and prepare for and respond to disasters and conflict in the areas of child protection in humanitarian action, education in emergencies, health, and NFI and food distribution.

- Develop partnerships with local actors⁷ that are equitable and ethical and that allow for greater decision-making power of local actors; support and strengthen local actor leadership; strengthen the operational and programmatic DRM capacity of local actors; promote local actor engagement in DRM coordination fora; seek to provide more funding for local actors and ensure transparency specific to financial transactions and budgets. ChildFund Australia will test and promote the use of a contextualised localisation framework through the Plan Consortium under Disaster READY of the Australian Humanitarian Partnership.

Guidance Notes

Consult the International Program Team for support documents, such as templates, resources and checklists, to assist with the implementation of this policy. These include formats and guidelines for preparing and implementing contingency plans.

⁷ Government and civil society actors at national, sub-national and local level

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