

CHILDWORLD

SUMMER 2010



If I were president ...
what children really think

Connecting children across the world
Focusing on child health in Papua New Guinea
Helping Sri Lankan children get back to school

www.childfund.org.au

ChildFund
Australia



FROM THE CEO

Nigel Spence

Dear ChildFund supporters,

Childhoods around the world are changing fast. Globalisation, technology, war, terrorism, climate change, economic development in some countries and deepening inequality in others are having a profound effect on children.

But children are not passive in the face of these global forces. In many communities, children are at the forefront of development and well-placed to speak out on the aspirations of their generation.

The notion that children should be seen *and* heard has steadily gained ground. Children in Australia are represented at school, in local government and in the legal system. International aid agencies are also beginning to consult children about the design of aid programs.

But does it really matter what children think? At ChildFund we believe the question should be, can we afford *not* to listen to children? Silencing children means there is a missed opportunity to harness the energy, insight and fresh perspectives that come with youth.

Our Global Survey (see right) finds a universally shared desire for education. The survey also reflects an optimistic spirit amongst children, so vital to community morale.

Vulnerable children in poor communities can't do it alone. They need support. When this is provided the results can be extraordinary. It can be seen among Australian children who have experienced disadvantage through abuse or neglect, and children in developing countries living in extreme poverty.

When given unconditional support, encouragement and opportunity, children survive and thrive.



Connecting children across the world

Using the latest technologies to help young people communicate

ChildFund Australia has launched a new, interactive education program, aimed at connecting children in Australia with their peers in developing countries. ChildFund Connect, supported by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) provides a space for children and young people, living in different parts of the world, to communicate and learn about each others' lives.

The first pilot of the program is underway, with over 200 school students in Vietnam, Laos and Australia communicating with each other using video, photography and social media. Armed with pocket video cameras, children have interviewed their classmates, asked questions of their peers overseas, and talked about their own lives. In this way, the children have discovered how similar and different their lives are compared to young people in other parts of the world. To date, the favourite topics from Laos, Vietnam and Australia have been food, sports, popular games and free-leisure activities.

One of the most important aspects of ChildFund Connect is to ensure that young people are involved every step of the way. That means they get to have their say on everything, from the design of the website to the way they communicate with their peers in other countries. As the program grows, ChildFund will continue to explore the use of video, photography, online chats and other media to connect children. One Australian participant said: "It is really cool to actually see the kids in Vietnam and Laos answering our questions." ChildFund believes that the best kind of learning occurs when children use their own creativity and inquiring minds to find out about the world.

If you want to find out more about the program, or keep an eye out for ways you can get involved, visit www.childfundconnect.org.

Global children's survey finds that education is their number one priority

Make them Prime Minister and what would they do? Give them a dollar and what would they buy? ChildFund finds out

The ChildFund Alliance global children's survey, *Small Voices, Big Dreams* polled 3,000 children aged 10-12 from 30 developing countries across the world – from Afghanistan to Zambia – as well as children from Australia.

"The survey aimed to find out what is important to children and to help paint a picture of what life is like for children in developing countries, compared with children in developed countries such as Australia," says ChildFund Australia CEO Nigel Spence.

If I were Prime Minister or President

Thirty-percent of children in Australia say that as Prime Minister, the one thing they would do for other children is improve education – a view held by 57% of their peers around the world.

Children had a range of ideas for how this could be done, from improving existing schools to building new ones, providing school fees or making education free, distributing school supplies and textbooks, and increasing access to education for all children.

In your daily life, what one thing do you need most?

Across the world, children rated food and water (33%), and education (34%) as most important. For 43% of Australian children, family and friends were identified as what they need most.

How much of your day is spent working?

Half of the Australian children who undertook the survey said that they spend less than an hour a day working while globally, 43% of children said they spend more than an hour (but less than half a day) working. Almost one-fifth of children worldwide said they worked half a day.

If you had \$1, what would you spend the money on?

Surprisingly, toys weren't at the top of the list for children – 45% of children worldwide said they would spend their money on food or water.

What are you most afraid of?

Children around the world share common fears. One-third of children globally said they were most afraid of animals and insects – with snakes (15%) topping the list – followed by death/accidents/disease (20%) and war/terror/violence (15%).

ChildFund Australia CEO Nigel Spence says: "Childhoods are so different in different countries, yet there are threads of commonality that run through them."

He adds: "Children in poor communities are acutely aware of the daily struggle of their families to provide, and know that their future is intimately linked to getting a good education. Addressing these issues is vital to achieve genuine improvements in children's lives."

Growing up in different worlds

The survey results show the stark differences between a child growing up in Australia and their peers in Afghanistan:

- Over 60% of Afghan children are afraid of war, terror and violence compared to 14% in Australia.
- 50% of Afghan children spend half a day or more doing work or chores; the same proportion of Australian children said they spend less than an hour doing work.
- 42% of children in Afghanistan say the one thing they need most is an education, whereas for 43% of Australian children it is family and friends.
- 40% of children in Afghanistan say if they were the president, they would provide healthcare for children, compared to only 3% in Australia.
- Afghan children placed a much higher importance on providing playgrounds and recreational activities (Afghanistan 19%; Australia 2%) and infrastructure such as roads (Afghanistan 24%; Australia 1%).



ChildFund around the globe



Ethiopia

In the village of Buee, ChildFund Ethiopia has trained village committees to identify and help families in need within the community. At the committee's recommendation, widowed mother Yewubnesh was put forward for a livelihood sponsorship, which arrived for the family in the form of a cow.

A month's supply of milk (around a litre a day) costs \$12. Yewubnesh's cow produces over 10 litres each day, and has also given birth to a heifer. As a result, the family income has substantially increased and means Yewubnesh can support her children in pursuing higher education. In Ethiopia, this is only possible if families can afford the books, fees and the cost of living away from home at college or university.

Daughter Emebet, aged 20, is studying administration at a university in Addis Ababa; Alemu, 18, is now at Dila University studying economics; and son Zeneba, aged 17, is studying horticulture at Walito. Yewubnesh's fifteen year-old son Simi attends Butajira technical college, where he is studying horticulture, while her youngest son, Abush, age 12, attends Buee primary school.

The cow will have another calf soon, as will the heifer. So the family's herd is steadily growing, giving everyone opportunities for the future.



Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's civil war finally ended in 2009, but the 26-year conflict left a devastating mark on the country, destroying infrastructure, and forcing many children and their families into displaced persons camps.

Twelve-year old Ravi and her family have now left the camp behind and returned to their hometown of Kilinochchi. Despite a severe lack of resources, schools are open again. Classes were taught outside, with children sitting on tarps spread on the ground. In addition to the dirt, there was the difficulty of trying to write in that position, and the pain of sitting on hard-packed earth for up to six hours a day. Nearly 5,000 children in Kilinochchi's schools struggled to learn under such conditions.

"We were suffering without a proper place to keep our schoolbooks and documents, including important documents on children," says a local school principal.

ChildFund Sri Lanka provided all nine schools in the area with basic classroom furniture and other materials, including tables and chairs for students and teachers, filing cabinets, white boards, markers and more. Schools will need more resources in the years to come, but at least children like Ravi can now return to their education, and begin working towards a better future.



Guatemala

Young people recently took part in a Youth Spokespersons Workshop, run by ChildFund Guatemala. The benefits of the initiative are twofold – youth learn valuable communication skills which they can use in their working life, and ChildFund is given the opportunity to engage young people in planning new programs and priorities for the local community.

Sessions focused on recent events in the youths' communities as well as issues around nutrition and education. Attendees experienced actual reporting by breaking into groups, choosing a subject and presenting what they knew about it to the audience. Further workshops looked at the more subtle aspects of reporting, such as ethics, use of language, and strong versus weak messaging.

Finally, the youth were tasked with publicising an actual event: the Community Planning Workshop. When this event was over, it was clear that in addition to communications skills, the young people had developed a greater self-confidence in communicating with adults.

In fact, ChildFund staff found that the young people had been the "eyes and ears" of the community-wide process and "helped keep their communities informed before and during the process".

The ChildFund Alliance works where aid is able to flow, implementing community development programs in 55 countries. ChildFund Australia thanks its supporters and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID).



Thailand

When Marneewan moved from Thailand's north-east region to Bangkok over 30 years ago, she quickly learned the struggles of those who migrate to big cities seeking work. Now, as chair of the Project Parents Board established by ChildFund Thailand, she is using her experience to help other families going through similar difficulties.

Marneewan says the problems of children in the city are very different to the problems of children in rural areas. Many of the children in the project live in overcrowded flats or slums, often with four or five families to a room. Drug and alcohol abuse, gambling and violence are common among parents.

“Because parents don't have an education and are cash labourers, they don't encourage children to go to school but rather lead a similar life to them,” says Marneewan. “That's what we're trying to fight against – trying to explain to parents the significance of education and also provide occupational and skills development.”

A range of services is available to the seven communities involved in the project, including scholarships, youth advocacy programs and weekend activities for children and their families. Sixteen Australian sponsors are among those funding the work.



PNG

In Papua New Guinea, 60% of mothers in rural areas have not had their children immunised. This is primarily due to low family incomes – women are unable to pay for transport to take them to hospitals providing immunisation services.

In addition, there are only a limited number of immunisation patrols to the more remote areas. Many parents lack the basic knowledge of what vaccines are given against which diseases. In response ChildFund Papua New Guinea established a community health initiative in 11 villages, with the aim of addressing the primary health care needs of 0-5 year olds.

The program has been successful in training village health volunteers, and establishing new immunisation patrols with district health officers, focusing on measles, polio and tuberculosis. The patrols also monitor child growth and provide mothers with nutritional advice and information related to infant care.

ChildFund has established two new Aid Posts, and updated an existing Aid Post. Improving the health infrastructure for these communities contributes directly to building their capacity, and ChildFund has worked with the provincial governments to find staff to run and maintain these facilities.



Vietnam

Children in Vietnam attended the National Children's Forum in Hanoi, organised by the Vietnamese government, ChildFund Vietnam and other NGOs including Unicef, Save the Children and Plan.

This year, the conference focused on child abuse, violence, exploitation, neglect and trafficking. Over 80 children from 12 provinces took part. During the workshops, children discussed human trafficking, abuse and violence in their communities, finding reasons and proposing solutions to these problems.

Children also had direct dialogue with government representatives, and delivered messages to combat human trafficking to the Vietnamese and Mekong regional leaders.

The Director of the Vietnamese Child Protection Bureau Nguyen Hai Huu said that the children showed their strong confidence and excellent abilities of performance, communication and presentation skills.

Ha Thi Diem, a 14 year-old attendee, said: “I'm so proud and happy to join in such a big event like this. The biggest achievement that I gained is my knowledge of children's rights, child violence and trafficking, team work and communication skills with people from other provinces.”

SPONSOR VISITS

Janelle has a special connection with Cambodia – it is the birthplace of her adopted daughter and her sponsored child

When planning our trip to visit my daughter Rachani's biological family, we decided it was also an ideal time to meet the child whose life chances have been changed by our support.

Sophall, who lives with her family in the small community of Svay Thum, seemed at once both delighted and confused by our arrival, but when given her mother's approval quickly opened the small pack of goodies we had brought along especially for her.

She eloquently answered the questions asked of her, seemed bemused by the sight of one of her sponsors being a Cambodian girl just like herself, and was eager for a girl-to-girl chat when the two scampered off to play at the edge of a nearby pond covered with flowering lotus plants.

Though they had no language in common, I looked on as the two little girls touched the sensitive weed with the tips of their shoes and watched fascinated by its reaction, chased butterflies together, and stretched themselves to their limits as they attempted to reach the unreachable flowers growing on the pond.

While they played, Sophall's mother chatted to me through a translator about her life in Cambodia. She expressed her thankfulness for the work being done in her community – including improved access to water through a new well and health education initiatives that have improved the quality of life for her family. She also spoke of her hopes for the future, particularly the benefits that a school and education can offer her children. All things which are taken for granted as their rights by my own family.

Finally, it was time to call the girls in from their play in the sun and to say goodbye to Sophall. There were smiles and best wishes all around – from the community members who

had come to meet us, and from one mother and her daughter to another mother and her daughter.

At the day's end, and after an exhausting but thrilling 6-hour journey

by 4WD, it was impossible not to feel the sense of self-gratification and happiness that comes from witnessing the differences being made to the life of this little Cambodian girl.



Rachani and Sophall with their mums

OUR COMMUNITY

ChildFund's work in developing countries would not be possible without the amazing support of everyday Australians

Milkshake the cow

The pupils in year 4 at Broughton Anglican College recently participated in the 'Picasso Cow' competition run by Dairy Australia. They were given a life-sized fiberglass cow, and used the theme 'Fuel for Life' to decorate the cow.

The class wanted to highlight the importance of dairy products for

children living in Australia and developing countries. This was also a great opportunity for them to raise funds for ChildFund Australia, and buy a real cow for a family in East Timor.

The fundraising began with a competition to vote on the name of the cow. Students voted with a gold coin donation. The result? A cow called Milkshake! The new name sparked

more fundraising opportunities, including a Mad Scientist Milkshake Day, a milkbar for dairy sales and a gold coin longest line competition.

"We were very happy to be awarded a second place in the Macarthur region!" said teacher, Julie Schulz. "We were also very happy to have raised enough money for three cows, and have enough left over to browse the ChildFund Australia



Donations with a Difference catalogue and choose more things to buy," said Julie.

Turning trash into treasure

A newly-formed youth group in Killarney Heights, NSW with a passion for helping others set themselves a big task of making a difference to the lives of children and youth around the world.

The six members, Amy, Darcy, Emma, Elizabeth, Marnie and Rhiannon, from the Baha'i Junior Youth Group decided to run their own garage sale. The team's objectives were to purchase a buffalo for a family in Indonesia, so they needed to raise \$560.

In preparation, the team gathered books, clothing and household items from friends, family and neighbours so there was plenty for shoppers to buy. They also created posters so shoppers knew that every cent would be donated to ChildFund Australia.

On the day of the sale, the group told shoppers about their ambitious aim, and noticed that many people left their change as a further donation towards the buffalo.

The group managed to raise over \$900 and were able to purchase a water buffalo, four goats, twelve fruit trees and ten baby chickens from ChildFund Australia's Donations with a Difference program.



The adventure of a lifetime

Have you always wanted to take an adventurous break that also allows you to help a local community and children overseas?

ChildFund Australia has come up with an amazing 11-day challenge that gives you the opportunity to experience our community development work in Vietnam over two days, followed by four days of trekking through stunning Sapa.

You could be part of a small group of adventurers who take on the challenge of fundraising for a new preschool for 60 children. Currently, the old preschool is constructed of old buffalo cages, and there are no learning materials, chairs, tables or toys.

Register to be part of this adventure in October 2011 by calling 1300 905 188 or visiting www.childfund.org.au for more information.

Our supporters show their commitment in so many ways. Thank you!

- Luke is cycling from Cairo, Egypt to Capetown, South Africa
- Rockdoctors have dedicated a song to ChildFund on iTunes
- Emma is raising money to climb Mount Kilimanjaro, Tanzania
- Isabella sponsors 25 children around the world
- Honeymoonfund is supporting ChildFund on their website
- Morteza is fundraising to celebrate his birthday
- Students at Monash University are running film nights
- Eric and Ivy have been sponsoring children with ChildFund for 20 years

For more information about how you can support ChildFund's work in developing countries, visit www.childfund.org.au/act/fundraise

NEWS IN BRIEF



Project Humanity

Providing emergency support to children in Indonesia

ChildFund Australia's Project Humanity program has been responding to the humanitarian emergency caused by continuing volcanic eruptions by Mount Merapi.

Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has called the emergency a national disaster, with over 300,000 children and their families forced to leave their homes and take shelter in temporary evacuation centres.

ChildFund has set up Child Centred Spaces in the camps to ensure that the basic needs of displaced children are being met. In addition, these centres provide children with a place to draw, play and tell stories, keeping them occupied and providing them with a distraction from the traumatic situation.

ChildFund has distributed hygiene kits (which include soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes and nappies) to evacuated families staying in shelters. Families have also received emergency food supplies as well as clothing, mattresses and blankets.

Three-year-old David is staying in a camp in the Magelang district with his family. His mother, Wanti, says her family's village is located only 5km from the mountain's peak.

Wanti says: "We want to go home, but we don't know when that will be. I don't know what state our house will be in when we return. My husband sometimes ventures up Merapi's slopes to check on our cattle and goats, but I tell him it's probably best not to check on the house or he will cry."

Join our online community

Want to get regular updates about ChildFund Australia's work in developing countries? Or would you like to chat to other ChildFund supporters?

Then why not follow us on Twitter, or become a fan of our Facebook page. It's easy, just visit www.twitter.com/childfundau or www.facebook.com/childfundaustalia and get involved in our online community.

The year in review

ChildFund Australia's Annual Report for 2009-10 financial year is now available to download from our website at www.childfund.org.au/publications.

Find the perfect pressie

This Christmas you can put a smile on the face of someone you love and change the lives of children most in need. ChildFund's Donations with a Difference catalogue offers great Christmas gift ideas that you can buy in honour of your friends and family.

You could choose baby chickens for the animal lovers, school kits for the scholars, or even a football and net for sporty types. We send your funds overseas so our partners can deliver your gift to the children who really need them. We'll send you a gift card for each item you purchase, so you can show your loved ones the gift you have donated in their honour.

Buying unforgettable Christmas gifts is so easy. Just visit childfund.org.au/gifts and make your choices

ChildFund Australia

Working in partnership with children and their communities to create lasting and meaningful change by supporting long-term community development and promoting children's rights

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