ChildFund Australia Theory of Change

ChildFund Australia has a Theory of Change, which outlines the drivers of poverty the organisation works to address as a result of its experience, technical expertise and knowledge. ChildFund Australia works across four 'themes': 1) Assess to Assets; 2) Voice, Agency & Power; 3) Protection; and 4) Formal Systems. ChildFund Australia's MEL Framework seeks to build an evidence base to test the validity of this Theory of Change and the assumptions underpinning it.

Access to Assets

ChildFund Australia believes children, youth and adults are poor because they are deprived of key assets, including human, capital, environmental, and social assets.

- **Human assets** include individual's knowledge, education, skills, access to information and people that support people in their development such as caregivers, teachers, nurses and doctors;
- **Capital assets** refers to physical infrastructure, equipment, materials, as well as the financial services and economic opportunities needed to generate income to meet needs and build a future;
- **Environmental assets** include natural resources such as clean water and crops needed for food, income and health;
- **Social assets** refer to culture, norms, attitudes, social institutions and structures, and the networks that support and empower individuals such as friends, families and groups.

ChildFund Australia increases peoples' access to assets by providing physical infrastructure, and supporting marginalised groups such as children, youth, women, people with disability, and ethnic groups to have equitable access to existing services, resources, tools and markets. It also improves the quality of local support systems and networks. ChildFund Australia's projects seek to ensure people have the physical resources and materials they need, and works to provide access to information, knowledge and skills to develop their capacities and fulfil their potential.

Some examples of how ChildFund Australia's projects address access to assets:

Health:	Increasing access to TB prevention and treatment; building and equipping aid posts
Education:	Ensuring children are able to read and write to national standards
Child Protection:	Increasing the skills and capacity of Child Protection Groups
DRR:	Ensuring people know what to do in a disaster
Social Emotional Learning:	Implementing youth loans and savings schemes

Voice, Agency & Power

ChildFund Australia believes children and youth are poor because they lack opportunities, experience discrimination or marginalisation in their societies and are prevented from contributing to decisions which affect their lives.

Children and youth can be excluded due to power differentials in their families, communities, societies, and across nations, and experience discrimination and exclusion due to gender and sexuality, disability, minority status, language, legal status, ethnicity and other exclusion factors. They may be excluded because they lack:

- **Opportunities** – children and youth may not be given opportunities to express their views and be heard and engage in informal and formal decision making;
- **Confidence and capacity** –children and youth may not have experience in expressing themselves and may lack the confidence and ability to engage effectively;
- **Safe spaces to speak up –** children and youth, particularly minority groups, may be denied the opportunity to become involved in their communities and give their views in a safe environment, where they are listened to and respected.

ChildFund Australia helps to build the confidence, sense of self-worth and resilience of children and youth (Power within). It also sets up platforms that enable children and other community members to feed into decision-making processes and helps to provide children and youth with the information and skills they need to effectively express themselves and engage with others to bring about the changes they want to see in their lives (Power to). In some cases, it also seeks to promote collective action (Power with).

Some examples of how ChildFund Australia's projects build voice, agency and power:

Health:	Adolescent peer educators learning and educating others on sexual reproductive health
Education:	Setting up school councils enabling students to influence school decisions
Child Protection:	Supporting community based child protection committees to present their concerns to government authorities
DRR:	Supporting youth DRR Champions to lead community disaster risk mapping
Social Emotional Learning:	Supporting youth to be leaders and active contributors to local government planning processes

Protection

ChildFund Australia believes some people are more vulnerable due to their exposure to risk from economic shocks, environmental damage, lack of legal protection, civil and political unrest, armed conflict, corruption, and displacement.

Some children, youth and women are also more vulnerable to violence, neglect, abuse and exploitation because others hold more power over them including:

- **Physical capacity** – whereby physical strength is used to harm, abuse, dominate or control others;
- **Financial capacity** – which can leave children, youth and women vulnerable to exploitation, dependency, and in unequal relationships;
- **Decision making** – some people have greater status, connections, wealth and decision-making power which can result in the rights of others being overlooked, ignored or actively violated;
- **Information** – both duty bearers and rights holders may not have access to the information they need to seek and provide protection.

ChildFund Australia seeks to reduce children, youth and adults' vulnerability to disasters through its disaster risk reduction projects and responds, directly or through partners, to help those impacted by natural or human-caused disasters. ChildFund Australia targets and works with different groups that may experience increased risks of abuse, neglect, violence or exploitation as a result of age, gender, disability or social status. It works directly with power-holders and people in positions of authority to raise awareness, promote attitudinal change and prevent abuse. It also seeks to strengthen the systems and networks in place to respond to protection issues and violations.

Some examples of how ChildFund Australia's projects protect children, youth and adults:

Health: Strengthening growth monitoring, screening and referral systems to address parents/caregivers' neglect of child nutrition problems

Education: Educating parents, caregivers and teachers on the negative effect of corporal punishment on children

Child Protection: Training parents and caregivers on positive discipline practices and strategies

DRR: Alternative and sustainable agricultural practices

Social Emotional Learning: Teaching young people about online safety

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Formal Systems

ChildFund believes children, youth and adults are poor because they lack access to formal systems through which social services are delivered. Services are often:

- **Not accessible** to all, with some people experiencing barriers due to location, ethnicity and culture, language and disability;
- **Low quality** as a result of limited funds, physical, human and technical resources, and lack of training and skills development opportunities for staff;
- **Not responsive to needs** as they are not appropriately designed and delivered to respond to people's needs and circumstances.

ChildFund Australia helps to maintain and strengthen existing formal systems. It increases access to formal systems by working with government, civil society organisations and in some cases the private sector to ensure their services reach marginalised groups. It helps to improve systems by providing technical support to strengthen government policy, improve planning processes, and develop administrative and information management systems. ChildFund Australia provides training to government staff delivering social services such as Education, Health and Child Protection to improve their technical capacity to provide quality services responsive to needs.

Some examples of how ChildFund Australia's support formal systems:

Health:	Supporting national government to develop national TB treatment protocols
Education:	Capacity building of government officials on supportive supervision of teachers and school management, governance and accountability
Child Protection:	Conducting case management training for frontline social workers
DRR:	Supporting central government to develop emergency contingency plans
Social Emotional Learning:	Supporting local government employees to engage youth in local decision-making processes