

# Attachment 2.10 Social Welfare Assistance and Development Policy

## Version 3.1

### Introduction

ChildFund Australia aims, over the long term, to achieve sustained positive changes in the wellbeing of children and support programs that do not perpetuate dependency.

We understand that welfare, in the form of direct provision of services, money or goods is likely to improve the short-term wellbeing of people in grave need<sup>1</sup>. We also acknowledge that individuals may require immediate assistance, especially in the early stages of our engagement with a community. If immediate assistance is envisioned in these early stages, a clear description of the interventions and how they will be reduced over time must be included in the approved Program Outline.

Addressing immediate needs by providing direct welfare support is not ChildFund Australia's focus and will not be part of project and program design. This is because it offers no guarantee of sustained improvement. It doesn't give recipients the opportunity to participate or to improve their capacity to manage their community's long-term development. It also doesn't address the root causes of the situation.

ChildFund seek to operate instead by offering support to build national social welfare structures by better equipping them with the resources they require to support their own populations.

### Key Principles

**Social Welfare Assistance:** A government program that provides financial or material aid to individuals, families or groups who are not able to support themselves for a variety of reasons. Welfare programs are designed to provide short-term support to individuals, families or groups in crisis and address the root cause for the presenting crisis. Elements of social welfare support may be provided through not-for-profit organisations to support individuals, families or groups in crisis short term, however should always be done so with collaboration and oversight of the community or nationally mandated body for welfare.

**Community Development:** The following components characterise community development;

- a process where community members are supported by agencies to identify and take collective action on issues which are important to them.
- empowers community members and creates stronger and more connected communities to meet the needs of their own populations. In the case of social welfare assistance this should be support to communities and government to provide assistant to their own populations.
- a holistic approach grounded in principles of empowerment, human rights, inclusion, social justice, self-determination and collective action. As with the provision of social welfare assistance, on a community and individual level, welfare should be used as short-term support to address longer term problems

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<sup>1</sup> This policy does not cover humanitarian, or emergency-response situations; see the Emergency Response Policy.

- considers community members to be experts in their lives and communities, and values community knowledge and wisdom. Therefore all support to social welfare assistance should be done in line with community and national efforts to advance welfare support and reform.
- programs are led by community members at every stage - from deciding on issues to selecting and implementing actions, and evaluation. Therefore community, national and subnational levels of governments should always be involved with program design that incorporates social welfare assistance to ensure leadership in its long-term trajectory
- has an explicit focus on the redistribution of power to address the causes of inequality and disadvantage away from the most powerful to the most marginalised.
- not one-off events, it is medium to long term support in building the capabilities of communities to be empowered to address their own needs.

### **Policy Statement**

ChildFund Australia will not engage in the direct delivery of short-term direct welfare assistance, unless this is couched within a broader community development program. This broader program must be designed to enhance social and economic conditions for children and young people. It must also enhance individuals', organisations' and government's' capacity over the long term. Any direct assistance will be provided through a third party other than ChildFund who are part of the national or subnational environment tasked with long term social welfare, care and assistance to affected populations.

ChildFund will design and deliver medium to long term projects focusing on building the capacity of national and sub national government structures to be able to deliver sort term, long term and direct holistic welfare assistance to their own population. The design of such projects will be done in conjunction with national and subnational levels of government and compliment expressed efforts to strengthen the national social welfare system. The overall aim is for communities and governments to be equipped to provide adequate and timely support services to their own population. Such projects may budget for contribution to the provision of basic service cost, however these services, direct or referral, will be managed by entities other than ChildFund Australia.

### **Policy Commitments**

ChildFund Australia Country and Regional Office senior management will:

- Assist staff and partners to understand the importance of strengthening local capacity in order to manage sustainable development initiatives that are led by communities.
- Establish local procedures which clarify to staff when and how direct welfare assistance will be provided<sup>2</sup>.

ChildFund Australia Country and Regional Office program staff will:

- Work to understand community, national and sub national priorities in the provision of social welfare to their entire population and where the role of ChildFund exists in supporting these objectives to be reached.
- Increase communities' capacity to advocate for government services and upholding of rights for all in their community.

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<sup>2</sup> These procedures must be in place whenever any direct assistance is provided.

- Provide direct assistance through mandated entities to individual children and families only when this is delivered within a broader community development program that is designed to address the root causes of problems.
- If under special circumstances direct assistance must be provided by ChildFund, distribution and provision of services must follow procedures issued by senior management and undergo planned and rigorous monitoring.
- Not discriminate between children in a community where we work on any basis, including enrolment or sponsorship status.
- Plan to phase out any direct assistance activities not existing in a broader development program.

## Document Information

Document details	
<b>Name of document</b>	Social Welfare Assistance and Development Policy
<b>Owner</b>	International Programs Director
<b>Approved By</b>	Board of Directors
<b>Date of Approval</b>	27 September 2019
<b>Date of Effect</b>	27 September 2019
<b>Assigned Review Period</b>	Every three years after Date of Approval.
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	27 September 2022

Version control				
Version No.	Version Date	Amendment Details	Amended By	Approved By
1.0	13/02/2008			
2.0	11/06/2008			Board of Directors
3.0	06/02/2013			Board of Directors
3.1	27/09/2019		Head of Programs	International Programs Director