



Strategic Directions 2020-21

Addressing COVID-19 through response and recovery

June 2020

ChildFund
Australia

Background

ChildFund Australia's *Strategic Directions 2020-21*, approved by ChildFund Australia's Board in May 2020, establishes the organisation's key objectives and priorities for the coming financial year.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been unprecedented, leading to devastating health, economic and social effects felt worldwide. As the diverse and severe impacts continue to be felt, this changing environment presents a host of new challenges for our work, but also new opportunities.

ChildFund Australia must adapt and evolve if we are to meet these opportunities and challenges head on and continue to create lasting and meaningful change for children. The *Strategic Directions 2020-21* ensure ChildFund Australia has a roadmap in place as it navigates a pathway from the COVID-19 crisis to the new normal.

The strategic priority areas are also aligned with the realisation of the ChildFund Alliance COVID-19 Response Plan.

Focus on purpose & people

ChildFund Australia consider its people and partners as talented, committed and essential contributors in the delivery of our vision, mission and COVID-19 response.

We are confident they will uphold the organisation's values through this period of disruption. ChildFund is committed to supporting its people through consultation, growing a work environment which is responsive to change, and working together moving forward.

Process

The development of the proposed *Strategic Plan 2020-2024* began in late 2019, with extensive consultation undertaken with the Board, Country Office Leadership Team (COLT) and Sydney staff through workshops and surveys.

Under the leadership of the new CEO, the Board gave formal approval to a process and timeline for the development of the new strategic plan in February 2020, with the new plan expected to be finalised by July 2020.

As the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to unfold worldwide, the effects of the crisis are expected to be profound and long-term. Given the significant uncertainty and rapidly changing context, ChildFund Australia's Executive Team (ET) proposed pausing the development of the *Strategic Plan 2020-2024*.

Instead a set of interim *Strategic Directions* were developed and agreed for FY 2020-21, the four priorities identified are explored in greater detail in this paper. In addition, following discussions at a strategic planning workshop in March 2020, revised organisational vision and mission statements have been proposed, which provide greater clarity on the organisation's purpose in a world increasingly characterised by inequality, climate change and health insecurity.

The revised vision and mission were submitted to the Board for review and discussion at a special meeting on 10 June 2020, and have informed the development of the *Strategic Directions 2020-21*.

Strategic priorities



1. Protect, empower and educate children

As the health, economic and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to unfold, ChildFund Australia will prioritise response and recovery through our child-focused development programs. ChildFund Australia will work to safeguard hard-won development gains and respond to the challenges being faced by the children and their communities in our priority countries and regions.

Our approach

- Develop and implement a COVID-19 Response and Recovery plan for 2020-21, with specific work plans for all Country and Regional Offices and the Pacific.
- Mainstream COVID-19 prevention and response in relevant programming to address the risks to, and impacts on, children.
- Actively pivot funding and appeals to respond to COVID-19 and secure longer-term funding for recovery efforts in ChildFund Australia's priority geographic regions.
- Evaluate and demonstrate results from our COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan and learn from our experience.
- Amplify our voice to become an influential advocate among those who shape public policy, with a focus on addressing the impact of the pandemic on children.

2. Sustain and strengthen our organisation

ChildFund Australia will take action to ensure the long-term sustainability of the organisation and work to boost financial reserves. Building on a strong foundation, we will take bold decisions to ensure ChildFund Australia continues to deliver lasting and meaningful change for children and their communities into the future.

Our approach

- Ensuring a robust organisational budget is in place for FY20-21 that prioritises program funding and allows for investment in revenue-generating activities and key initiatives.
- The budget will also consider financial sustainability beyond FY20-21 by ensuring appropriate resources and reserves are available for the future.
- Explore opportunities for financial relief.
- Investigate and apply temporary staffing changes and conditions.

Strategic priorities

3. Optimise fundraising

Over the past five years, we have built a sound foundation through diversifying revenue and increasing investment in fundraising products. We will continue to build on our strengths and adapt to the changing environment over the next year by refining our fundraising model, exploring new pilot opportunities, optimising products and pursuing new acquisition methods.

Our approach

- Focus immediate efforts on supporter retention, reactivation, upgrade and add-on activities to maximise fundraising return.
- Resume and optimise face-to-face fundraising when the environment allows.
- Generate awareness of the impact of COVID-19 on children in our priority countries through a greater media presence and expanded social media activity.
- Explore emerging fundraising models that align with our vision and mission, particularly digital and telemarketing opportunities.
- Build on existing relationships with sporting and corporate organisations and investigate new marketing avenues, such as sports marketing and CSR sponsorship.

4. Innovate and change

We will embrace the opportunities that global disruption brings and actively work to re-think and re-imagine more flexible and agile ways to operate. We will use innovation to amplify and accelerate our mission, deliver greater impact and effectiveness, and improve organisational efficiency.

Our approach

- Explore opportunities to drive change for children in Australia and the Pacific, with a focus on child protection, child rights and youth leadership.
- Focus and prioritise our expertise in education, child protection, and social and emotional learning (incorporating sports for development) in our development programs and public engagement.
- Review and revise ChildFund Australia's structures and ways of working to ensure the organisation remains dynamic, efficient and fit-for-purpose. Investigate and embrace alternative staff structures that enable flexible technical oversight of programs.
- Explore and develop models to increase localisation and reduce ChildFund Australia's footprint, including the potential opportunities that may arise from mergers and partnerships.

OUR VISION

A world without poverty where all children and young people can say: "I am safe. I am educated. I contribute. I have a future."

OUR MISSION

We partner to create community and systems change which enables vulnerable children and young people, in all their diversity, to assert and realise their rights.

COVID-19 Response Plan Priorities

For children in poor communities, the collateral damage from COVID-19 is just as big a risk as the virus itself.

Schools have closed, and many children may never return. Food is scarce, due to disrupted supply chains and lockdown laws. Health clinics are struggling to cope, and many immunisation campaigns have been suspended. The psychological stress on families is enormous, with parents losing work and facing an uncertain future. Sadly, this has resulted in an increase in domestic violence, with children both experiencing or witnessing abuse in their homes.

The five priorities of our response intersect to help stop the spread of the virus and mitigate its potential harm, whether direct or indirect, to children and young people.

1. Stop COVID-19 from infecting children and communities

We are distributing soap, hand sanitiser, gloves and masks to families, and personal protective equipment to health workers. Community hand-washing stands are being constructed, and hygiene information is being provided. For children being treated for COVID-19 or subject to quarantine measures, we are creating child-friendly spaces with age-appropriate toys and books.

2. Help children continue learning

With schools closed, we are supporting children's education through learning programs delivered online or via radio. We remain vigilant and prepared to address the increased risk of online sexual abuse that accompanies children's greater exposure to the internet, and are focused on increasing the knowledge and self-protective behaviors of children and families who have been moved to rely on the online environment. For students without online access, we are distributing home learning kits with materials and guidelines for their use.

3. Keep children safe from harm

We are supporting community-based child protection systems that identify and respond to cases of child abuse or exploitation, and providing virtual, online and phone-based counselling and emergency safety planning for women and children experiencing violence. We are supporting national social and protective essential services so that they can continue operating, and delivering rapid training to their staff so that they can screen for and respond to vulnerabilities in families. Temporary shelters have been provided for young people who live on the street, and safe care arranged for children separated from their caregivers due to COVID-19 treatment or prevention measures.

4. Ensure children get the food they need

To help the most vulnerable families keep food on the table, pay rent and cover other basic household needs, we are providing cash transfers. Where possible, we are distributing food and basic household items directly to communities, carefully abiding by COVID-19 protection measures.

5. Supporting young people to play an active role in the response

We will be surveying children to understand their concerns, ideas and opinions. Their feedback will influence our program response. Young people are being given the tools to develop their own videos to share with their peers and the wider community. As we work with governments, local partners and communities to respond to the pandemic, we will ensure children's voices are heard.

Together we will fight to protect children from the direct impacts of COVID-19, and from the cascade of effects caused by the virus, including the economic crisis that is unfolding throughout the world.