

Impact Report

2023

ChildFund
Australia

BECAUSE
EVERY CHILD
NEEDS A
CHILDHOOD

Thank you for your support and generosity!



Together, we've been able to create positive change for children and young people around the world, despite the ongoing adversity that many families and communities continue to face.

Your commitment has enabled ChildFund and

our local partners to support children and young people to be as safe, healthy, and educated as possible. This has been our purpose, passion, and mission for almost four decades.

This year saw an even greater need to deliver urgent assistance in times of crises. In the Ukraine, donations provided displaced children and families with food, medicine, and shelter. Response efforts led by ChildFund Alliance members, WeWorld and ChildFund Deutschland, in Ukraine and in neighbouring countries, have reached more than 110,000 people to date. In Moldova, more than 3,000 Ukrainian children have access to safe spaces where they can play, learn, and experience a sense of stability. This support has been so important for children during times of great distress.

In Kenya, your donations delivered emergency food and water to families facing ongoing drought, which worsened in 2022 and has led to widespread hunger. Teso and her three-year-old daughter, Kabale, are one of the hundreds

of families in Kenya who received food including maize, beans, and rice.

In Cambodia, children living with a disability are now accessing a quality education, thanks to ChildFund Australia supporters. Fifteen-year-old Seila, who shares his story on page 4, is one of the many children who are now back in school.

Our sport for development initiatives continue to expand and strengthen. ChildFund Rugby was again named the principal charity partner for the Rugby World Cup, played in New Zealand in 2022. Through our strong partnership with World Rugby and with the support of people in Australia, children and young people learnt how to handle conflicts, challenged gender stereotypes, understood the importance of mental wellbeing, and accessed leadership opportunities.

The inspiring commitment of thousands of people like you, families, businesses, and the Australian government has made all this, and so much more, possible for children and young people living in poverty. Thank you for believing every child needs a childhood and contributing to a better world. Together, we can support more children and young people to say: "I am safe. I am educated. I contribute. I have a future."

Margaret Sheehan
CEO ChildFund Australia

Arush, age 7, has a nutritious meal at a community kitchen in Sri Lanka.



Better nutrition for a better childhood

In Sri Lanka, children and their families are experiencing devastating food shortages and rising living costs. The result is many children are going hungry and ongoing shortages are leading to malnutrition.

At the local village level, community kitchens are one solution. These kitchens are run by dedicated mothers and volunteers, with food and equipment supplied by ChildFund Sri Lanka. They feed families at risk of hunger in their community by providing large, healthy, and well-balanced meals three times a week.

Children aged 0 to 5 years old are given priority for the nutritious meals.

"This place provides healthy food for Liyoni*," said one mother, Mandari*. "Otherwise, it's just rice and vegetables for her at home."

ChildFund supports community kitchens throughout the country, with 1,230 families served at 17 kitchens in Monaragala District alone.

Isuri* says her children love the food at the community kitchen. "I don't know where we'd get our meals from if this wasn't here," she said.

Mothers leading the kitchen also share valuable knowledge to other parents about how to prepare healthy meals for their children at home. Families attending the kitchens also receive seeds, equipment, and training to start their own gardens. While the current focus is on dealing with the immediate food scarcity, these skills and knowledge will assist families in the future.

Creating youth-friendly health services

Sarah*, 22, lives in a community in Jinja District, Uganda. She noticed that some girls in her community were leaving school early because of unwanted pregnancies or sexual health issues, including HIV/AIDS. While a health post was available in her community, it was not always accessed by young people.

"Because the staff at the health post were older, young people didn't feel comfortable approaching them for information because of the stigma attached to reproductive health," Sarah said.

Sarah talked to ChildFund Uganda staff at the health post to see how they could work together to support young people. "I was encouraged to study a certificate course in counselling, which I completed successfully," she said.

Today, Sarah is working as a youth counsellor at the health post. She has seen a huge increase in the number

of young people attending the facility for information on reproductive health, and counselling sessions.

"This is because as a peer, they feel that I understand their issues, and can support them to get the right services," she said. "There are now more than 100 youth seeking reproductive health services at the facility every month. Before we would only get about 30 people coming in."

Sarah is also a Voice Now Champion, a ChildFund initiative empowering young people to be leaders and contribute to positive change in their communities.

"As a Voice Now Champion and counsellor, I believe I am making a difference in improving the lives of adolescents and young people trying to access reproductive healthcare," Sarah said.

ChildFund Australia is an independent international development organisation that works to reduce poverty for children in developing communities. ChildFund Australia is a member of the ChildFund Alliance – a global network of 11 organisations, which assists almost 23 million children and families in 70 countries.

Address: Level 8, 162 Goulburn Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010
Phone: 1800 023 600
Email: info@childfund.org.au
Website: www.childfund.org.au



Editor: ChildFund Australia communications staff

Photography: ChildFund staff

Print and distribution: JA Wales Printers

Front cover: Pukiksana, age 4, Sri Lanka.
Photo: Jake Lyell for ChildFund

Back cover: Patience, age 7, Uganda.
Photo: Agaba Steven for ChildFund

STAY CONNECTED

/childfundaustalia

/childfundau

/childfundaustalia

/childfundaustalia

**Names have been changed.*

Making education accessible for all children

Fifteen-year-old Seila* (pictured right) from Battambang Province in Cambodia wants to be a teacher. "I want future generations, especially children living with a disability, to benefit from education like I have," he said.

Seila has difficulty walking and sleeping because of pain in his hip. He developed a cyst on his hip when he was nine years old and while it was removed, the pain never went away.

Over time it prevented him from walking or riding his bike to school, a 10-kilometre journey from his home. Without alternative transport, Seila sometimes missed class and fell behind in his studies. Seila was able to undergo a second surgery to correct his hip pain and a new leg brace has enabled him to attend school.

He is hopeful about the future and a step closer to his goal of becoming a teacher. "Now that I'm going to school regularly, I'm doing better at my studies," he said. "I placed sixth out of 28 students this year."

Children living with a disability are among the most marginalised groups in Cambodia and across the world. Negative social attitudes towards disability in communities often lead to children missing out on an education.

ChildFund Cambodia and local partners, Khmer NGO for Education and the Cambodian Disabled People's Organization, are working with families and communities to improve the lives of more than 360 children living with a disability.

ChildFund has helped to provide disability aids and equipment, create inclusive learning environments, and change discriminatory attitudes towards disabilities. Teachers are learning how to include children who live with a disability in the classroom, and parents and community leaders are learning how to overcome social stigma and advocate for the needs of their children.

Stigma and attitudes towards disabilities in the community are now starting to change. "My friends know more about my disability and how to support me," Seila said. "They encourage me to attend class every day. They tell me not to give up because I can achieve anything anyone else can."

Seila's community is leading the way on a Disability Empowerment and Education project supported by ChildFund. The project aims to provide children living with a disability with basic rights, including access to health care, education, and the opportunity to contribute to their community.



Guiding mums and bubs to reach their full potential

Meet Lisbeth (pictured left), a Guide Mother from the Guatemalan highlands region. She works with mums, teaching them different ways to nurture their children's development.

Lisbeth also advocates for the resources and opportunities needed for every child in her community in Guatemala to reach their full potential. This year on International Women's Day in March, Lisbeth struck a pose and embraced equity.



Safer housing helps children stay in school

Ten-year-old Lan* (pictured below in cream shirt) lives in a remote community in Vietnam. Lan is in Grade 5 and the nearest school to her home is 12km away. The only way she can get to school is by walking.

When Lan was eight years old, she and her younger sister and cousin lived in a small shack close to their school to prevent having to walk the long distances and to make sure they could get to class on time. The shack was made from wood and bamboo and did not protect the children from the weather. Their parents took turns visiting them during the week, bringing food, but they felt unsafe when they were alone. "We were afraid of ghosts and scared of losing our roof when there was heavy rain," Lan said.

When Lan started Grade 5, ChildFund Vietnam supported a project to build a semi-boarding house attached to her school, with fully equipped bedrooms, bathrooms, a kitchen, and a cafeteria. School leaders and teachers were trained on how to manage and supervise the semi-boarding house, and students learnt the skills needed to live independently.

Lan, her sister, and cousin are now living in the semi-boarding school. "I love it here because I have many friends to play with, and many older children who are always happy to help me with schoolwork," Lan said.

Lan is happier, safer, and can focus on her education. "I'm not afraid of ghosts anymore! The school gate is

locked at night, and there are teachers on duty in case we need anything."

ChildFund is working with the Vietnamese Government to ensure Minimum Standards of Care become the responsibility of all school leaders, and are well understood and implemented across all semi-boarding schools in Vietnam in the future.



The importance of preschools

In many rural and remote communities in Timor-Leste, a lack of resources and information about early childhood education means many children do not get the best start to their education.

ChildFund Timor-Leste is advocating to the Timorese Government and engaging families about the importance of early childhood education and helping to create quality preschools.

Father-of-three Florencio is one parent who has been taking part in ChildFund-supported early childhood information sessions. His youngest son is attending a preschool where all children have the right to play. They have engaging learning supplies and receive child-focused learning. The preschool is a place where Florencio's son can meet and play with other children.

Florencio says the most enthusiastic students are those who have attended a ChildFund-

supported preschool. "Preschool prepares and helps children be more confident learners," he said. "They have a head start in reading and the alphabet, which is very important for all children because their minds are so open at that age."

Florencio has been committed to making sure his children can access a quality education since learning about the importance of preschools. He walks with his children to school every morning before going to work on the village farm. He then returns to the school in the afternoon to pick them up.

Through this commitment, Florencio has become a role model for other men in his community. He is demonstrating that education is the business of both father and mother. "My dream for my children is for them to have success in every way they choose," Florencio said.

Maria's championing the rights and resilience of young people

Gender inequality, childhood experiences, and harmful forms of masculinity in Papua New Guinea (PNG) have led to some of the highest levels of gender-based violence in the world. These issues, and a lack of basic reproductive health knowledge, have also led to high rates of early pregnancy.

ChildFund Papua New Guinea is empowering young people by developing their emotional and social skills, and helping to educate them on sexual and reproductive health. Youth are also learning about respectful relationships and developing skills to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Maria*, 21, (pictured right) took part in a ChildFund-supported project, led in partnership with the Young Women's Christian Association, after losing her baby. Initially, Maria found a supportive community who helped her to manage the immense grief she was experiencing. "Once I joined the group it helped me," Maria said. "It made me feel like I was going to be OK."

Over time, Maria learnt emotional and social skills to build her resilience to overcome everyday conflicts and challenges. "I learnt that I could share my experience with other girls," she said. "We need to have good peers and good friends."

Today, Maria is a Youth Peace and Protection Champion in her village. As a youth champion she is passing on the skills she has learnt through ChildFund's project to her peers and helping other young people in her community to overcome their own challenges. Maria feels supported and hopeful about her future again.



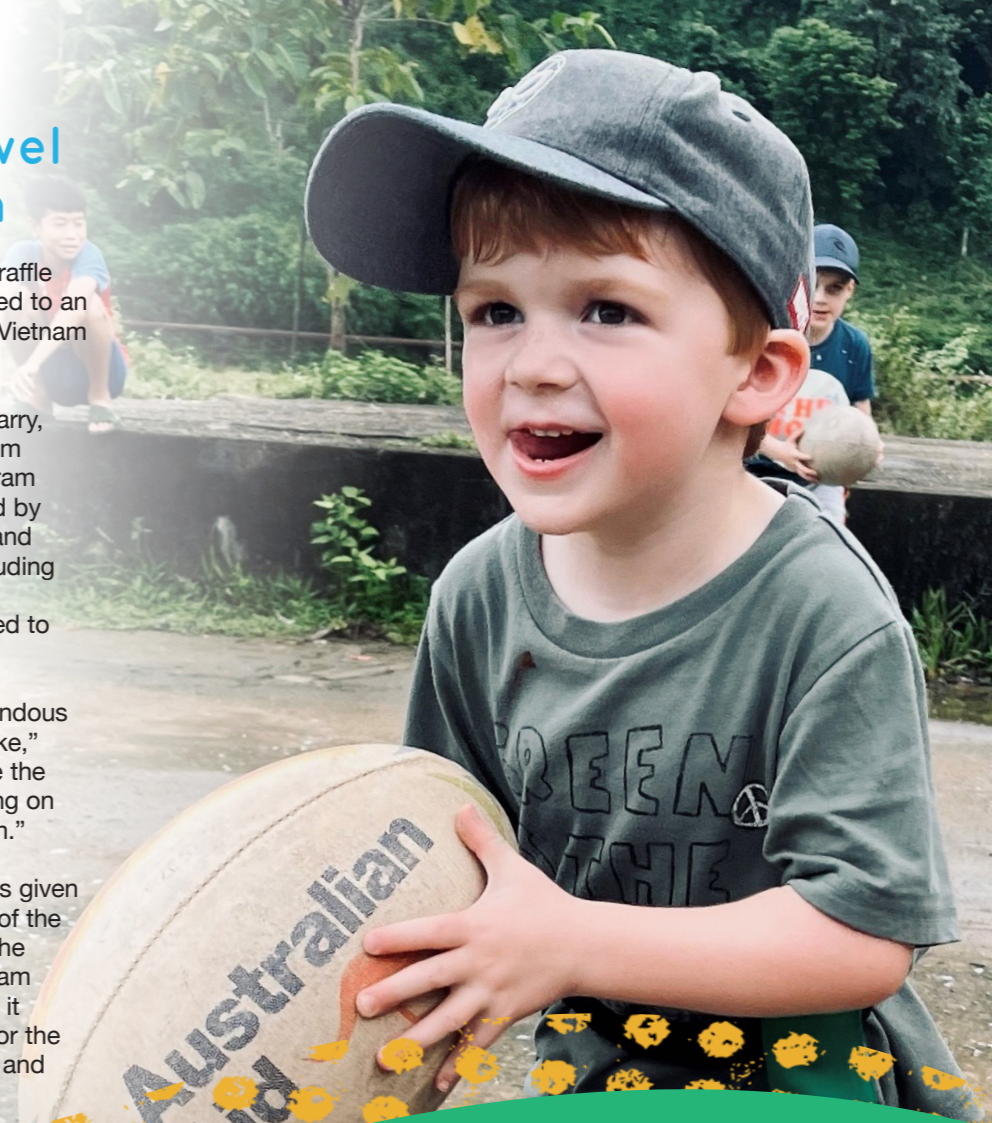
Vietnam rugby trip inspires family to level the field for children

Rugby fan and father-of-two Chris bought a raffle ticket at a ChildFund fundraising event that led to an eye-opening and rewarding journey through Vietnam for him and his family.

Chris, his wife Natalie, and their two sons, Harry, and Jamie (pictured right), travelled to Vietnam in October 2022 to see Pass It Back, a program delivered by local rugby clubs and supported by ChildFund Vietnam. The Sydney family met and heard from children and rugby coaches, including girls and young women from disadvantaged backgrounds, about how the programs helped to change their lives.

"The Pass It Back program presents a tremendous opportunity for both coaches and players alike," Chris says. "It was incredibly powerful to see the huge, positive impact that ChildFund is having on these disadvantaged communities in Vietnam."

"I'm so grateful that it was my family that was given the opportunity to spend time with so many of the inspirational ChildFund team members and the amazing children who benefit from the program every day," Chris says. "For the whole family it was an eye-opening experience, especially for the kids, and has only inspired us all to do more and continue to pass it back."



A legacy of helping children

Vikki and Chris (pictured right), from Western Australia, were planning their wedding when a pamphlet from ChildFund Australia arrived in the mail, asking for support for children living in poverty.

Vikki and Chris responded. That year they began a lifelong commitment to each other and to helping children. "We thought that it would be a good way to start our marriage doing something good for someone else," Vikki says.

Now, 17 years later, Vikki and Chris have turned their unwavering support for children into a legacy and have written a gift to ChildFund in their Will.

"Chris and I don't have children ... so we wanted to make sure that any money that we have when we pass away goes towards doing good," Vikki said.

"We support a number of charities, but ChildFund gets most of our support because we feel that there are so many children that don't have opportunities."

"We feel that if it goes to ChildFund, it can help children to get an education, and help families with what they need to support their children in the long term."

If you are considering leaving a gift in your Will, please contact ChildFund for more information.



Thank you
from everyone at

ChildFund
Australia

www.childfund.org.au

