

ChildFund[®]
International

**IMPACT
REPORT
2018**



Welcome

Dear Readers:

Over the past 80 years, ChildFund International and our partners have worked to promote and support children's well-being and development through increasingly targeted and impactful programming and strategic advocacy efforts worldwide. However, research and our own data tell us that the effects of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence can be devastating to children in both the short and long term, derailing their ability to achieve their potential and lead fulfilling lives. This kind of violence affects not only the children that we support but causes real harm to millions of children and youth every day, across the globe.

Given this crisis confronting children, families and communities, and guided by our global strategy, Destination 2020, we have affirmed our commitment to ending violence against children. Our last Impact Report focused on the journey we were starting; this report describes how we are strengthening our approach to child protection, investing in more rigorous research and data collection efforts and contributing to meaningful change in children's lives. We are more intentionally bringing together what we know works for child development and well-being with what we are learning about child protection to enable children to thrive.

Our interventions – from reducing violence in schools to improving parenting practices and preventing early marriage and child labor – are producing results and showing us how we can most effectively partner with communities and governments to further protect and advance the well-being of children and youth. Our knowledge is informing the improvement and expansion of our programming, as well as our growing advocacy work. From Uganda to the Philippines to the United States, we are working with children and youth to address policy-makers and advocate for the enactment and enforcement of effective policies to protect children from violence and ensure that their rights are upheld. We are inspired by the way children and youth are discovering their own voices and being part of positive changes in their countries and communities.

In this third biannual Impact Report, we are proud to share some of our results with you, as well as what we've been learning and how we've grown as an organization. We are grateful to you – our supporters, colleagues and partners – for your commitment to improving the lives of children farthest from opportunity and promoting societies that value, protect and advance the worth and rights of children. We will keep building on the momentum we have already generated, using our program results, research and advocacy to increase our partnerships, scale and scope. By joining forces with other international movements, we will continue to bring the voices of children into the global dialogue and fight for all children's development, protection and happiness.

Our dream for the future is a safe childhood for all children. Together, we can achieve it.



Anne Lynam Goddard
President and CEO of ChildFund International

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Nearly 30 years after the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children and youth around the world, of all ages and backgrounds, continue to experience abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence. As well as being a direct violation of their rights, this violence can have a deeply harmful impact on children's long-term well-being and development.

At ChildFund, we are committed to changing this. Guided by our organizational strategy, **Destination 2020**, we are strengthening our child protection work around the world to ensure that the progress we make for children is not undone by abuse, neglect, exploitation, or violence. This involves systematically targeting – across all our programs – the risk of violence that may disrupt children's well-being and development, while working with communities and governments to advocate for wider policy and social change. At the same time, we are strengthening our ability to provide high-quality programming that enables children of all ages to grow and thrive.

As an important first step, **we are investing in collecting information about the risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence that children experience**

across the countries where we work. We are already learning valuable lessons. Child protection mappings, new monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data, and innovative research studies are helping us to better understand the factors that render children vulnerable to violence, as well as those that protect children at different stages of childhood. We are using this knowledge to tailor our programs in response and strengthen our overall child development work while also working to transform ourselves internally so that we set the highest standards for the way that we work with children.

Our goal for 2020 is for more children to be living in conditions which enable their optimum development at each stage of their lives, including being protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence.

What are we learning about violence against children?

The 2018 Impact Report examines how we are progressing on our journey to deepen child protection across our programs and organization. It explores what we are learning about the violence that children face as they grow from infancy to adulthood and how this may hamper the developmental outcomes we seek and highlights ChildFund programs that are helping to protect children around the world.

Data from our research and interventions reveal that:

- **Children and youth are at risk of and subject to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence** at all stages of childhood and early adulthood. While families are the main source of care and protection for the vast majority of children, our data remind us that violence often has a “familiar face.” It is all too frequently inflicted by parents and caregivers, adult relatives, teachers, neighbors, classmates, and friends.

- **Children are vulnerable to changing forms of violence** as they grow up. For example, our data indicate that infants and young children are particularly vulnerable to violent discipline from caregivers, older children and young adolescents are more vulnerable to peer-to-peer bullying and physical punishment by teachers, and older adolescents and youth face an increased risk of physical and sexual violence.
- **Violence affects girls and boys differently.** Although children tend to face many of the same risks in the early years, gender increasingly determines the kind of violence girls and boys – and children expressing a non-binary gender identity – experience as they transition to adolescence and adulthood.
- **The reasons for violence are complex;** however, our exploration of the causes of violence reveals the particular role of cultural and social norms in sanctioning forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children. For example, in many societies harsh physical punishment by parents and teachers is still socially accepted (and legal) and is considered a way to instill good behavior, while early marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting are viewed as protective rather than harmful practices.
- **Measures to protect children from violence** are essential at the community level. In many of the countries where we work, formal child welfare and protection systems are weak, under-resourced, and have limited reach within some communities, which means that direct interventions with children, parents, families and communities are essential.

How are we protecting children from violence?

At ChildFund, our **Life Stage Approach** continues to guide our programs, ensuring that all children are able to realize a series of core outcomes in each chapter of childhood. This unique approach provides a framework for addressing the evolving challenges and opportunities that children face as they grow and mature – whether at home, school or in the community – including different forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence.

Our continuing efforts to understand children’s experiences of violence inform priority areas for interventions at different stages of their lives in order to both protect them and support healthy development. For example:

- **Infants and Young Children** (Life Stage 1: ages 0-5 years): Ethnographic research with communities in **Kenya** revealed protection risks to infants and young children ranging from poor parental care and sexual violence to neglect and abandonment.ⁱ Evidence like this is changing the way we design and deliver our work with caregivers of very young children.
- **Children and Young Adolescents** (Life Stage 2: ages 6-14 years): Findings from our global M&E data collection indicate a link between children’s exposure to violence at school and their learning outcomes.ⁱⁱ This gives further impetus to the development and wide-scale uptake of our *School-Based Violence Prevention Program*.

- **Adolescents and Youth** (Life Stage 3: ages 15-24 years): Our research has shown significant vulnerability to child labor and sexual violence in the **Philippines** and **Uganda**, respectively, concerns that are echoed across many of the countries in which we work. We have proven ability and experience in developing safe spaces for youth to explore, strategize, and respond to these issues, helping them to develop the agency and voice to engage with governments and other powerful people to make change in their own lives, communities and government policy. These safe spaces will form the cornerstone of our programming with adolescents and youth.

As we strengthen our work on preventing and responding to the violence that children experience in each life stage, we are working with our partners to:

- **Design targeted child protection programs** that are appropriate to the local context and reflect the priorities of children and communities. For example, we support community-based child protection mechanisms (CBCPMs) to prevent and respond to violence against children and forge linkages between communities and formal social welfare services.
- **Adapt our existing program interventions** in education, health, nutrition, livelihoods, and emergencies so that they identify and mitigate children’s vulnerability to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence.
- **Advocate with and for children and youth**, using the knowledge we generate about the prevalence and impact of violence against children to bring about systemic social change.

What change are we seeing?

We are making progress. From efforts to reduce violence in schools and improve parenting practices to anti-trafficking and youth advocacy programs, we are starting to make a difference in children’s lives:

- In **Uganda**, we were able to reunite 1,743 children with their families while reducing the social and economic vulnerability scores of households at risk of family separation by 34%;ⁱⁱⁱ ChildFund Uganda also led efforts to conduct the first-ever *National Survey on Violence Against Children (VAC)*ⁱ in partnership with the Government of Uganda.^{iv}
- In the **Philippines**, the *ABK3 LEAP* initiative² reached 54,000 children and youth and led to a reduction in the percent of children in exploitative labor: from 94% (2011) to 16% (2016).^v
- In **Honduras**, our violence prevention intervention in 36 schools in high-crime cities led to a reported reduction in physical and emotional violence in classrooms and a greater use of positive discipline by parents.^{vi}
- In **Ethiopia**, good child care practices showed an increase from 31% to 92% of caregivers at the end of our positive parenting program. Child protection issues that were reported and

1. Funded by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

2. Funded by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) through World Vision International

became part of a formal case management response increased from 9% to 100%.^{vii}

- In **Senegal**, we partnered with the Ministry of Education to train teachers in religious schools and enlisted local community groups to feed and care for students so that they were no longer forced to beg for money or food.^{viii}
- In **Indonesia**, our disaster risk reduction (DRR) intervention in preschools in Sumba resulted in significantly increased knowledge among young children regarding where to go and what to do in emergencies.^{ix}
- At the **global level**, we came together with other child-focused organizations in 2017 to successfully advocate for the inclusion of Target 16.2, a specific goal to end violence against children in the new United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

We are also seeing changes internally, as we put stronger safeguarding policies in place to protect the children and youth with whom we work and roll out child protection training for all our staff and partners.

Reflections

As we move forward, we are determined to build upon this progress to shape our work. Our programs and data collection efforts are already yielding important conclusions and learning for our future programming.

As ChildFund strives to achieve its goals for children, we will work with our partners to:

- 1 Focus on the intersection between child development and child protection**, integrating our learning about the risk and impact of violence against children into our programs on health, education, nutrition, early childhood development (ECD), and livelihoods.
- 2 Consolidate and expand our learning about child protection**, investing in innovative new ways to capture the stories of children's lives.
- 3 Build the necessary capacity to address violence**, to both prevent and respond to violence against children in the communities where they work.
- 4 Foster nurturing relationships that protect children** at all ages and stages of development to mitigate the risk of violence and to promote well-being to families and communities.
- 5 Strengthen our partnerships with the communities where we work**, empowering children, parents, teachers, government, and local partner organization staff to challenge harmful practices and transform deeply held attitudes.

- 6 Support community systems of protection**, including community-based child protection mechanisms, to operate more effectively and be linked to formal systems.
- 7 Amplify the voice of children and youth and facilitate participation**, working with them as partners in research, program design, and evaluation.
- 8 Advocate for and support the development of formal child protection systems**, progressively bringing children’s experiences and opinions to the attention of senior policy-makers.
- 9 Sharpen a gender lens to our interventions**, in recognition that vulnerability to specific types of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence affects girls and boys – and children expressing a non-binary gender identity – differently, especially as they transition to adolescence and adulthood.
- 10 Take a long-term, systems approach to child protection programming**, enabling us to address the complex and deep-rooted nature of many child protection issues.

As we make child protection integral to everything that we do, we will begin to see the real impact on children’s lives. We believe that the changes we are making are a worthwhile investment so that **children and youth can grow up safe from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence, achieve their potential, and lead fulfilling lives.**

Endnotes:

- [i.](#) African Research and Development. (2017). *A Rapid Ethnographic Study of Community-Based Child Protection Mechanisms for Infant and Young Children (0-5 years) in Two Villages in Ugunja Sub-County, Siaya County.*
- [ii.](#) ChildFund International. (2018). *Global M&E Level 2 Data Brief FY17: Exposure to Violence in Schools*
- [iii.](#) JSI Research & Training Institute. (2018). *ChildFund Deinstitutionalization of Vulnerable Children in Uganda (DOVCU): Final Report from July 1 2014 through December 31 2017.*
- [iv.](#) Uganda Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development. (2017). *Uganda Violence Against Children Survey: Findings from a National Survey 2015.*
- [v.](#) Del Rosario, B.P, Adaro C.E., Rolle, J.M., Clavero, C.S., & Del Rosario A.P. (2016). *ABK3 LEAP Endline Study December 2015-August 2016: A Report on the ABK3 LEAP (Livelihoods, Education, Advocacy and Protection) Project to Reduce Child Labor in Sugarcane Areas.*
- [vi.](#) USAID Honduras & ChildFund Honduras. (2017). *Final Evaluation: Project PUENTES.*
- [vii.](#) ChildFund Ethiopia. (2017). *CCCP Learning Brief.*
- [viii.](#) Cabinet AFRICADIS Consulting. (2015). *Evaluation of the Project Daara Plus: Final Report.*
- [ix.](#) ChildFund International. (2016). *Disaster Risk Reduction in Early Childhood Development: Evaluation of ChildFund International Model.*

CHILD FUND'S APPROACH



Nearly 30 years after the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children and youth around the world of all ages and backgrounds continue to experience abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. As well as being a direct violation of children's rights, violence often has a deeply harmful and long-lasting impact on children's well-being and development.

At ChildFund, we are committed to changing this. Having supported vulnerable families and communities for 80 years, we know that the positive changes we make in children's lives may be undone if they experience abuse, neglect, exploitation, or violence. As a global child development agency, we are therefore giving greater attention to how we give focus to protecting children, from infancy through young adulthood, enabling them to grow up safe from harm and empowered to reach their full potential.

The 2018 Impact Report

The 2018 Impact Report tells the story of how we have evolved in recent years to make the protection of children central to our work. It documents the strategies we are using to integrate **child protection** across ChildFund's programs, illustrates the kinds of initiatives we are supporting, and reflects upon what we are learning about our impact – and how we are influencing change.

In this Impact Report we:

- Examine data from ChildFund's ambitious monitoring, evaluation, and learning system to understand the forms of violence which can derail children's development at different life stages and the ways that families and communities are responding to protect children.
- Explain how we are using our new data and knowledge to inform all of our programs, while also reflecting upon the internal organizational changes that aim to keep children safe.
- Highlight and share emerging learning from ChildFund research and interventions around the world which help to protect children and youth from violence.
- Explore how all of this is helping us to establish a broad, integrated approach to child development and protection across the organization with the potential for impacting children's lives.

We are already seeing meaningful change. As this Impact Report shows, innovative research and rigorous data collection are consolidating our understanding of the factors that perpetuate violence against children and youth. At the same time, we are learning about the kinds of interventions that protect girls and boys at different stages of childhood, while simultaneously continuing to promote their development and well-being.

We define child protection as:

"the prevention of and response to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children in both humanitarian and development settings." (Based on UNICEF's definition)

The urgency of child protection

Every day, millions of children and youth around the world experience one or more **forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation or violence**. From extreme physical discipline and sexual abuse, to exploitative labor and forced marriage, harm is inflicted on children in homes, schools, institutions and communities, most commonly by adults who are responsible for their care and protection.

Our own data tell us that certain forms of violence, such as bullying and physical punishment are commonplace in the daily lives of children and youth. **In 2016, over half of the 18,626 children we surveyed in 13 countries reported exposure to violence at school.**ⁱ

While violence happens everywhere and at every stage of childhood, factors such as poverty, gender inequality, marginalization due to disability or harmful social and religious norms make some children and youth more vulnerable to harm.ⁱⁱ During times of conflict or humanitarian crisis, children's vulnerability to violence is exacerbated, through the breakdown of supportive structures, forced relocation, and emergence of new forms of risk.

The impact on children and youth

The effects of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence can be devastating for children and youth. Exposure to trauma at a very young age can impair a child's developing brain, and affect physical, emotional, and social well-being at every stage of childhood.ⁱⁱⁱ

This damage goes beyond the immediate physical pain and humiliation: It affects children's longer-term education, health and life opportunities.^{iv} Research tells us that childhood violence is linked to a range of serious problems later in life, including physical and mental health issues, substance abuse, poor educational achievement and difficulties securing employment.^v Children who grow up with violence may also be more likely to engage in violent behavior as they become adults, perpetuating a cycle of violence across generations.^{vi}

Forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence

- Physical violence, including shaking babies and corporal punishment
- Sexual abuse and violence, including rape
- Neglect and deliberate lack of care
- Child labor
- Sexual exploitation
- Early and forced marriage
- Forcing children to live on the streets and/or beg
- Recruitment of children into armed groups
- Child trafficking
- Female genital mutilation/cutting

In line with definitions widely used within the sector, we use the term 'violence' in this report as an overarching term to capture all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

“When children experience violence, the pain stays with them. When they grow up, they repeat the violence with others.”

-Yeimi, Honduras

On a wider level, violence against children imposes a huge economic burden on societies. It is estimated that the annual costs of physical, psychological and sexual violence against children (due to spending on medical and social services and lost economic productivity) ranges between 3-8% of global GDP.^{vii} This is many times higher than the investment required to prevent violence in the first place.

A long way to go...

More than 1 billion children worldwide are exposed to violence:^{viii}

300 MILLION children ages 2 to 4 years, experience psychological violence and/or physical punishment by their caregivers at home^{ix}

168 MILLION children are involved in child labor, often in hazardous and exploitative situations^x

15 MILLION adolescent girls ages 15 to 19 years have experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forced sexual acts in their lifetime^{xi}

51,000 adolescents died as a result of homicide in 2015^{xii}

33% of girls are married before their 18th birthday, with **11%** married before the age of 15 years^{xiii}

Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children:
A Familiar Face: Violence in the lives of children and adolescents, UNICEF, Nov. 2017

Our commitment to ending violence against children

In 2017, ChildFund affirmed its commitment to ending violence against children by placing child protection at the heart of its new organizational strategy, **Destination 2020**.

We have adopted this approach because:

- **All forms of violence against children are preventable and unacceptable.** Children have a right to be protected from abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- **Children’s development at any life stage can be greatly compromised by violence.** Only when children are safe from harm will our educational, health and nutrition programs have optimal impact on their lives.

Destination 2020 — Our Overarching Aim for Children

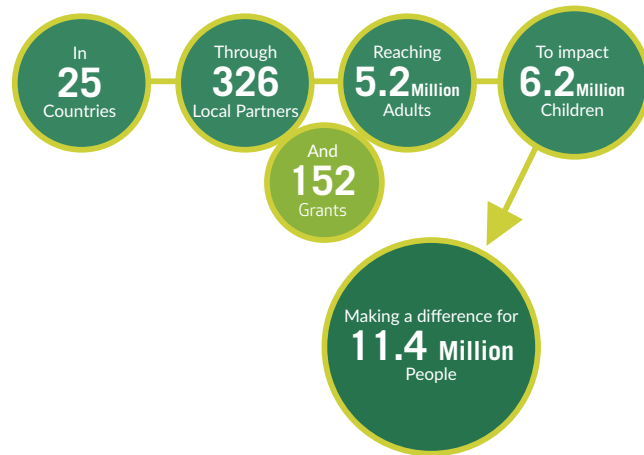
More children live in conditions that enable optimum development at each stage of their lives, including being protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence.

- **Children and youth have asked us to put their protection needs first.** We need to continue to directly support families and communities, while also advocating for the wider policy and social changes that will bring about a permanent end to violence against children and youth.

“Children need more safety because they cannot defend themselves. I wish grown-ups understood that children are the priority.”

-Nancy, Mexico

Since 1938, ChildFund has partnered with community-based organizations to enhance the care and well-being of children, creating opportunities for girls and boys to thrive and achieve their full potential. Today, ChildFund International has a presence in 25 countries. We currently implement programs through local partner organizations in 21 countries and support sponsorship in an additional 4 countries as a member of the ChildFund Alliance. This report focuses on the efforts of our staff and partners in those 21 countries, where we are building upon a solid foundation of programming to extend more targeted support to families and communities in the fight against child abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence.



Ultimately, our organizational mission to **“help deprived, excluded and vulnerable children improve their lives and become adults who bring positive change to their communities, and to promote societies that value, protect, and advance the worth and rights of children,”** will only be achieved if, individually and collectively, we are purposeful about strengthening protection outcomes across all of our programs.

Creating a child-safe organization:

As our organization focuses more acutely on protection outcomes for children, we must always be mindful of the way we engage with children and communities. Aligned with other organizations in the sector, we strive to be a “child-safe organization,” and to ensure that our staff and partners apply an understanding of children’s vulnerability to violence to all of their interactions with program participants. To this end, we have strengthened the safeguarding policies that protect the children and youth we work with and have introduced an updated Code of Conduct.

As an organization, we are also changing the way that we *think* about children’s vulnerability so that we can systematically find ways to prevent and respond to violence throughout our work.

We are rolling out training to our staff and partners so that they better understand the risks children of different ages and genders face and feel confident applying child protection approaches to all interventions with children.

Our approach to protecting children

Our work to protect children builds on established organizational principles and approaches:

A life stage approach:

At ChildFund, we tailor our interventions to meet children’s evolving needs as they develop from infancy through young adulthood. Our Life Stage Approach guides our programs, ensuring that children are able to realize a series of core outcomes in each chapter of childhood. A theory

of change in each life stage identifies the conditions that will enable children to reach these outcomes. This unique approach provides a framework for addressing the changing problems children face as they grow up – whether at home, school or in the community – including different forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence.

ChildFund’s Life Stages and Core Outcomes

Life Stage	Age Range	The Core Outcomes We Seek
1	0 to 5 years	Healthy and Secure Infants
2	6 to 14 years	Educated and Confident Children
3	15 to 24 years	Skilled and Involved Youth

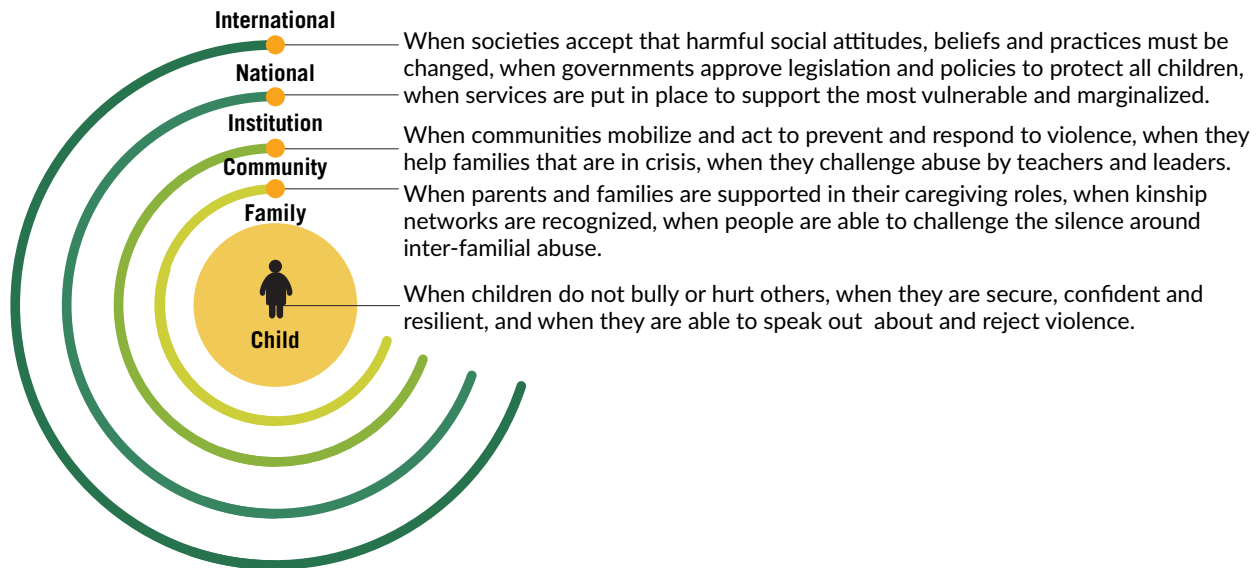
A systems approach:

Our approach puts the child at the center of all we do and considers the different “layers” of potential support and risk to children. In our work, we are conscious of how these different layers impact a child’s life, and how they impact or interact with each other – either strengthening a system of support or fragmenting it. Understanding this helps to direct our work and engage with children, families, and communities to prevent violence, strengthen institutions, and advocate for broader reform and social change with high-level government actors and decision-makers.

“Most of the time, leaders prioritize politics over children’s welfare. Despite young people being regarded as the hope of the nation, leaders don’t take issues that affect children seriously.”

-Karen, Phillippines

Our experience tells us that a protective environment for children is created at multiple levels:



A community-based approach:

We know that families and communities have their own ways of protecting children from abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence in the home, school or community. ChildFund and its partners support community practices that are protective of children and strengthen community groups that informally work to prevent and respond to incidents of violence against children. We link these informal **community-based child protection mechanisms (CBCPMs)** with formal child protection services to ensure that children have access to social workers, police, health care and other agencies responsible for protecting children.

“Everyone in society has a responsibility to protect children.”

-Najiya, Sri Lanka

A child-centered approach:

We put children’s voices and experiences at the center of our work. When we empower children and youth to claim their rights, they become agents of change in their own lives and mobilize their peers to action. We actively engage children and youth in defining both problems and solutions.

Community-based child protection mechanisms (CBCPMs)

Community Based Child Protection Mechanisms (CBCPMs) are groups or networks of community members who work together to address abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children. A CBCPM can take the form of a formal committee that addresses multiple types of harm, or a less formal group that works on one particular aspect of child protection. Their focus is on strengthening child protection, responding to incidents of harm against children, and referring cases to social services where necessary.

Children and youth are key partners in research and advocacy. For example:

- They guide us about the issues we need to research and advise us how to best collect information about children.
- They conduct focus groups, interviews, and creative research exercises.
- They help us to understand their reality, often highlighting types of abuse and exploitation of which adults are unaware.
- They raise their voices in communities and on a national stage.

“After getting associated with ChildFund, I am trying to do something to bring about changes in my community, so all the people can feel safe. I provide information about the help the organization imparts to children and adolescent girls, and about the available laws and rights to support and protect them. I motivate them to raise their voices against the atrocities happening to them. I have learned from my experience that the more you allow others to pull you down, the more they will try to pull you down further. If we must prevent violence against us, we will have to muster courage against it.”

-Shobhawati, India

Change through advocacy:

We are not alone in this effort. As part of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, ChildFund joins a growing global movement of governments, UN agencies, international organizations, civil society and other actors working to protect and advocate with and for children and youth around the world. At a national level, ChildFund country offices and our partners are actively advocating for policy change and improvements in government budgeting and implementation so that the effects of positive policies are felt by vulnerable children in all communities.

“As a young person with a disability, I now feel safer because there are laws that protect people like me. In our community, there is also a council for the protection of children in the community they serve. They are champions of children’s rights and allies in our fight to end violence against children.”

-Antonio, Philippines

Our program principles:

Our principles call for us to uphold children's **right to protection** from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence.

Moreover, we know that our efforts will only be sustainable if we address the **root causes** of violence against children, such as social inequality, chronic poverty, and harmful social norms.

We believe in building **collaborative relationships** among the people and institutions engaged in protecting children. We know that when children and youth are inspired to become **agents of change** in their own protection, they can find their own solutions.

Embedding these principles in all that we do provides a strong foundation for achieving **sustainable impact** for children. We also seek to ensure sustainability through our advocacy efforts, changing laws and garnering government commitments to contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal Target 16.2: "End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children."

ChildFund Program Principles

Child Rights

Advance and protect the rights of children

Root Causes

Address the root causes of deprivation, exclusion and vulnerability

Partnerships

Build collaborative relationships

Change Agents

Engage and inspire children as agents of change

Sustainability

Embrace community-based strategies and then scale-up for impact

Evidence Based

Advance relevant evidence-based research and best practice

Building evidence and documenting impact through systematic monitoring, evaluation, and learning:

Guided by our organizational strategy, we have refined our global monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system to capture new child protection data across all life stages. We now systematically:

- Ask children and youth, their caregivers, and community representatives in all of our program countries, about their exposure to and experience of violence in different settings and stages of childhood.
- Explore whether community-based child protection mechanisms (CBCPMs) have been established to prevent and respond to harm against children and, if so, how well they actually function.
- Examine how families and communities care for and protect children as well as the circumstances in which children are referred to formal service providers.

These data add a child protection layer to our global M&E system, which captures data from all of the countries and communities in which we work. By collecting information on a set of indicators

aligned to our Life Stage Theories of Change, we are able to measure how we are progressing toward the outcomes we seek for children and learn about the role that protective environments play in achieving these outcomes.

We have used our M&E system as the basis for developing a range of **different methods for evaluating our programs** and for systematically collecting information about protection risks to children. We use these results to understand the impact of our work, inform our programs and advocate for systemic social change.

We are being more deliberate about the way that we capture learning about children's lives and experiences of violence. From research into child discipline in schools in **Sri Lanka**^{xiv} and child detention in **Uganda**^{xv} to pioneering studies of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) youth in the **Philippines**,^{xvi} we are learning more about some of the most marginalized groups of children in society. This research helps us to understand the protection challenges that children and youth face around the world, share emerging knowledge, and tailor our programs accordingly.

In all our program countries, we have also launched an exciting initiative to explore the ways that violence impacts children in selected communities: our **Community-Based Child Protection (CBCP) Mapping Initiative**. To standardize and ensure the quality of these data, we have introduced a global toolkit and trained our staff and partners to conduct participatory research with communities, families and children. This CBCP mapping process aims to identify:

- Forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence that children experience in each life stage.
- Immediate and root causes of violence against children, including positive and harmful social norms.
- How child protection systems function. This includes identifying the individuals and organizations that are responsible for protecting children at family, community, institutional and national levels; the legal and policy framework in place to protect children; how children experience these systems of support; and the extent to which community

Evaluation and Research Methods

Mappings to compile our evidence and learning for specific domains and to identify areas for future research and programming

Systematic literature reviews to explore existing research (published and unpublished) on particular topics

Situation/environmental analyses to provide information about specific contexts and to identify the priority issue(s) to be addressed

Case studies to help us understand the role that context plays in influencing our interventions and the factors underlying program outcomes.

Observational studies to monitor changes in our core outcomes and other indicators over time, and within and across different contexts.

protection efforts are linked to formal child services (social welfare, police, health, education).

We share our findings with communities and work together to develop action plans that address their protection concerns for children.

Ultimately, our data and research findings help us to understand the types of abuse, exploitation, neglect, and violence that children and youth experience at different life stages. Our information sheds light on the drivers of violence and the factors that perpetuate risk, while also highlighting the positive practices, social norms and actors that we can build on to keep children safe. This knowledge helps us to find appropriate strategies to prevent harm against children and guides us toward effective programming that can make a real difference in children's lives.

The 2018 Impact Report: A review of our progress

ChildFund is already learning valuable lessons as we strive to make children's protection integral to everything that we do. In the 2017-2018 Impact Report, we examine how we are progressing on the journey to deepen our work with and for children – and especially how we more purposefully work on child protection – across our programs and organization.

The following sections highlight a selection of studies and programs around the world that are helping us understand and respond to the risks of child abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence. Based upon our Life Stage Approach, each section explores:

- The changing forms of violence that children experience as they reach different developmental stages.
- The child protection programs we have developed in partnership with families and communities to prevent and respond to violence at home, school, and in the community.
- The ways in which our teams are integrating child protection learning and outcomes within our programs on early childhood development, education, and health, including within emergency contexts.
- Our efforts to advocate at local and national levels for improved laws and services to protect children.

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A young child with a joyful expression is the central focus, wearing a bright yellow t-shirt with a blue graphic. The child is surrounded by a blurred crowd of people, including a woman in a red shirt and a yellow patterned skirt, suggesting a community gathering or event.

Part 1

Life Stage 1:

Infants and young children

0-5 years old

Our focus on parenting and early childhood development initiatives

Children are at their most vulnerable during the first years of their lives: infants, toddlers and young children are completely dependent on others for their care. Yet every day children in this age group witness and experience violence, including **violent physical discipline**, as parents and caregivers struggle with the demands of raising young children.

From the start of life, infants and young children may experience shaking and smacking, harsh words, neglect and abandonment, as well as more traumatic experiences linked to traditional practices. Around one in five child homicide victims is below the age of four, and most are killed by their caregivers.ⁱ

Studies show that when babies and young children do not experience love, safety and protection in the early years, their physical, cognitive and emotional development is jeopardized.^{ii,iii} Prolonged exposure to traumatic experiences and toxic stress can even alter the structure and functioning of children’s brains at this formative stage.^{iv} Violence and neglect in early childhood also contributes to long-term problems as adults, and significantly affect children’s future life opportunities. In short, what happens to children early in life may cause lasting harm and directly impact their ability to become healthy and functioning adults.^v

At ChildFund, we know that preventing abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence during the early years gives children the best start in life. A 5-year-old who has been well cared for and protected is likely to be stronger and healthier, and better equipped for the challenges of the next life stage. And encouragingly, there is now an established body of evidence suggesting that interventions delivered early in life can help to mitigate many of the adverse consequences of violence.^{vi}

By supporting and empowering parents and caregivers across all of our programs, ChildFund aims to give infants and young children the support they need for healthy development, while reducing their risk of being harmed. Recognizing a universal desire to provide the best start in

Violent physical discipline / corporal punishment is the most common form of violence experienced by young children, affecting three-quarters of children ages 2 to 4 years on a regular basis. In many societies, slapping, ear-twisting, beating with an instrument are forms of humiliating and painful discipline that are accepted as the norm. Predominantly carried out by the parents and caregivers to correct “unacceptable” behavior, violent discipline may be perceived as the right way to socialize a child — or even as a parental duty.^{vii}

ChildFund’s Domains of Change and Core Outcome for Life Stage 1: Infants and Young Children 0-5 Years Old

- ✓ Empowered and Responsive Caregivers
- ✓ Safe and Caring Environments
- ✓ High Quality Nutrition and Health Care
- ✓ High Quality Developmental Stimulation

Healthy and Secure Infants

life for one's children, we support parents and caregivers to develop **responsive and protective parenting** practices and to create safe homes and caring learning environments where infants and young children can thrive.

While our health, hygiene, and nutrition programs promote the physical health of children, our early childhood development (ECD) and parenting programs help parents to better understand children's emotional and cognitive development and the importance of parental bonding, stimulation and nurture. Combined, our programs in this life stage take a holistic perspective that focuses on the overall well-being of infants and young children.^{viii}

Responsive and Protective Parenting involves responding promptly to a child's behavior in a way that is appropriate to their needs, rights, and developmental phase.^{ix} A responsive caregiver has skills to provide prompt, safe, and attentive care due to their knowledge of infant and child development, nutrition, health, and early learning and stimulation.^x

Our learning about protecting infants and young children

There remains a significant gap in the literature regarding the kinds of violence that infants and young children commonly experience in the countries where we work. To address this, our country offices are collecting information about the protection risks that compromise early childhood development and the measures that families and communities take in response. This is not easy; early childhood violence is often "invisible," taking place in the privacy of the home and away from the eyes of the world, making it extremely challenging to detect and address.

In this section, we present some findings from the research we have conducted for infants and young children in Life Stage 1:

- 1 More needs to be done to improve community safety and access to affordable child care options for infants and young children.** As part of our global monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data collection in 2017, we talked to 15,011 caregivers (51% female and 49% male) of infants and young children in 13 countries.^{ix}

We discovered that:

- **More than one-third (34%) of caregivers felt that their community was not a safe place for children.**
- **Almost half (49%) of caregivers reported that children were regularly being left alone or in the care of a child younger than 10 years.**

More needs to be done to understand these findings. In particular, we need to explore why some caregivers feel that their community is unsafe and how this may affect their child care decisions, while also exploring policies and programs aimed at improving affordable and accessible child care.

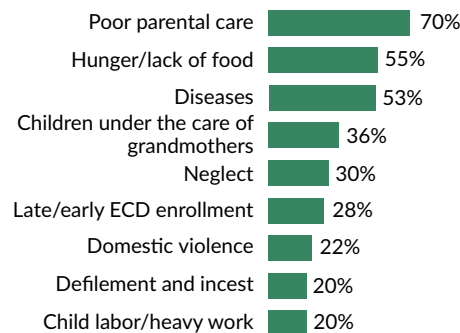
2 The majority of caregivers of infants and young children know where to report harm to children and would take action to report it. Our 2017 global M&E data collection also involved asking 54,954 caregivers of infants and young children from 16 countries about their knowledge of child protection reporting mechanisms and their willingness to report violence against children. We learned that:

- **Two-thirds of caregivers (67%) of infants and young children said that they knew where to report protection issues and that, if a child was being harmed, would report it.**

Despite these overall positive findings, there is still more work to be done in countries where caregivers revealed less knowledge and likelihood of reporting harm against children.^x Some of our more focused inquiries also tell us that these M&E data may not be reflective of the full picture, demonstrating the need for continuing research in this area.

3 **Issues of violence against infants and young children are not always a priority.**^{xi} As part of our early childhood development work in Kenya, we commissioned an ethnographic mapping of community-based child protection mechanisms in the Lunjre and Naya communities of Siaya County, alongside a global literature review of violence against children. This research focused exclusively on the violence experienced by infants and young children ages 0 to 5 years, as well as an assessment of the child protection systems that serve them.

Most Commonly Perceived Harms and Risks to Children 0-5 Years Among Caregivers in Lunjre and Naya Communities, Siaya County, Kenya



The research revealed that:

- **Communities overwhelmingly perceived ‘poor parental care’ as the main protection risk** for children ages 0 to 5 years, with sexual violence (particularly by family members), neglect, child labor, and child abandonment also described as problems.

Alongside poverty, poor parental care was mainly attributed to caregivers' lack of knowledge about the developmental, emotional and physical needs of infants and young children and how these differ from those of older children.

- **Respondents explained that some caregivers were unable (or did not know how) to meet young children's basic needs**, left them unaccompanied while they worked, and sometimes expected them to do potentially dangerous chores such as fetching water and cooking. In particular, children who were orphaned and sent to live with relatives, or who were born to drug-using parents or teenage mothers, were perceived to be at heightened risk of violence in these early years.
- In the face of poverty, unemployment and hunger, **issues of violence against infants and young children were not always a priority** for family and community members. With the formal child protection system considered ineffectual and overwhelmed, instances of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against infants and young children were rarely reported to government social welfare officers. Instead, community members indicated that they preferred to deal with cases of violence informally, with sensitive issues such as sexual violence and incest dealt with privately within families to avoid shame. This is of great concern to ChildFund as it potentially leaves children at risk of continued sexual violence and without access to treatment and support.

4 Indigenous practices and customary justice systems can have both protective and harmful aspects. In 2017, ChildFund conducted an ethnographic mapping of the child protection system in four indigenous communities (Teduray, T'boli, Blaan and Subanen) in the Philippines.^{xii}

In the community consultations participants described protection risks to children under the age of 6, including **neglect, abandonment, and arranged marriages**. They also shared:

- The ceremonies that recognize the birth and developmental milestones of infants, as well as the **traditional nurturing practices** that ensure they are brought into the fold and protection of the community.
- The practice of **resorting to informal and customary justice systems to address child protection issues** (for children of all ages).

While these traditional justice systems may bring about fast and amicable resolutions, ChildFund is concerned that the harmony of the community may sometimes take precedent over the best interests of the child. For example, in some cases, incidents of rape against children are resolved through “amicable settlement” or compensation payments from perpetrators.

5 Infants and young children are particularly vulnerable as parents and caregivers struggle to secure a family livelihood while trying to fulfill the intensive caring responsibilities of these early years. In recent years, we conducted baseline studies in **Uganda**,^{xiii} **Ethiopia**,^{xiv}

Kenya and Zambia^{xv} for our early childhood development programs. These revealed a range of child protection issues for infants and young children including:

- High levels of **physical discipline** by caregivers (often with the aim of instilling good social behavior) due to limited understanding of responsive parenting and **low engagement of fathers** in child care.
- Child protection violations including **physical and sexual violence, neglect, abandonment, harmful traditional practices** and even attempted murder. Children living in households affected by domestic violence and substance abuse were seen as especially at risk.
- **Environmental risks** including pollution, open sewage, fire and drowning. These pose a particular threat to unsupervised young children and those left in the care of siblings, who may not be mature enough to ensure their safety.
- **Low uptake of birth registration services**, often due to their limited availability and the associated costs. This means that children without proper documents may face difficulties accessing health, education and social services.
- **Limited awareness of and/or willingness to report child protection concerns** to formal child protection services and community-based structures such as Child Protection Committees.
- **Varying availability and quality of ECD services** for young children and, in some cases, inadequately trained caregivers, poor facilities and overcrowding and mistreatment of children.

What is our research telling us?

While these examples provide just a small snapshot of a few selected studies, the findings give us a sense of the protection risks that infants and young children ages 0 to 5 years often face and echo what we see in other communities where we work. These studies tell us that babies, toddlers, and young children – just like older children and adolescents – are not immune to abuse, neglect, and even the worst forms of sexual violence and rape. In fact, infants and young children face unique risks due to their physical vulnerability and near total dependency on adults, particularly their caregivers. The information we are collecting is helping us shape our programs and create a baseline from which to measure our progress as we respond to the protection needs of this age group.

Our response

We know that a child's world revolves around their family during their early years. To give children the best start, caregivers need skills and resources to build safe families and healthy homes.

At ChildFund, we work through community partner organizations to enhance the knowledge and skills of parents and caregivers to nurture and protect infants and young children – and to provide discipline without violence. We ensure that families and communities – including community volunteers and caregivers in ECD centers – understand the risks of violence to children and know how to report abuse to social service providers.

We also reinforce community responsibility for the protection of young children by strengthening community-based child protection mechanisms and linking them to formal child protection services. More indirectly, we help families to provide for and protect children through social protection measures, such as registration for cash transfers, participation in village savings and loans groups, and livelihood strengthening activities.

We are starting to see some progress:

- In **Senegal**, where ChildFund provided structured playgroup sessions and *Learning through Play* initiatives for caregivers of children ages 0 to 3 years, participants reported abandoning violent discipline methods, such as slapping, and taking better care of their children.^{xvi}
- In **Sri Lanka**, “Lead Mothers” trained through our parenting program respond proactively to child protection concerns that they identify during household visits with vulnerable families and follow established protocols for referring children to government agencies and social services for assistance.^{xvii}
- In **Ethiopia**, under our six-year country-wide *Yekokeb Berhan Program for Highly Vulnerable Children* project,¹ our local partner organizations have played a critical role in improving the access of children ages 0 to 3 years to ECD services, training community groups to provide parenting education to vulnerable families, and creating referral pathways to legal, education, and health services.^{xviii}
- In **Bolivia**, ChildFund has recently piloted a *Regional Responsive Parenting Program* for caregivers of infants and young children. Founded upon an analysis of the regions' best parenting practices, the program uses group work and home visits to change attitudes about violent discipline and to engage fathers in child care responsibilities.^{xix} We now aim to scale up this parenting program across the region.

Below are more detailed examples of how we are using our parenting and ECD interventions to more explicitly incorporate child protection. The case studies illustrate our results and lessons for ongoing and future programming.



CASE STUDY: Supporting community volunteers to protect children in Kenya and Zambia

Our country offices in **Kenya and Zambia** are working to integrate child protection into our early childhood development initiative: *Assuring the Essentials of Optimal Development for Infants and Young Children Affected by HIV and AIDS*^{2, xx}. Launched in 2013, this program uses a cascaded training model whereby ChildFund staff train networks of community health volunteers who, in turn, provide parenting support to caregivers of infants and young children ages 0 to 5 years affected by HIV and AIDS. The purpose is to help caregivers to build nurturing relationships with their children from birth, providing their infants and young children with the stimulation and responsive care they need. Through home visits, community health volunteers:

- Observe how caregivers interact with their young children and show them how to **discipline children** in ways that don't involve harsh words or slapping.
- Teach caregivers the **benefits of childhood play**.
- Help families to create **safe homes** so that children are protected from injuries and accidents.

- Serve as a **focal point** between families and local health and social welfare systems. For example, if children lack identification papers, the volunteers support parents to obtain birth certificates and other documentation.

Our community volunteers support families in situations of poverty, illness, and household violence, and work with caregivers to solve problems in overwhelming situations – all of which can take a personal and emotional toll. A critical challenge has been supporting and building the capacity of these volunteers, who joined the initiative with very different skill levels, so that consistent support could be given to all families. While pre- and post-training test results revealed an overall increase in participants’ knowledge, skills, and abilities, they were not brought to the same level. In response, we have worked closely with our partners to establish a **reflective supervision approach** that provides structured coaching and mentoring to community volunteers, identifies areas for tailored further training, and helps to keep them motivated and committed.

“They are given space to come together to share their challenges, successes, and learning. We also have a clear process for providing them with feedback and praise.”

-ChildFund Early Childhood Development Specialist

This approach has made all the difference to the program, which has retained over 90% of its community volunteers. As an emerging good practice, ChildFund has expanded this learning into its work in **Guatemala**, where reflective supervision approaches have been incorporated into parenting initiatives.

While endline results are still pending for this program, qualitative data from community consultations in late 2017 and field visits in 2018 highlight important caregiver behavior changes, including enhanced caregiver understanding regarding the importance of:

- Disciplining young children in positive ways instead of with physical and verbal abuse and communicating with them “more softly, less harshly.”
- Spending more time with their children, especially providing better supervision and playing with them.
- A balanced diet for their children and exclusive breastfeeding.
- Health and hygiene practices such as bringing their young children to the health clinic when ill, taking measures to prevent malaria, and adhering to immunization schedules.



CASE STUDY: Early childhood development (ECD) programs as an entry point for building systems of community-based child protection in Ethiopia and Uganda

In **Ethiopia** and **Uganda**, ChildFund's country offices supported a stronger community response to violence against young children as part of its early childhood development initiative *Communities Caring for Children Program (CCCP)*.^{3 xxi, xxii} This five-year program, which ended in 2016, aimed to promote positive parenting practices, establish high quality early childhood development (ECD) centers, and strengthen the ability of communities to prevent and respond to violence against children.

"The Child Protection Committees are our watchdogs on the ground!"

-Senior Probation Officer, Uganda

Operating in communities with significant levels of child neglect, abuse, harmful traditional practices, and violent discipline, our partners sought to reduce the risk of harm to young children by working in:

3. Funded by Irish Aid through ChildFund Ireland

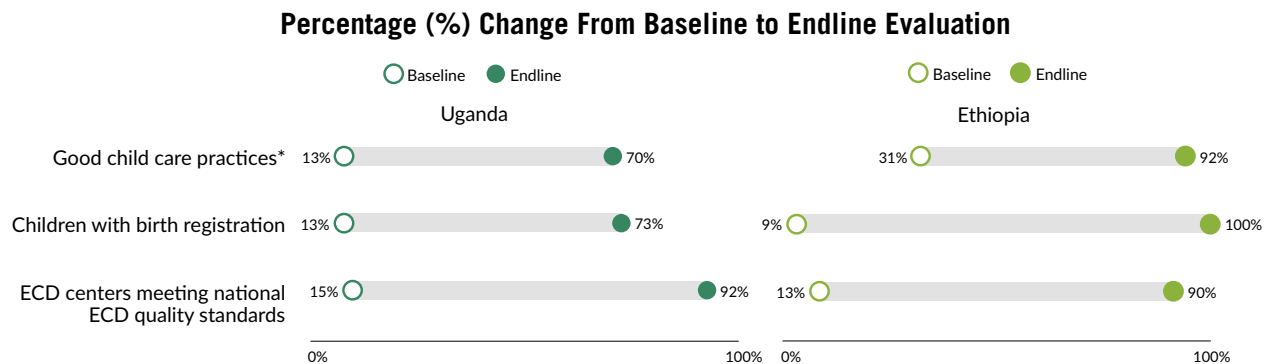
- **Homes:** Building the capacity of community volunteer networks to support families to improve parenting, use positive discipline techniques, encourage violence-free homes, and inform parents about access to health, education and social services.
- **ECD centers:** Training ECD staff and management committees (composed of parents and community members) to identify and respond to any child at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence.

In **Uganda**, ChildFund extended this model by establishing and training **Child Protection Committees (CPCs)** from the village to district levels, which were then linked to ECD centers, schools, and government social welfare providers through a simple referral system. Communities could report child protection issues to the community CPCs, who would respond or, in more serious or complex cases, refer children to the police or formal social welfare services.

“We really saw a difference. Once families and ECD centers were linked to well-functioning CPCs the community was able to handle and respond to case of abuse much better and faster.”

-ChildFund child protection specialist

In both Ethiopia and Uganda, CCCP has seen encouraging results around parenting practices, including a reduction in violent discipline and improved caregiver engagement (including by fathers) in children’s learning and play.



*Good child care practices are defined as: good hygiene and sanitation practices; proper management of child illnesses; positive, non-violent discipline practices



CASE STUDY: Protecting preschool children from natural disasters in Indonesia

In an innovative project in **Indonesia**, ChildFund used preschools as an entry point for protecting young children during and after natural disasters. Recognizing that young children are particularly vulnerable to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence in emergency situations, ChildFund integrated **disaster risk reduction (DRR)** measures into an early childhood development (ECD) program⁴ for children ages 4 and 5 years on the disaster-prone island of Sumba.^{xxiii}

ChildFund's aim was to create a safer preschool environment and to minimize the risk to children during disasters. To start with, our partners renovated local preschools to make them more structurally sound and enable safe evacuation, then taught pupils how to remain safe during different types of emergencies. Weekly evacuation drills were conducted, and a six-module DRR package

Children are disproportionately affected by disasters.

The impact of earthquakes, landslides and flooding in Indonesia can be devastating on families and children. As well as the potential for loss of life and severe injury, children may become separated from their families and other responsible adults, leaving them vulnerable to harm and distress.

4. Funded by Australian Aid

was rolled out to school staff. At the same time, teachers were taught positive discipline techniques and ways to better engage with their students.^{xxiv}

A rigorous evaluation of the program compared the preschools that received the DRR-ECD intervention with a control group of preschools in nearby villages.^{xxvi} The results demonstrated that:

- The renovated schools were more structurally sound and disaster-ready.
- The quality of adult-child interactions was higher among DRR-ECD schools.
- Children in the DRR-ECD program had greater awareness of safety precautions and emergency actions than children in the control group. This included better knowledge of ways to prepare for emergencies, the different types of natural disasters and their warning signs, where to go (safe spaces) during emergencies, and which adults to turn to for help.

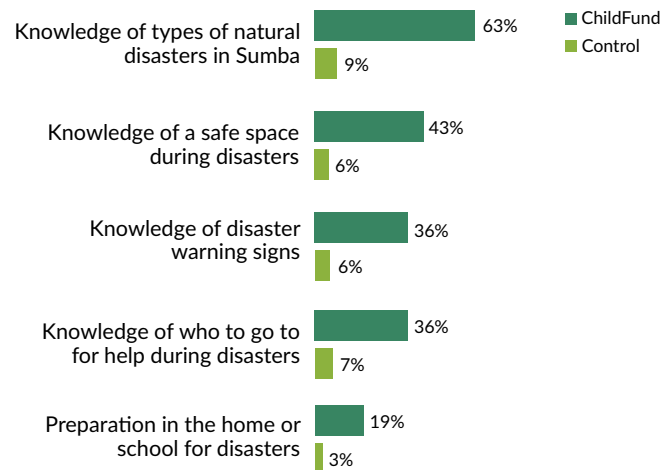
The stress caused by disasters can cause family tension, which may manifesting physical violence and child neglect. Children's learning may also be disrupted if their schools are damaged or if their families lose their livelihoods.

ChildFund's **disaster risk reduction (DRR)** strategies aim to prevent children being harmed during and after disasters. Key to their success is making sure that children know what to do and where to go in an emergency.^{xxv}

Although the evaluation broadly demonstrated a positive impact, a few lessons learned emerged:

- Integrating the DRR components took time away from school readiness activities and overwhelmed teachers with additional responsibilities.
- DRR training needs to be tailored to prioritize the most commonly occurring natural disasters in each context.
- More attention needs to be given to preparing children for what to do during disasters that take place outside of preschool settings - for example, at home - so that the knowledge they gain is sustained and remains relevant as they transition into primary school and grow older.

Evaluation of DRR Knowledge Among Children in ChildFund's Impact Group and the Control Group



Overall, the results from this exciting ECD-DRR initiative suggest that the model could be adapted to other contexts and that preschool programs provide a promising entry point for preventing harm to children during and after natural disasters.

Our future commitment

The more we learn about the abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence that infants and young children may experience in this life stage, the more we understand its devastating impact on their well-being and development.

Our Life Stage Approach reminds us that if young children are to develop into healthy and fulfilled adolescents, their safety and protection in the early years cannot be overlooked. As ChildFund puts its Theory of Change into action for infants and young children, we will use our learning to:

- **Strengthen our support to parents and caregivers** during the critical – and often challenging – first years of raising a child. In the communities where we work, we will continue to listen to caregivers' needs and, with them, design programs that build upon their innate desire and capacity to care for and nurture their children.
- **Strive to understand more about the violence that infants and young children experience** and, most importantly, the factors that lead to or perpetuate different forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation in both development and emergency contexts. As we bolster our data collection methods, so too will we adapt and tailor our positive parenting and ECD programs, building knowledge and skills and giving caregivers the confidence to access help when needed.
- **Continue to involve communities in the protection of young children.** Empowered, community volunteers, ECD teachers, or Child Protection Committees can support vulnerable families, learn how to detect children in trouble and connect them to the help they need. In this way we can help to build a frontline of protection for young children across the communities where we work.
- **Engage community leaders and government representatives** to help them better understand the challenges of protecting children early in life and the critical need to create systems of support for infants and young children. This includes advocating for communities and governments to consider the needs of very young children in the design and delivery of care and protection systems.

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Part 2

Life Stage 2:

Children and young adolescents

6-14 years old



Our focus on preventing violence in schools and communities

As children grow up and begin to interact more with the world outside their families, they face new types of opportunities and risks. For the vast majority of children between the ages of 6 and 14 years, schools play a critical role in their educational and social development.

School should be a safe environment where girls and boys learn, socialize and realize their potential. Unfortunately, for many children, school is where they feel least safe. Far from being protected, they are exposed to different kinds of violence in the classroom and on the playground. Students may also have to navigate a series of dangers just getting to and from school, from busy roads and environmental hazards to adults who deliberately harm them.ⁱ

Violence at school can lead to decreased attendance rates, poor academic performance and higher dropout rates.ⁱⁱ Around the world, studies show that children who feel unsafe or scared at school are less likely to attend and, if they do, may have more problems learning. And because school violence compromises children's educational achievement, they are less likely to meet other developmental goals and to become integrated members of society. As such, experiencing violence at school may have a lifelong detrimental impact on children's well-being.ⁱⁱⁱ

School violence includes:

- Physical and humiliating punishments inflicted by teachers
- Sexual harassment and assault, including trading sex for good grades
- Peer-to-peer bullying

All pupils are potentially at risk. However, children who are seen as 'different,' may be particularly vulnerable to bullying and violence.

For example:

- Children with disabilities
- Children from ethnic or religious minorities
- Children affected by HIV and AIDS
- Children who identify with a non-traditional sexual orientation or gender identity

ChildFund's Domains of Change and Core Outcome for Life Stage 2: Children and Young Adolescents 6-14 Years Old

- ✓ Positive Relationships in Supportive Homes and Communities
- ✓ Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills to Make Healthy Decisions
- ✓ Healthy and Actively Participating in Community Life

Educated and Confident Children

At ChildFund, we know that we need to address violence at school if we want children ages 6 to 14 years to become educated and confident. This means supporting students, teachers and parents to create a **safe learning environment** that keeps children protected from harm, and promotes their emotional, physical, and psychological well-being.

We know too that positive attitudes and behaviors learned at school are likely to be replicated by children in their homes and communities. In the same way, children raised by parents who do not physically punish their children or allow sibling bullying are more likely to have the confidence to challenge these forms of violence at school.

Our programs for Life Stage 2 aim to:

- Promote high-quality academic teaching and child literacy, as well as enhance essential life skills for children.
- Educate children, parents, teachers and community members to recognize and speak out on violence in all of its forms.
- Empower communities to question cultural norms that perpetuate, justify, and normalize violence against children.
- Establish systems in schools for reporting violence against children and access to social services.
- Provide safe places to learn and play in humanitarian emergencies.

A safe learning environment is one that is free from all forms of violence against children, including physical, psychological, and emotional violence. The risks of violence and harm are reduced through changes to student, parent and teacher skills, attitudes and behaviors, as well as through appropriate school infrastructure and policies/codes of conduct, among other interventions.

Our learning about protecting children and young adolescents

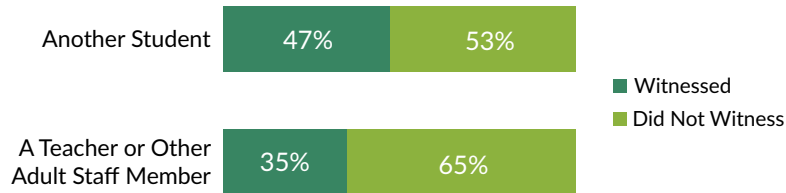
In order to design effective programs for children ages 6 to 14 years, ChildFund has been collecting data about children's experience's in educational settings around the world. In this section, we present our findings regarding the types of violence children face as they try to navigate their learning environment:

1 Children are frequently exposed to violence at school. We asked 18,626 children in 13 countries about their experience of witnessing violence at school^{iv} as part of our 2017 global monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data collection. We learned that:

- **Over half of all children (55%) ages 6 to 14 years had been exposed to violence in their school.** Children in **Sri Lanka** (81%), **India** (74%) and **Indonesia** (62%) had witnessed violence in their schools at particularly high rates.

- **Peer-to-peer violence was more commonly witnessed than adult-to-student violence.** 47% of children reported witnessing their peers being hit or humiliated by other students, while only 35% reported witnessing adults such as teachers hitting or humiliating students. These data seem to confirm other findings and anecdotal accounts regarding the pervasiveness of peer bullying in schools.

Percent of Students Who Reported Witnessing a Child in Their School or Community Being Hit or Humiliated by....



- Our analysis of the relationship between exposure to violence and learning outcomes revealed that, overall, **fewer children who witnessed adult-to-student violence at school met academic benchmarks** than children who had not witnessed such violence.

This finding points to the importance of positive teacher-pupil relationships and safe learning environments for promoting academic achievement. However, there is a need for further exploration of these data and research in this area, as this global finding may not be reflective of the full picture at the country and community levels.

Our research studies and surveys below corroborate these global M&E findings and document the prevalence of school violence across the countries where we work:

- Child protection mappings of communities in **Bolivia**,^v **Honduras**,^{vi} **Guatemala**^{vii} and the **USA**^{viii} and baseline studies in **Ethiopia**^{ix} and **Uganda**^x reveal that children experience **bullying by classmates at school and physical and humiliating punishment at the hands of teachers.** In Honduras, violence was cited as a primary reason for children dropping out or not attending school.
- In **Uganda**, a *National Survey of Violence Against Children (VAC)*¹ revealed that **male teachers were the most frequent perpetrators of physical violence against children ages 13 to 17 years.**^{xi} In this same age group, 33% of boys and 16% of girls who had been abused sexually in the preceding 12 months reported that school was where the incident of sexual violence had taken place.
- In **Sri Lanka**, a national study of child disciplinary practices indicated **high rates and acceptance of corporal punishment and psychological aggression by teachers** and revealed a punishment-based culture in schools.^{xii}

2 The majority of children and young adolescents know where to report harm to children and would take action to report it. As part of our global M&E data collection in 2017, we asked 163,509 children and young adolescents ages 6 to 14 years from 16 countries about their knowledge of child protection reporting mechanisms and willingness to report violence against children.^{xiii}

We learned that:

- **59% of children and young adolescents said that they knew where to report protection issues and that, if a child was being harmed, they would report it.**

However, there is still more work to be done in countries where children revealed less knowledge and likelihood of reporting violence. Some of our more focused inquiries also tell us that these M&E data may not be reflective of the full picture, demonstrating the need for continuing research in this area, particularly among school-aged children.

3 Children and young adolescents experience risks during the school day, as well as on their way to and from school. We piloted USAID's *Safe Learning Environment (SLE) Qualitative Assessment Toolkit*^{xiv} in a small number of schools in **Honduras**^{xv} and the **Philippines**.^{xvi} Focused on communities with a high incidence of poverty and violence, we undertook participatory research with students, teachers, parents, and community leaders to document and analyze the risks that children face during the school day, as well as on their way to and from school. The study considered a broad range of risks, including: school-related gender-based violence, gang violence, a negative and unsupportive school climate, the impact of armed conflict, and environmental risks such as natural disasters and health epidemics.

The toolkit allowed us to look at the learning environment from a child's perspective, and to identify risks that were sometimes unknown to, or considered insignificant by, adults.

Children reported that:

- Peer bullying and violence by teachers (in the form of physical punishment and verbal/emotional abuse) was widespread.
- In the Philippines, hazards on the way to school included vehicular accidents, animal bites and "spirits."
- In one school in Honduras, gang violence created a "scary atmosphere" of intimidation. Some children claimed that fear or trauma prevented them from being able to learn, reporting lack of attention in class, difficulty in establishing interpersonal relationships with peers and poor academic performance.

In both countries, the findings from the assessments will be used to develop targeted school interventions that address the risks that children have identified.

What is our research telling us?

We expect school to be a safe place, one that promotes children's academic achievement and allows them to develop their social and emotional learning skills. However, our data show that violence manifests itself in many different and harmful ways within the education system. In the following section, we explore some examples of what we are doing to protect children's right to learn by supporting safe learning environments – even during times of crisis – and preventing and responding to the violence that children face in and out of school.

Our response

At ChildFund, we see our work to address violence at school as the interface between our child protection and education programming. Our aim is to ensure that children ages 6 to 14 years can learn and grow at school – an aim that is significantly impeded by the violence they face. Therefore, our interventions must ensure that children feel physically, emotionally, and psychologically safe in their learning environments, and must serve as an entry point for reducing violence at home and in the community.

To this end, in recent years ChildFund has increased its efforts to:

- Train teachers about the benefits of positive, non-violent methods of discipline.
- Encourage and support schools to develop child-friendly, inclusive cultures with policies and codes of conduct that prohibit bullying and corporal punishment.
- Establish parent and student committees and empower students to speak out on violence and other violations of their rights.
- Support schools and teachers to develop violence prevention plans.
- Build the capacity of caregivers to prevent, mitigate and respond to violence.

During **emergencies and humanitarian crises**, we protect children by providing safe learning and play environments. This helps children to continue their education and provides a routine during times of instability. In some countries, we are directing our efforts towards broader societal change through advocacy and policy reform at the national level, as well as raising awareness at the community level.^{xvii}

We are starting to see positive outcomes from our school and community-based programs for children and young adolescents in Life Stage 2. For example:

- In **Sri Lanka**, ChildFund's partners started a two-year project implementing child-centered education in primary schools in 2017.^{xviii} Observations showed the teachers were displaying better teaching techniques, more positive behavior and less aggression toward students. **Student engagement showed an average 23% increase from the baseline evaluation.**

These improvements were accompanied by an increase in improvements in children's learning, with **reading at age-appropriate fluency and comprehension increasing from 51% of students at the baseline to 81% at the midline evaluation.**

- In **Ethiopia**, we have created safer school environments by establishing girls' clubs and enabling members to speak up on harmful traditional practices and gender-based violence.^{xix}
- In **Senegal**, we partnered with the Ministry of Education on a project² to train teachers in religious schools and enlisted local community groups to feed and care for students so that they were no longer forced to beg for money or food.^{xx} We also advocated for a law to regulate and improve students' living and learning conditions by working with our partners to facilitate an open dialogue and consultation process between government and religious actors.

Advocating for change

Across **Senegal**, an estimated 50,000 boys (talibé) live in traditional Koranic boarding schools (daaras), often in squalid, overcrowded conditions. They are commonly forced to beg on the streets for money or food.

Children in these daaras are often beaten, chained, bound and subjected to other forms of physical or psychological abuse amounting to inhuman and degrading treatment.





CASE STUDY: Building bridges between teachers and parents to combat violence in Honduras

In Honduras, ChildFund has piloted an innovative method to prevent violence in schools as part of the *PUENTES* (“Bridges”) project³.^{xxi} Working in 36 schools in high-crime cities over a period of 18 months, the project tested *Miles de Manos* (“Thousands of Hands”), an approach that brings together teachers and parents to reduce violent behavior at home and at school. Intensive training workshops were conducted with parents (mostly mothers) and teachers to enhance parenting and teaching skills, teach positive discipline techniques, and facilitate the development of better communication and relationships with children.^{xxii}

Honduras has been classified as one of the most violent countries in the world, with many children facing huge challenges accessing safe education. In our own studies we have found that students in Honduras are exposed to gang violence, peer bullying, and verbal/emotional abuse from teachers at school.

A quasi-experimental study evaluation found encouraging results, including:

- A reported 62% reduction in acts of physical violence and a 59% reduction in acts of psychological and emotional violence in classrooms – with teachers and students relating to each other in more positive ways.
- An increase in students who report feeling safe and protected in their classroom and at home, from 70% to 90% by the project's end.
- An increase in reported use of positive discipline techniques by parents, from 60% to 65%.
- A better understanding among parents and teachers about how their own behavior (hitting, yelling, and verbal abuse) constitutes violence and can negatively affect their children.
- A sense of increased duty among parents to protect children, who have learned strategies for building more positive and caring relationships.

“Milos de Manos helped us to relate to our children.”

-Mother participant in the PUENTES project

For many teachers, parents and children, the *PUENTES* project provided a welcome safe space to speak about the violence endemic to their communities – a space that had not been offered to them before. Despite some of the challenges of the project, such as low participation of fathers and the demands of working in dangerous school environments, the results from this initial pilot are promising.

Moving forward, *Milos de Manos* will be used as the foundation for ChildFund's *School-Based Violence Prevention Model*, which will be piloted over a two-year period in different regions around the world.





CASE STUDY: Child protection is everyone's responsibility in the Philippines

In the **Philippines**, ChildFund piloted a community-based program to address violence against children in schools, homes and communities through its two-year project *Not in Our Community*.⁴ Advocating that “child protection is everyone’s responsibility,” the project focused on nine schools where a baseline study had identified peer bullying and violent discipline by teachers and parents as protection concerns.

Working alongside partners, ChildFund trained teachers, parents, and students on issues such as positive discipline methods, anti-bullying, and child rights, and enlisted children to speak out about violence using community radio broadcasts, school newspaper articles, and posters.

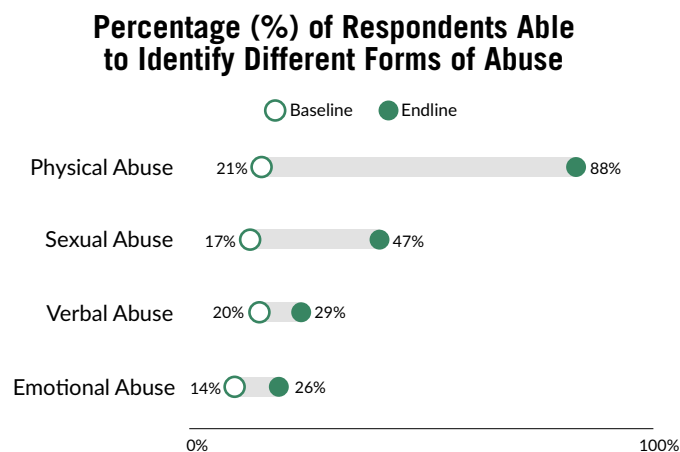
One of the major contributions of the Not in Our Community project was to help stakeholders, particularly children and teachers, to develop a much **broader and more intimate knowledge of child abuse and protection** including forms and sources of violence, risk factors and where to go for assistance.

The project also set up **zero-tolerance child protection committees** at the schools, where children could report cases of violence and abuse. These in turn were linked to local government child protection committees and provincial level Child Protection Units (established through the project), to ensure that, where necessary, children received additional support and services.

“Linking community-based mechanisms to the formal child protection system is one of the best practices from this project that can be replicated in other countries.”

-ChildFund Philippines Staff

A Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) study at the end of the project indicated that teachers showed positive changes in attitude toward protecting the rights and welfare of children, and that students were more aware of their rights and responsibilities.^{xxiii} Participants also demonstrated a better understanding that violence against children most often occurs at the hands of family members or friends.



However, the survey also found that local officials continued to have gray areas in the ways that they viewed physical and verbal violence, neglect and even sexual abuse of children. Parents seemed unconvinced of their ability to protect or guide their children, with a few continuing to resort to corporal punishment. This is symptomatic of the broader challenge of shifting deep-rooted attitudes and harmful behaviors over a short period of time, especially in the private realm of the household.



CASE STUDY: Creating safe places for children to learn and play during crisis in Ethiopia

In 2016, ChildFund set up a one-year emergency project to strengthen community-based child protection in the districts of Siraro and Fentale in the Oromia region of **Ethiopia**. Severely affected by one of the worst droughts in decades, these remote pastoralist communities were experiencing a rise in school absenteeism and child labor, with heightened rates of anxiety and psychological distress among children as their families struggled with food and water insecurity.

One of the principal aims of the *Strengthening Community-Based Protection in Severely Drought-Affected Districts in Oromia Region* project⁵ was to strengthen psychosocial support for children by setting up 30 **Child-Friendly Spaces** where girls and boys of mixed ages could play, learn to read and write, engage in fun activities, and develop important life skills. Significant effort was also made to include **children with disabilities**, who were often stigmatized or kept at home by families with project staff visiting households to identify children with physical and developmental impairments who could benefit from activities.

In a final evaluation, children and adults identified the Child-Friendly Spaces as the most beneficial and successful component of the project.^{xxiv} By providing children with a hub for learning, entertainment and socializing during a time of emergency, the spaces were found to:

- Reduce children's drought-related stress.
- Contribute to children's informal learning.
- Increase community awareness about the importance of formal education for children and young adolescents ages 6 to 14 years old.
- Provide a safe place for children to take a break from daily hardship.

Enthusiastic volunteers from the community managed the Child-Friendly Spaces and played an important role in their success. Running activities appropriate to the local culture, they engaged children (many of whom had never attended school) in sessions that included reading, counting, drawing, games, drama, singing and story-telling. Simple measures such as situating the Child-Friendly Spaces close to households, providing children with shade in the very hot climate, and giving them snacks and drinks also contributed to their success.

Finally, community participation in building and managing the Child-Friendly Spaces helped to develop local ownership of the initiative. This enabled the communities in Siraro and Fentale to keep the Child-Friendly Spaces running even after the end of the program so that children continued to benefit from a safe learning and play environment.

While the project clearly gave much-needed relief to families and children during a time of hardship, sustainable change for these communities will need to include addressing the chronic nature of drought-related stress. A longer-term perspective would include the development of water sources – including water tanks at schools – and building permanent, rather than temporary, facilities for children.



Our future commitment

Our studies and programs reveal the importance of building safe learning environments for children and young adolescents in Life Stage 2, and creating opportunities for girls and boys to learn, play, and grow even during times of crisis. Through this work, we not only increase the likelihood that children will attend school and achieve their educational goals, but we also encourage social change and establish norms of behavior that permeate the home and community.

As ChildFund continues to put its Theory of Change for children and young adolescents into action, we will use our learning to:

- **Listen to the priorities of children.** Our research and data collection must reflect children's daily realities and not be limited by our own interpretations of their lives. In all of our research we must take opportunities to learn more about children's vulnerability to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence.
- **Continue to support parents and families,** even as children begin to spend more time at school than at home during this stage of their development. Parents continue to play critical roles in their children's emotional, social, intellectual, and physical development; our emphasis on parenting therefore remains relevant as children grow older. We must support families through stress and financial pressure as they seek to meet the evolving needs of children: buying books and uniforms, providing more food for growing children, and dealing with children's emerging sexuality.
- **Ensure that children have access to safe learning and play environments,** such as Child-Friendly Spaces, during times of crisis. For children whose schools may not be operating, these spaces provide them with psychological relief and equip them with the resilience and skills needed to navigate their changing and often precarious circumstances.
- **Eliminate tolerance for peer-to-peer bullying and violence.** If the cycle of violence is to end with this generation, we must work with the education system at community, district and national levels. Through our programs, we will promote standards of behavior that encourage all children to attend school and actively participate in their own learning and development.
- **Ensure that our messaging and advocacy efforts are consistent across our programs.** For example, our research tells us that corporal punishment by parents and teachers is still widespread in the communities where we work. In response, our programs must work across sectors and at all levels of the community to encourage nonviolent disciplinary measures in all settings.

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Part 3

Life Stage 3:

Adolescents and youth

15-24 years old



Our focus on the safe transition from childhood to adulthood

Adolescence and youth are a time of great change for young people everywhere. As adolescents become young adults, their social world expands, they assume new roles and responsibilities, develop emotionally and physically, and explore a more individual sense of identity.ⁱ While this transition may be turbulent for some, most adolescents manage to navigate the teenage years successfully.

Unfortunately, for some of the children we support, adolescence is characterized by exposure to abuse, neglect, exploitation and, in particular, **sexual and physical violence**.ⁱⁱ From hazardous labor and trafficking, to child marriage, to forced recruitment into armed groups and gangs, adolescents face a unique set of risks to their safety and welfare.

In many of the communities where we work, the end of primary school and the onset of puberty bring an abrupt end to childhood. This period can be a time of great vulnerability as adolescents demand increased freedoms and explore an adult environment. They may engage in more risky behaviors, for example experimenting with alcohol and drugs and engaging in unprotected sex, which can damage their health and lead to early pregnancies. Poverty and social inequality may exclude them from education and employment opportunities and push them into exploitative situations.

During this stage of life, protection risks and vulnerability become increasingly determined by gender, with girls and boys fulfilling – and being constrained by – more traditional roles.ⁱⁱⁱ Adolescent girls may be expected to marry and raise children within the home, to undergo initiation ceremonies that include genital mutilation/cutting,^{iv} and experience heightened risk of sexual violence.^v Adolescent boys, adopting the social norms of masculinity, are more likely to engage in physically aggressive behavior, join gangs, and become involved in crime. They are at particular risk of physical violence,^{vi} and are more vulnerable to the most physically punishing forms of child labor and forced recruitment into armed combat.^{vii}

Sexual and physical violence

Adolescents and youth face an increased risk of sexual and physical violence, including homicide, as they transition to adulthood. Around the world:

- Children's mortality rate from violence doubles during their second decade of life
- About 15 million adolescent girls ages 15 to 19 have experienced forced sex in their lifetime
- The global homicide rate for adolescents age 10-19 is four times higher for boys than for girls
- An adolescent is killed by an act of violence every 7 minutes

The impact of this violence on adolescent and youth physical and emotional health, educational achievement, and well-being is extremely serious and can have life-changing consequences including disability, pregnancy, mental illness, and social ostracism. In some countries where we work, homicide (often due to gun crime) and suicide are major causes of death among adolescents and youth.^{viii}

ChildFund's Domains of Change and Core Outcome for Life Stage 3: Adolescents and Youth 15-24 Years Old

- ✓ Employed at a Living Wage in Non-Exploitative Work
- ✓ Make Choices for a Healthy Reproductive Life
- ✓ Change Agents in Family and Community

Skilled and Involved Youth

At ChildFund we recognize that adolescents and youth are resourceful and resilient. We also know that the transition to adulthood represents a unique and challenging period and that this age group is often overlooked within child welfare programming. If we are to reach our goal of adolescents and youth becoming skilled and involved, we must design specialized, age-appropriate interventions that meet their unique needs. This includes supporting **youth-led safe spaces** and clubs that provide a protective environment for young people as they grow into adulthood.

Youth-led safe spaces and clubs provide safe and protected spaces for youth to make friends, learn critical skills and serve as leaders in their communities.

Our work with adolescents and youth is designed to improve their economic, physical and social well-being. Our wide range of programs – whether they relate to sexual and reproductive health, adolescent life skills, education, job readiness and livelihoods, or youth empowerment – all provide opportunities to mitigate the risks of violence that young people face. For example, through direct action and advocacy we:

- Provide adolescents and youth with social and emotional skills that foster healthy and non-violent relationships.
- Enable adolescents and youth to find work in safe environments, free from physical danger, sexual harassment, and exploitation.
- Provide adolescents and youth access to information about sexual and reproductive health to reduce early pregnancy and prevent the transmission of diseases.
- Address harmful traditional practices including early marriage, female genital cutting/mutilation, and gender-based violence.
- Ensure that marginalized adolescents and youth (e.g. girls, the disabled, LGBTIQ, and minority groups) participate and benefit equally from ChildFund programming.
- Empower adolescents and youth to know their rights and to advocate for themselves and others.

- Build greater community and caregiver understanding of the life stage of adolescence, and the unique needs and experiences of young people.

Our learning about protecting adolescents and youth

This section explores how ChildFund is deepening its knowledge about the factors that perpetuate violence against adolescents and youth, as well as the types of support and services that can protect them. At this stage of life, adolescents and youth are increasingly able to guide ChildFund about the research topics that are relevant to their lives and to design their own advocacy strategies.

Our interventions and studies are already giving us a clearer sense of the concerns of adolescents and youth ages 15 to 24 years and the forms of violence and exploitation they face in the countries where we work:

1 Violence is a reality for many adolescents and youth, and can jeopardize their education, employment and life opportunities:

- In a study by ChildFund in **Honduras, El Salvador, Mexico, Guatemala and Nicaragua**, children and youth suggested that personal safety and limited opportunities for employment or meaningful engagement in their communities were driving young people to migrate away from their homes and countries.^{ix}
- In the **Philippines**, research with indigenous communities revealed that both young men and women ages 15 to 24 years experienced sexual harassment, with women also subject to sexual violence and physical punishment.^x
- An ethnographic mapping of two communities in **Kenya** revealed that teenage pregnancies were sometimes the result of transactional sex, exploitation, and rape by adult men.^{xi}
- In **Uganda**, a *National Survey of Violence Against Children*^{1xii} supported by ChildFund highlighted that approximately half of respondents ages 18 to 24 years believe it is acceptable for a man to beat his wife, and roughly 60% believe that a wife should tolerate violence to keep the family together. Meanwhile, one in five young women, and one in three young men, revealed that they had already perpetrated violence. This is significant as the survey also found a correlation between participants' experience of physical violence in childhood and the likelihood that they would commit violence later in life.
- A survey in the **Philippines**^{xiii} found that only 12% of children and youth ages 15 to 24 years with disabilities were attending school and indicated that further education for this group was a "serious challenge."

2 The majority of adolescents and youth know where to report harms to children and would take action to report them. In 2017, as part of our global monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data collection, we asked 88,516 adolescents and youth ages 15 to 24 years from 16 countries about their knowledge of child protection reporting mechanisms and willingness to report violence against children.^{xiv}

We learned that:

- **More than two-thirds (69%) of adolescents and youth said that they knew where to report protection issues and that, if a child was being harmed, would report it.**

Despite this overall positive finding, there is still more work to be done in countries where young people revealed less knowledge and likelihood of reporting violence. Some of our more focused inquiries also tell us that these M&E data may not be reflective of the full picture, demonstrating the need for continuing research in this area.

3 LGBTIQ youth are particularly vulnerable to discrimination and violence. In the **Philippines**, ChildFund conducted pioneering research with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ) youth ages 10 to 24 years to learn more about the violence they face.^{xv} Participatory workshops brought together LGBTIQ youth in three cities and a series of innovative research tools were used to capture information about their lives.

“I wish we were not bullied all the time. I wish people would just accept us.”

-Youth participant

The research findings revealed that:

- Many participants shared **experiences of violence and exclusion on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity.**
- LGBTIQ youth predominantly experienced **verbal bullying, emotional abuse, social isolation and physical violence**, mostly from family members and friends, but also from figures of authority such as priests and local government officials.
- Some youth were **deprived of the opportunity to work**, some spoke of **discrimination at the hands of the police and teachers**, and others were **pressured into more acceptable gender roles and behaviors**. A few youth shared stories of sexual abuse.

The harassment and violence that LGBTIQ youth face is perpetuated by cultural and religious norms that stigmatize homosexuality and dictate strict rules about the way men and women should behave. This stigma was often internalized by LGBTIQ youth, who felt that something was wrong with them; they reported feelings of stress, depression and anger as a result of living with discrimination and violence. The lack of LGBTIQ-sensitive services also meant that their psychosocial and health needs often went unmet.

Ultimately, the research broke new ground in the Philippines, helping to draw a picture of the reality for LGBTIQ youth, whose needs had largely been ignored in research and in gender programming. As an initial response, ChildFund identified entry points within its youth advocacy, life skills and school-based child protection work to integrate a focus on LGBTIQ. Longer-term efforts are also underway with communities to transform social norms that stigmatize youth because of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

4 Adolescents and youth experiencing early pregnancy face unique risks. In recent years, ChildFund has partnered with leading child welfare organizations to conduct ethnographic mappings of community child protection systems in **Kenya** and **Sierra Leone**. In both countries, these studies identified early pregnancy as a priority welfare issue and informed the design of ChildFund's interventions:

- In **Kenya**, a child protection mapping of two communities indicated that teenage mothers were especially at risk of harming, neglecting or abandoning infants and young children. ChildFund has collaborated with community leaders to develop an action plan for preventing teen pregnancy and supporting young mothers to care for their babies.^{xvi} To this end, the community aims to train adolescents on sexual and reproductive health and provide young mothers with parenting support. ChildFund also plans to engage with identified perpetrators of transactional sex with adolescent girls, including *bodaboda* (commercial motorbike) drivers to educate them about the sexual exploitation of children.
- In **Sierra Leone**, ChildFund provided field support in Bombali, one of two districts studied in an inter-agency research initiative to map the community-based child protection system in 12 villages.^{xvii} Teenage pregnancy was found to have a highly negative impact on adolescent girls, who were often forced to drop out of school and/or to engage in transactional sex to survive. In response, ChildFund developed the *Girls and Young Mothers Urban Livelihood* project, which has provided vocational and livelihood training to 300 young mothers. ChildFund provided them with start-up kits and equipment (such as sewing machines) to launch their work and supported them to raise funds by forming savings groups. In this way, ChildFund aimed to improve the standard of living for young mothers and, in turn, the care and protection of their children.

5 Children engaged in irregular migration are particularly vulnerable to discrimination, human trafficking, and sexual violence on their journeys: In recent years there has been a dramatic increase in unaccompanied children and youth from Central America and Mexico crossing into the United States under irregular and dangerous conditions. Migrating to escape violence at home and to leave behind unemployment and lack of opportunities, these children and youth have been particularly vulnerable to discrimination, human trafficking and sexual violence as they attempt to journey across borders and to settle in the U.S.^{xviii}

In 2017, the ChildFund Alliance launched an ambitious four-year project, *Preventing Irregular Migration in Central America (PICMCA)*,² focused on children and youth in EI

Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua.^{xix} This initiative, called *CONFIO* in Spanish, aims to address the root causes – high levels of crime and violence, limited employment and education opportunities, and lack of awareness about the dangers of irregular migration – that compel young people to leave their countries.

The project will provide at-risk youth with vocational and entrepreneurial training to improve their employment prospects, while empowering them to engage with local and national decision-makers to address irregular migration. At the same time, ChildFund and its partners will work with communities to improve delivery of child protection services and to address violence against children and youth. In this way, the project aims to improve the well-being of children and youth ages 6 to 24 years and to create the conditions that enable them to stay in their communities.

6 Children and youth are important partners in our research and advocacy efforts: Given a chance and some support, young people can be important advocates for their own protection. In the Firozabad district of Uttar Pradesh, ChildFund manages a major child labor initiative, *DISHA*, in an urban slum in India’s glass and bangle making industry.^{xx} Children and youth participating in the project asked for the opportunity to map out the types of harm and risks they face in daily life, and the way that communities help them.

Project staff helped children and youth to design the research, and then, over a three-week period, teams of child and youth researchers collected information from children and adults through interviews, focus group discussions and a quantitative survey. This innovative study highlighted a series of risks to children:

- Persistently high levels of **involvement in hazardous labor**.
- **Emotional and physical violence at home and at school** – with 35% of parents indicating that they express their displeasure with their children through emotional or physical violence of varying intensity, and 42% of parents confirming that their child has reported being bullied at school.
- High numbers of girls (40% of those surveyed) reporting that they have experienced **unwanted attention or touch** – which mostly went unreported.

More than three-quarters (77%) of parents were against giving children time to play, citing reasons such as “playing is a waste of time.” The children’s study also revealed extremely low awareness of both formal and informal community-based child protection organizations, with family considered to be the primary source of help and protection.

ChildFund India is using these findings to inform the next three-year strategy of the *DISHA* initiative. In response to the study conclusions, project staff will focus on ensuring the children and families know what to do, where to go and who to report to if they experience harm or violence. Alongside this, community-based child protection organizations will be supported to better link children and families to formal government services.

Our response

We are actively working to combat the different forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence that adolescents and youth experience as they move toward adulthood. We now have more information about the circumstances that push young people into potentially harmful situations, and we strive to equip them with the life skills and opportunities they need to keep themselves safe.

We are starting to see some real progress:

- Through our school clubs and youth forums in **Ethiopia**, we have successfully raised awareness about gender-based violence and sexual reproductive health among young people.^{xxi}
- In Madhya Pradesh, **India** we have worked to reduce teenage girls' involvement in marriage by empowering village-level Child Protection Committees and strengthening a community system of protection.^{xxii} A total of 131 potential child marriage cases have been prevented through this system since the start of the *UNMUKT* project in 2016.
- In **Uganda**, 85% of 166 youth who were provided with vocational training by the *Deinstitutionalization of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (DOVCU)* project³ successfully found gainful employment, were able to support siblings with school fees and contributed to basic household costs.^{xxiii}

In the following section, we look in more depth at a selection of program case studies that illustrate the work that ChildFund is undertaking with adolescents and youth in Life Stage 3.





CASE STUDY: Creating opportunities for youth as an alternative to exploitative labor in India

In India, ChildFund works with poor rural communities in South Rajasthan to prevent the trafficking and migration of children and youth into exploitative labor in the cotton industry.

Between 2012 and 2015, ChildFund conducted a three-year project, *Combatting Child Trafficking Through Sustainable Livelihood Development (Phase II)*,⁴ in 50 villages across Udaipur district to increase awareness of the risks of child labor, and to empower local community and government actors to take coordinated action on child trafficking. Seeking to address the underlying poverty that drives children into the cotton industry, ChildFund conducted **vocational training for 374 youth** (for example, in masonry, mobile phone repairs and tailoring), enabling them to find alternative ways to support themselves and their families.

Each year, thousands of children are trafficked from South Rajasthan to work in cotton fields in the neighboring state of Gujarat.

Seen as a source of cheap labor, children often work long hours for minimal pay with inadequate food and poor shelter, and risk physical and sexual abuse by their employers. Deprived of their right to attend school, they are known to experience

An evaluation highlighted the project's impact: ^{xxiv}

- Cases of child trafficking and exploitative labor significantly decreased in project villages. Data showed that children reported that children who were out of school and involved in child labor decreased from 39% to 12%, and that there was a further decrease (from 33% to 7%) of children engaged in cotton work in all areas.
- Families and communities demonstrated a much higher awareness of child protection laws (from 14% to 88%) and programs (6% to 76%).
- A network of child protection actors teachers, police, lawyers, civil society organizations, as well as community vigilance committees joined forces to respond to cases of child trafficking and labor.
- Many of the trained youth, some of whom had previously worked in the cotton industry, reported that they had since found employment and were earning a decent income.

headaches, convulsions and respiratory conditions due to the adverse working conditions and exposure to pesticides.

Poverty is the major underlying cause of child trafficking and migration. For parents (and children) the journey away from home may be considered an opportunity to earn much needed income— rather than as a violation of their rights.

ChildFund has built on these successes with a second project in Udaipur district that trains young people on **business and entrepreneurial skills** and links them to employment opportunities.

VIDEO: Child Trafficking in India's Cotton Fields





CASE STUDY: Working with youth to prevent female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) in Guinea

ChildFund **Guinea** has been working for over 12 years to develop and strengthen community-based systems of child protection in the prefectures of Kindia and Dabola. Central to these efforts has been engaging with youth and communities to fight the practice of **female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)**.^{xxv}

Using its community approach, ChildFund and partners have mobilized Village Child Protection Committees, youth associations, women's associations, religious leaders and local authorities to work together to protect girls and young women from FGM/C:

FGM/C in Guinea

Although prohibited by law, Guinea has one of the highest rates of FGM/C in Africa, with 97% of girls and women age 15-49 years affected. Complex belief systems about female sexuality underlie the practice, which is deeply rooted in cultural traditions and social norms and continues to be supported by two-thirds (67%) of older girls and women.

- Community associations and local leaders run awareness-raising campaigns against FGM/C to change public perceptions and reduce the social rejection and isolation of uncircumcised girls.
- Community volunteers, including members of youth groups, conduct home visits to counsel families on the long-term, detrimental effects on girls' health and reproduction.
- A community alert system enables community groups to refer incidents of violence against children – including cases of FGM/C – to village Child Protection Committees whose representatives then link vulnerable children to health and social services.

The impact of FGM/C can be devastating. It can cause severe and lasting pain, urinary infection and incontinence, and affect reproduction and childbirth. Girls and women who do not undergo FGM/C may be stigmatized, or rejected for marriage and, as a result, may experience economic hardship.^{xxv}

A particularly innovative feature of the initiative has been the establishment of a dialogue between circumcised and non-circumcised girls and youth, which has helped to break down the social barriers between these girls and to build a sense of solidarity.

Youth and women play a critical role in this work. In an evaluation, youth and women's associations were identified as the front line in community efforts to prevent FGM/C and are seen as instrumental in addressing the stigmatization of uncircumcised girls.^{xxvii}

Women's involvement in village Child Protection Committees increased from 37% of committee members to 45% over the life of the project. This change reflects the importance of these key stakeholders' efforts both to change the social norms that underlie deeply rooted cultural practices and to make choices that potentially affect future generations.





CASE STUDY: Using adolescent and youth experiences of violence in Uganda to inform our advocacy efforts

In **Uganda**, ChildFund has played a lead role in the first *National Survey on Violence Against Children (VAC)*.^{xxviii} Conducted in partnership with the Government of Uganda, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and other children's agencies, this large-scale research initiative has shed light on the sexual, physical and emotional violence experienced by Ugandan children and youth across the country.^{xxix}

"We will use these findings to wake people up to reality. We can now go to policy-makers with hard evidence that will help us to make the case for child protection and will persuade them to back up their commitments with resources."

-ChildFund Uganda Child Protection Specialist

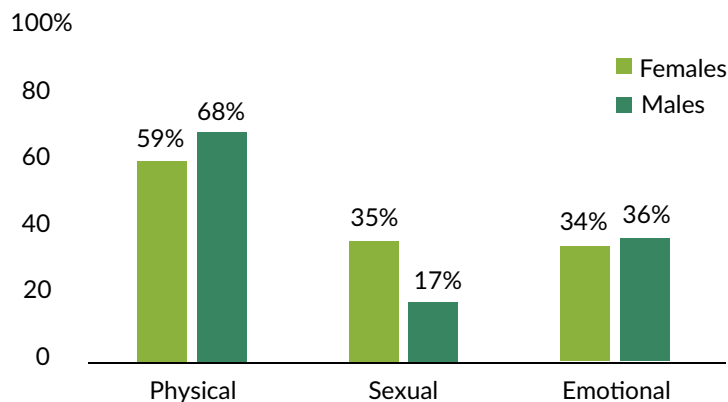
The research highlights the prevalence of different types of violence for Ugandans ages 13 to 17 years and 18 to 24 years, as well as the perpetrators, location, and time of incidents, the impact on youth and adolescents' physical and mental health, and the circumstances in which they receive social services. The analysis goes further to capture information about children's sexual

risk-taking, HIV testing behavior, and attitudes toward gender and interpersonal violence. It is the first VAC survey to provide regional-level data, allowing comparison of (and, eventually, a more nuanced response to) violence across different parts of the country.

The picture that emerges is alarming. The survey indicates that among youth ages 18 to 24 years:

- 35% of female respondents and 17% of male respondents have experienced **sexual violence** during their childhoods, most often in their homes and at school, and at the hands of neighbors and friends.
- The majority of young women (59%) and young men (68%) ages 18 to 24 have experienced childhood **physical violence** – defined as punching, kicking, burning, or striking a child with an object. For these youth, about 20% of young women and 16% of young men experienced their first incident of physical violence at or before age 5.

Experience of Physical, Sexual, and Emotional Violence Experienced in Childhood Among Youth Ages 18-24 Years



Among Ugandans ages 13 to 17 years, 44% of girls and 59% of boys experienced **physical violence** in the 12 months preceding the survey. Emotional violence is also widespread and damaging for both age groups.

Parents, adult relatives and teachers were all cited as perpetrators of violence. The impact on children included: physical health problems, pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, mental distress and self-harm, and missed school attendance.

The conclusions of the VAC study have provided the Government of Uganda with compelling evidence about the scale of violence against children and youth – and a unique opportunity to respond. ChildFund has joined forces with the Government of Uganda and partners to disseminate the survey findings across the country and to develop a **National Action Plan** to address violence against children in schools, homes and communities. Moving forward, this evidence will help ChildFund to monitor and support Uganda’s progress toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal 16.2.



CASE STUDY: The power of youth advocacy in the United States and the Philippines

Youth themselves are often the most powerful advocates in the fight against abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. Below are two examples from ChildFund programs in the **United States of America (USA)** and the **Philippines**, where youth have stood up for their rights and advocated for change.

In the **USA**, nine Youth Ambassadors from the *Youth Civic Engagement and Leadership (YCEL)* project in Jackson, Mississippi, traveled to Washington, D.C., to participate in ChildFund's annual Advocacy Day on March 24, 2017.^{xxx} Joining our staff from across the organization, these young people discussed critical issues facing children and youth with members of Congress, including investment in education and putting an end to violence.

VIDEO: Represent (P&G)
Washington DC

Advocacy Day provided the Youth Ambassadors with an opportunity to use the leadership and advocacy skills they had learned through the YCEL project. Hailing from communities characterized by poverty and violence, they had the rare opportunity to experience being listened to by people in power, which helped the young people understand that they could actually make a difference.

The Youth Ambassadors' involvement in Advocacy Day represented a true youth-adult partnership with youth and adults working together as colleagues for a common cause. The experience demonstrated the power of equipping youth with skills, building their confidence, and providing them with opportunities to bring their passion and energy to advocate for change.

"I want to advocate on behalf of children everywhere, not just children in Jackson [Mississippi]. I feel that people everywhere should have the same basic rights."

- Youth Ambassador

"As a recipient and witness of child abuse in the adoption system in the adoption system, [I feel that] what ChildFund is doing could be an example and should definitely be continued because it shows us that children definitely matter and should be protected and cared for."

- Youth Ambassador

Since returning to Jackson, these young people have built on this momentum and have successfully advocated to bring a youth voice to their school boards so that they can weigh in on issues that matter to them.

As part of the *EMBRACE* project⁵ in the **Philippines**, ChildFund has worked to empower children and youth with disabilities to protect themselves and to take action on matters that affect them.^{xxxi} A milestone in this initiative was the 2016 **#WeAreIncluded Convention**, organized by ChildFund in Bacolod City. This provided children and youth with disabilities an opportunity to voice concerns about their lack of social inclusion and their vulnerability to violence, in the presence of government, media, and civil society actors.

This Convention culminated in a call to action: children and youth presented the **#WeAreIncluded Manifesto** outlining their demands to be protected from physical abuse and neglect. They demanded appropriate social services and claimed their right to the same opportunities as children and youth without disabilities. In response, participating government agencies and civil society actors committed to an agenda for action and to developing programs and specialist support services.

"All of us share the same feelings of being left out, ignored, neglected, picked on, laughed at and bullied and not being provided the same opportunities as other children and youth without disabilities at home, in the community and at school...we are now coming together to speak out, be heard and advocate for change..."

-Extract from the **#WeAreIncluded Manifesto** written by 57 children and youth with disabilities.

5. Funded by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) through ChildFund Australia

Our future commitment

The data we have collected from our programs and studies highlight a series of protection risks that emerge in adolescence and often continue into early adulthood. This violence is not something that we can overlook if we want to **improve young people's economic, physical and social well-being**, and to help them to become skilled and involved adults.

We are committed to ensuring a safe transition through adolescence so that young people can grow up and lead fulfilling lives. As ChildFund puts its Theory of Change for adolescents and youth into action, we will use our learning to:

- **Create opportunities for all youth:** We will design programs to secure young people's smooth path to adulthood, increasing individual resilience and improving access to safe education, livelihood and employment opportunities. In this way, we build upon young people's skills and resources to contribute to their lives and communities.
- **Combat negative social norms:** We will enlist adolescents and youth in our efforts to combat deeply entrenched social norms that sanction violent practices such as early marriage, FGM/C, gender-based violence, and restrictions on the potential of children with disabilities. We will also combat factors that give rise to toxic ideas of masculinity. Because they are future (and current) parents and potential leaders, involving youth is critical if we are to bring about lasting change, reducing the vulnerability of the next generation of children.
- **Design interventions that reflect the divergence of gender roles and protection challenges:** Our tailored programs will work to reduce the risk of physical violence that adolescent boys disproportionately face, and to provide them with social and emotional skills that foster healthy, non-violent relationships. We will also address the deep-rooted gender inequality that defines the life experiences of girls and young women, advocating for their right to make decisions about their lives (including their education), and working to combat the sexual violence that affects so many of them.
- **Give young people opportunities to advocate for their protection rights – and those of other children.** We will empower adolescents and youth to speak up on the violence that affects them and their communities. In particular, we will make efforts to reach out to marginalized groups such as youth with disabilities, youth from ethnic or religious minorities, and youth who identify with non-traditional gender or sexual identities to ensure that their voices are heard.

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A woman with short dark hair, wearing a bright green polo shirt, is seated and writing in a notebook with a blue pen. A young child with short dark hair, wearing a light blue shirt, is leaning in from the right, looking at the notebook. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a wooden fence and some foliage. The overall scene suggests a community-based activity or a lesson.

Part 4

Working to Support Protective Systems

At ChildFund, we understand the importance of protecting children from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence at every stage of childhood in order to maximize their development and ability to reach their full potential.

While our Life Stage Approach helps us to design programs tailored to the vulnerabilities of children, adolescents, and youth, the reality is, of course, more complex. There are many factors that converge to influence the childhood experience, including children's individual personalities and physical maturity, their cultural and social environment, economic and political situation, and access to life opportunities. However, there are strong points of continuity between life stages and certain forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence that cut across all age groups. Formal and community systems of support need to be sensitive to the needs of different groups (ages, gender, gender identity, ability, etc.), how the experience of violence at one stage of development may affect their development later in life, and the forms of violence which affect children throughout their lives.

Our programs and studies also confirm the importance of **working at all levels of the child protection system**. If we are to significantly reduce children's vulnerability to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence, we must target our efforts to all of the people, policies, and services that can protect them. This means working at community, district and national levels, and with children, families, leaders, government, and civil society organizations.

Our learning about working to support protective systems

This section explores what we are learning as we deepen our protection work with children across their first decades of life – supporting their developmental trajectory as they grow from healthy and secure infants to educated and confident children, to skilled and involved youth. Already, our experience is beginning to show that:

1 **Most communities have an informal mechanism in place to support children who experience violence, but these are not always functional.** We collected information on 219 community-based child protection mechanisms (CBCPMs) in a small sample of communities in which we work across 17 countries as part of our global monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data collection data collection in 2017.¹ We found that only 38% of these mechanisms were **functional**.

While most country teams collected these data from only a few communities in 2017, **the Philippines** collected data from all 52 communities in which we work.

To meet the threshold for functionality, a CBCPM must have:

- formal recognition by a government agency,
- active participation of social service providers in its activities (i.e., meetings are attended by a member of the formal system), **and**
- an established protocol for referring incidents to at least one formal social service provider.

We found that:

- Out of 79 informal mechanisms identified in these communities, only 35 (44%) were functional.
- 66 (84%) of 79 informal mechanisms were being utilized, i.e. at least one type of harm was reported to the mechanism by the community in the past 12 months.

Functionality and Utilization of CBCPMs

	# (%) of functional CBCPMs	# (%) of CBCPMs being utilized	Total # of CBCPMs
Global	83 (38%)	186 (85%)	219
Philippines	35 (44%)	66 (84%)	79

In the Philippines, CBCPMs responded differently to reported harms; for example, some harms were handled internally, some harms were referred to social services, or both. In other cases, harms were neither handled internally nor referred to social services.

We found that:

- Most mechanisms handle sexual violence, but it is also frequently referred to social services.
- There were certain harms that were most frequently handled internally by the mechanisms – for example, reports of psychological abuse and demeaning and humiliating behavior – perhaps pointing to the capacity of these mechanisms.
- Child labor cases were not handled by many mechanisms, nor was it referred to social services when reported. Of the 34 mechanisms that received at least one report for child labor, 71% neither handled nor referred the case to social services.

How different reported harms were handled by the CBCPMs in the Philippines

	Sexual Violence	Psychological Abuse	Demeaning and Humiliating Behavior	Child Labor
Harm handled by CBCPM	71%	60%	59%	24%
Harm referred to Social Services	65%	16%	47%	12%
Both handled by the mechanism and referred to Social Services	47%	12%	8%	6%
Neither handled by the mechanism nor referred to Social Services	12%	36%	41%	71%

2 Violence is experienced differently by children depending on their age and gender. From the data we collected in the Philippines, we also found that while some types of violence affected most groups of children, there were certain types of violence that affected children differently based on age or gender. For example:

- Overall, CBCPMs received the fewest referrals for cases for infants and young children 0 to 5 years. Of the mechanisms that received referrals for this population, the majority received referrals for neglect and humiliating and demeaning behavior. Few mechanisms received referrals for other harms. As discussed in previous sections, many of the harms perpetrated against this age group may be hidden, due to young children's lack of interaction or visibility outside of the home, familial relations, or the lack of awareness or recognition of these types of harm.
- Neglect and humiliating and demeaning behavior were the most common harms reported to CBCPMs for children of all ages, and most frequently for children and young adolescents 6 to 14 years.
- Based on the number of mechanisms that received referrals for early marriage, child labor, and intimate partner violence, it appears that these harms are more of a risk for children as they enter late adolescence and early adulthood.
- Mechanisms received more referrals for early marriage, sexual abuse, and intimate partner violence for girls than for boys. On the other hand, mechanisms received more referrals for child labor and physical violence for boys than for girls.

3 We can be an effective bridge between children and the high-level decision-makers who have the power to introduce real reform:

- In **India**, ChildFund has been selected by the National Child Protection Commission to develop national Standard Operating Procedures to support police in responding to harm and violence against children.ⁱⁱ
- As a member of the National Partnership to End Violence Against Children in **Sri Lanka**, ChildFund has engaged in high-level discussions with the Ministry of Education to address violent discipline in schools.
- In **Indonesia**, ChildFund has been working to address illegal adoption and trafficking of children by advocating for stronger government commitment to preventing violence against children, anti-trafficking laws and policies, and improved family welfare services.ⁱⁱⁱ
- In the **USA**, ChildFund has joined World Vision and Save the Children in the *End Violence Against Children Taskforce* to work with Congress to advance policies that prevent and address violence against children worldwide.^{iv}

- At the global level, in 2017, ChildFund came together with other child-focused organizations to successfully advocate for the inclusion of Target 16.2, a specific goal to end violence against children in the new United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Our response

Working across life stages, our goal is to contribute to broader social change by supporting the development of child protection systems that can provide seamless support to children as they grow; strengthening the interface between formal and informal protection systems; and influencing policy and implementation to the benefit of children, youth and families. We do this at different levels:

- **Locally**, we build the capacity of community members, including children and youth, supporting them to raise their concerns and share learning with local and sub-national level officials.
- **Nationally**, we use our evidence to work with governments to create, strengthen, implement, and fund policies that address concerns relevant to children's protection and well-being.
- **Globally**, ChildFund contributes to advocacy efforts as a member of the ChildFund Alliance, ensuring that commitments made in the Sustainable Development Goals become a reality.

Through the following case studies, we examine how our country offices in **Uganda** and the **Philippines** have targeted forms of violence that cut across all life stages and have successfully strengthened the child protection system through direct action at the community level and advocacy initiatives at the national level. They highlight how we are translating our deep knowledge of communities into broader systematic reform and social change, enabling us to have a lasting impact in the lives of children beyond our program communities and the tenure of our projects.



CASE STUDY: Combating child labor in the sugarcane industry in the Philippines

Since 2003, ChildFund has been an active member of a consortium to eliminate exploitative child labor in the sugarcane industry in 11 provinces of the **Philippines**. The most recent four-year phase of this program, *ABK3 LEAP*¹, reached 54,000 children and youth before it ended in 2016. The project led to a **substantial reduction in the percent of children in exploitative labor: from 94% in 2011 to 16% in 2016.**^v

Since our last Impact Report, we have evaluated the *ABK3 LEAP* program.^{vi} The evaluation indicates that our interventions have:

- **Provided a strong incentive for families to send their children to school.** We have improved learning environments, trained teachers, delivered school supplies, and provided opportunities for children who have been out of school to attend catch-up classes.

1. Formally titled *ABK3 Livelihoods, Education, Advocacy, and Protection Against Exploitative Child Labor in Sugarcane*, this project is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) through World Vision International

- **Dissuaded vulnerable families from sending children to work** in the sugarcane industry by diversifying their income sources and improving their food security. This focus on other economic opportunities resulted in a monthly increase of 72% for participating families.
- **Raised awareness about the hazards of child labor and engaged community child protection structures** such as Community Watch Groups and Child Rights Advocates to monitor, respond to and advocate on behalf of child victims of child labor.
- **Contributed to the widespread adoption of ordinances to prevent child labor** at district level, the adoption of voluntary codes of conduct with sugarcane producers, and the inclusion of provincial mechanisms to monitor child labor violations.

The evaluation identified several **good practices** that have contributed to *ABK3 LEAP*'s success, and which will be applied to other child labor initiatives:

- The program was founded upon a baseline study, which provided **critical evidence** regarding the causes and scale of child labor. The study provided a robust rationale for the program and allowed ChildFund to advocate with communities, government, and sugar industry employers from a position of strength.
- The program took an **integrated approach** that addressed the extreme poverty and lack of economic opportunities that force families to send their children to the sugarcane fields. This combined direct social protection, livelihood, and education support for families with awareness activities to help communities understand the implications of exploitative child labor.
- The program sought to strengthen the **wider system of protection for children** at all levels, through support for community child protection structures as well as government policy-makers.^{vii} According to the evaluation, the intervention leaves a legacy of improved policies, institutional capacity, and local community and government commitment to ending child labor.

KEY RESULTS

The ABK3 LEAP program successfully reached (and exceeded) a number of targets:

- Exploitative child labor in sugarcane fields reduced from 94% to 16%.
- Average monthly income in project households increased by 72%.
- 97% of covered barangays, municipalities and provinces have enacted local policies or ordinances to reduce child labor.
- 11 sugar industry partners and 45 government agencies now have an annual program of activities to address child labor.

VIDEO: End Child Labor in the Philippines

- The program informed representatives of the sugarcane industry from the outset about the scale and impact of child labor. Using the evidence, ChildFund was able to achieve a broad **commitment toward eliminating** child labor from the industry and establishing ethical codes of conduct for the sector.

The evaluation cited the potential of using the *ABK3 LEAP* intervention model to tackle child labor in other sectors such as fishing, domestic work, and different agricultural industries. For future interventions, an area-based approach that addresses the specific forms of child labor in a particular geographic area was recommended, as this might decrease the likelihood of children shifting from one form of labor to another. ChildFund Philippines is now considering ways to apply *ABK3 LEAP*'s integrated model to find solutions to child labor in other industries and areas of the country.





CASE STUDY: Building a system of care for children in Uganda

We have long known that, in most cases, children are best cared for and protected within families. In 2013, Uganda had 57,000 children living in child-care institutions and 10,000 on the streets. Since then, ChildFund has been leading a consortium of agencies in an ambitious three-year initiative, *Deinstitutionalization of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (DOVCU)*,² to improve the safety and well-being of children outside of family care in 12 districts.

Working in close collaboration with the Government of Uganda, we have been implementing national reforms of the child-care system (guided by the Alternative Care Framework), which aim to keep **children with families and out of institutions**. The *DOVCU* project was the first of its kind in Uganda and involved a comprehensive package of interventions at household, community and government levels.

Prevention: Reducing the separation of children from their families

The *DOVCU* project aimed to tackle the social and economic challenges that cause children to be separated from their families. Recognizing that poverty, lack of opportunity, and conflict at home were driving children to the streets or to institutions, the *DOVCU* program designed an

integrated package of economic and social support for households. Families struggling to care for their children were helped through cash transfers, savings groups, and business/vocational training, while para-social workers and community volunteers conducted household visits to provide psychosocial support, promote positive parenting practices, and facilitate access to children's services.

Response: Placing children in families

The program also removed children from care institutions, **remand homes** and from the streets. Following an assessment of their situation, each child was then reintegrated within their own family or placed in family-based care. ChildFund and partners also worked closely with the Government of Uganda to: assess and improve living conditions in child-care institutions; establish a comprehensive case management system; and train social workers, government officers, and community volunteers to support and monitor children's reintegration into family care through Alternative Care Panels and Team Around the Child Committees.

Remand homes, also called detention homes, are institutions where courts may sentence juvenile offenders to temporary detention.

We introduced *DOVCU* in our last Impact Report, and now with the program recently ended we can reflect on some of the learning. Evaluation findings reveal positive outcomes for children and families: ^{viii}

- Over the course of three years **DOVCU has reintegrated 1,743 children into their families.** ^{ix} The majority (84%) were reintegrated from child care institutions, 12% were reintegrated from the streets, and 4% were reintegrated from remand homes.
- Through the program's economic and social interventions, almost a third of families assessed as being at high risk of separation are now in the **medium or low risk category.** ^x
- The program has **improved the way a critical mass of child care institutions provide care for children** by supporting them to develop new policies and standards, and by working toward children's reintegration into families.
- Interventions have contributed to a **change in mind-set** among families, communities, and government actors about the importance of family care. ^{xi}

"This was a learning experience for everyone including ourselves, the families and communities we worked with. The assumption was that children living in institutions were better off... Once we helped parents to appreciate that they had a lot of stability to offer their children even in the poorest homes, attitudes began to change."

-TPO Uganda Representative (ChildFund Partner in DOVCU)

Our experience from *DOVCU* has demonstrated how a combination of economic and social support interventions (preventative support) can effectively reduce families' vulnerability and increase their chances of staying together. At the same time, it has highlighted just how challenging and sensitive the process of children's reintegration can be, and how much time and follow-up support it requires. Given the complexity and scale of family separation in Uganda, we know that:

VIDEO: In Their Mother's Hands

- If we want to stem the flow of children being placed in institutions in Uganda, **the number of sub-counties that receive preventative household support needs to be increased.**
- Alongside poverty, we need to **continue tackling the family dysfunction** that can drive the institutionalization of children: *DOVCU* revealed the benefits of helping families to access support for mental health issues and alcohol and drug misuse so that they could better care for their children.
- We need to **focus more energy on ensuring successful, long-term reintegration** of children into families. During *DOVCU*, children's experiences of reintegration were sometimes problematic, particularly in areas where families had not benefited from any household interventions and where social/community workers were not mobilized to provide ongoing support.
- We need to further **test which combinations of economic and social interventions offered by *DOVCU* are most effective** at keeping children with families.
- We need to advocate for increased **investment in the national social welfare workforce** to ensure that household visits, case management, and monitoring processes are consistently conducted by professionally trained social workers. Guaranteeing the number of social workers required for such intensive work across the country will be an ongoing challenge.
- We need to explore how **innovative technologies such as ChildLinks**, a mobile phone case management system introduced by *DOVCU*, can be harnessed to support other child protection initiatives in Uganda.

Right now, because of the *DOVCU* initiative, there are hundreds of children across Uganda who are at home with families rather than living in institutions. Moving forward, ChildFund Uganda hopes to build on this learning to continue building a system of care and protection for children across the country.^{xii}

As a follow-on to DOVCU, ChildFund Uganda implemented the *Economic Strengthening to Keep and Reintegrate Children into Families (ESFAM)* project.³ This initiative tested how different types of economic support packages for vulnerable households can prevent family separation and support reintegrating children.

ESFAM supported 700 families – 350 who were at high risk of family separation and 350 with children who had returned home – with four economic support packages: business and financial literacy training, cash transfers, village savings and loan groups and matched savings accounts. The goal was to create and implement a graduation model through decreasing levels of poverty and vulnerability. This was combined with psycho-social support and linkages to social services.

ESFAM's combination of social and economic support to vulnerable households yielded exciting results: at the end of the project, children and youth reporting positive adaptive capacity and resilience increased from 11% to 60%, for example. The Matched Savings Account intervention showed how households were able to meet the expenses required for children's development, with 63% of expenses being used for education. This resulted in increased educational outcomes for children – with children with positive educational outcomes growing from a baseline of 52% to 83%. Finally, the households participating in the Matched Savings Account intervention realized a 34% reduction in social and economic vulnerability scores.



3. Funded by USAID through FHI360

Endnotes

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REFLECTIONS



This is an exciting time for ChildFund. Guided by *Destination 2020*, we are strengthening our programming by consciously examining how violence in all its forms affects children. We are working with an increasing range of partners to prevent and respond to violence against children, while pursuing interventions that contribute to positive developmental outcomes for children and youth. Our increased investment in generating data is helping us to understand and analyze the factors that render children vulnerable to violence and is informing the types of interventions that we undertake to protect girls and boys.

Our learning about children's experiences of violence

Our investment in collecting information is important. It tells us the story of children's lives and pushes us, as an organization, to reflect, innovate and mobilize resources to address the risks that children face. And, as our child protection mappings, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data, and research studies reveal the violence that children and youth experience, we are tailoring our programs in response.

What is our research telling us?

- **Children and youth are at risk of and subject to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence** at all stages of childhood and early adulthood. While families are the main source of care and protection for the vast majority of children, our data remind us that violence often has a familiar face – it is all too frequently inflicted by parents and caregivers, adult relatives, teachers, neighbors, classmates, and friends, whether at home, at school, or in communities.
- **Violence affects girls and boys differently.** Although children tend to face many of the same risks in the early years, gender increasingly determines the kind of violence girls and boys – and children expressing a non-binary gender identity – experience as they transition to adolescence and adulthood.
- **Perceptions of violence are underpinned by cultural and social norms.** Our data reveal that in many societies, harsh corporal punishment by parents and teachers is still socially accepted and legal. Similarly, early marriage and FGM/C may be viewed as protective rather than harmful practices.
- **The reasons for violence are complex.** Our data indicate a number of factors that contribute to children's vulnerability to violence, including gender norms (particularly prevailing expectations about masculinity); harmful cultural practices; access to quality education, social services, and information about sexual and reproductive health; and exposure to disaster situations.
- **The reasons why children and families do not always report child protection violations are similarly complex.** Our data show that children, families, and communities often do not

know where to seek help; experience shame, stigma, and the threat of reprisal; may lack confidence in the system to respond effectively; and the cost of accessing services may be prohibitive. At the same time, overwhelming poverty and economic hardship mean that child protection may not always be considered a priority.

- **Measures to protect children from violence are essential at the community level.** In many of the countries where we work, formal child welfare and protection systems are weak, under-resourced, and of limited reach within some communities – which means that direct interventions with children, parents, families, and communities are essential. We know too that, despite the challenges of establishing and sustaining community-based child protection mechanisms, they are often a helpful first option for mediating and resolving situations when a child is identified as vulnerable to violence.

Our commitment to protecting children

ChildFund’s programs are already making a tangible impact on children’s lives. As we move forward, we are determined to build upon these gains, using our learning about children’s experiences of violence – and how it disrupts their development and well-being – to further shape our work.

As ChildFund strives to achieve its goals for children, we will:

- 1 Consolidate and expand our learning about child protection:** We will continue to invest in data generation and explore how we can systematically reduce the risk of violence against children. In this way we aim to eliminate the violence that not only disrupts childhood but also significantly undermines the positive impact of our other child development programs.
- 2 Focus on the intersection between child development and child protection:** As we increasingly understand the effects of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence on children’s development outcomes, our health, education, nutrition, and ECD programs will reflect and integrate learning from our child protection research. This intersectoral approach will give us a more complete picture of childhood and help us create complementary programs for children.
- 3 Build our partners’ ability to address violence:** Understanding the forms of abuse, exploitation, neglect, and violence that children and youth are at risk of is just the first step in a longer process. Moving forward, we will focus our efforts on building the skills of our community-based partners – particularly those less accustomed to working in the area of child protection – to respond to violence against children in the communities where they work.

- 4 Foster relationships that protect children:** We recognize the positive impact that protective and nurturing relationships have on children's well-being as they grow and develop through the life stages. We will build and support these relationships – whether child-caregiver, parent-teacher, child-community, peer-peer, community leaders-partners – at all ages and stages of development, keeping them central to mitigating the risk of violence to children and restoring well-being to families.
- 5 Strengthen our partnerships with the communities where we work:** Our interventions demonstrate the potential for involving communities in the protection of children. When empowered, children, parents, teachers, government, and local partner organization staff can help to identify and respond to cases of violence, challenge harmful practices, and transform attitudes.
- 6 Support community systems of protection including community-based child protection mechanisms:** Our work demonstrates that CBCPMs can play an important role in protecting children of all ages. However, they need support. Our research has revealed that CBCPMs often do not function effectively and/or link to formal child services,ⁱ and that they may be less likely to deal with certain types of harm against older children.ⁱⁱ We will work to improve the way that CBCPMs operate, respond to children's protection needs, and make sure that their efforts are integrated within and linked to formal systems of protection.
- 7 Take a long-term, systems approach to child protection programming:** The complex and deep-rooted nature of many child protection issues means that we need to focus on long-term interventions if we want to see real systemic change. We know, for example, that changing social norms that sanction violence against children, such as violent discipline, FGM/C, or child marriage, requires action at every level of the child protection system – from families and communities, to government institutions and national policy-makers. This means moving away from short, ad hoc projects towards a broader, system-strengthening approach to child protection.
- 8 Amplify the voice of children and youth and facilitate participation:** In line with our mission and values, we will continue to encourage the involvement of children in research, program design and evaluation. Working in partnership with children and youth provides us a better understanding of their experiences and helps us tailor systems of support. Our example will help to create societies that value the opinions and decisions of children.
- 9 Advocate for and support the development of formal child protection systems:** In addition to our work at the community level, we will use our learning to open new channels of dialogue to advocate for effective formal systems of protection. At the national level, we will progressively bring children's experiences and opinions to the attention of senior policy-makers while at the sub-national level we will help to create professional networks of social workers, police, health services, and other actors working to protect children.

10 Ensure that our target interventions protect the most marginalized children by giving particular attention to disability, gender, and other vulnerability factors: We know that vulnerability to specific types of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence impacts girls and boys – and children expressing a non-binary gender identity – differently and becomes more pronounced as they transition to adolescence and adulthood. Our program response must shift accordingly and adopt a gender lens across life stages. We also need to be increasingly conscious of which children are included and benefit from our interventions and how we widen the net to include all marginalized children.

11 Transform ourselves internally as an organization: As we support families, communities and governments to protect children, we will also focus on our own organizational child safeguarding measures. This will ensure that we continue to work in safe and ethical ways with children and set the highest standards for all our programs.

Strengthening our child protection work is an ambitious undertaking and will take time. However, it is critical that we follow this path if we want to see our investments in other important child development spheres bear fruit. We are making steady progress. Across our country programs, innovative research studies and new ways of collecting information are helping us to understand children and young people’s vulnerability to violence as well as the factors that protect them. Our interventions – from initiatives to reduce violence in schools and improve parenting practices, to anti-trafficking and youth advocacy programs – are showing us how we can most effectively partner with communities and governments to protect children.

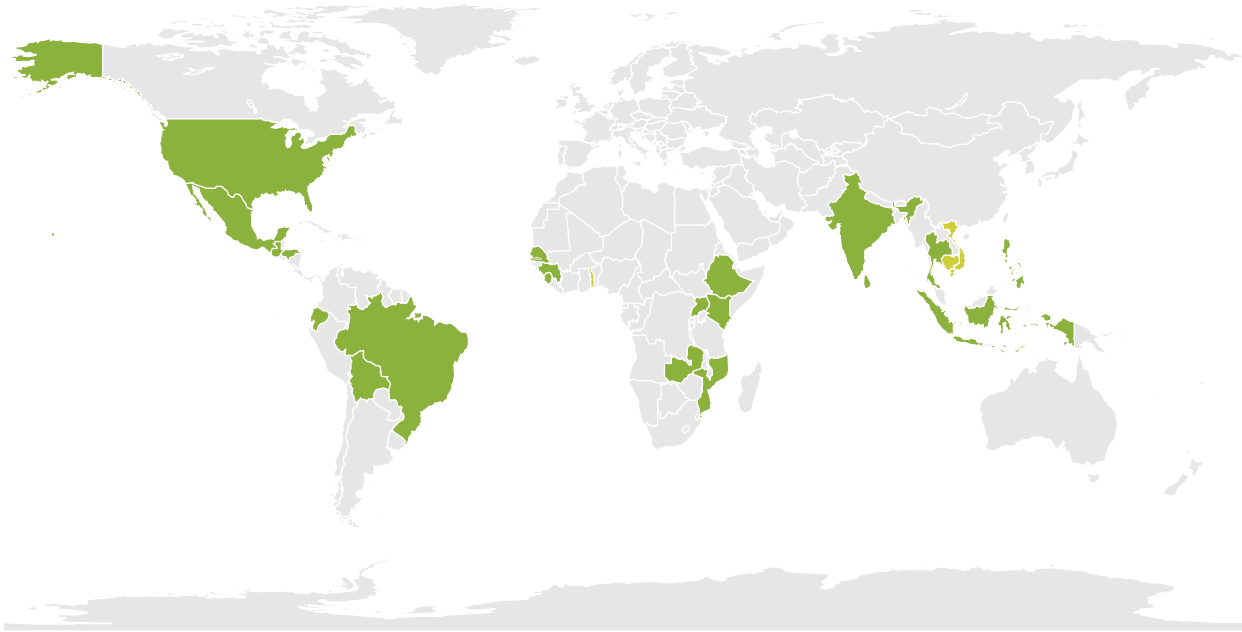
As our programs adopt a more integrated approach to child protection, we will begin to see the real impact on children’s lives. We believe that the changes we are making are a worthwhile investment so that **children can grow up safe from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence, achieve their potential and lead fulfilling lives.**

Endnotes

[i.](#) For example, our M&E data from selected communities in 17 countries found that only 38% of CBCPMs were actually functioning effectively, that is, had formal recognition, an established referral protocol, and convened meetings attended by at least one member of the formal protection system. Source: ChildFund International. (2017). Global M&E Summary Report.

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