



Overview of Advocacy Strategy 2017-2021

Background

The purpose of the advocacy strategy is to support coordinated engagement in advocacy across ChildFund Alliance offices and provide a framework for defining objectives and tracking progress towards achieving them through engagement with Governments in countries where our Members operate.

Since 2012, ending violence against children has been a key area of focus for ChildFund Alliance. This focus emerged from our [consultations](#) with more than 16,000 children in 50 countries to gather their opinions about global priorities. Our Free from Violence campaign 2012-2015 mobilized Member and country offices across the Alliance in support of a common goal to secure a target on violence against children in the new development framework. To support this goal, ChildFund Alliance commissioned [The costs and economic impact of violence against children](#), a 2014 study by the Overseas Development Institute that estimates the costs of physical, psychological and sexual violence against children at up to US\$7 trillion a year. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015 marked an important milestone with the inclusion of SDG target 16.2 *End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children*. This target will be reviewed at the 2019 High Level Political Forum (HLPF)— and 2019 is also the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child—so the Alliance is preparing for increased advocacy activities among Members and their country offices in light of this exciting moment.

Advocacy and [Child-friendly Accountability](#) are the first of our three strategic priorities in *Toward a Safe World for Children: ChildFund Alliance Strategic Plan 2016-2021*. To meet SDG target 16.2, we have defined eight “Advocacy Asks” for governments that were developed through consultation with Members and external experts. Grounded in our commitment to work with children to influence change, our Child-friendly Accountability initiative, along with the advocacy efforts of Alliance Members’ country offices, supports children in holding their governments and local authorities accountable to their obligations to end all violence against children, as per SDG target 16.2. Our advocacy within the United Nations system in New York and through our European Union Office in Brussels is also advancing these strategic priorities at the global level.

Our support for and engagement in the [Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children](#) (End Violence) is another important contribution to our advocacy work. In addition to support for the End Violence Secretariat, this includes national-level efforts to support End Violence in the [Pathfinding Countries](#) that have made a commitment to accelerate action to end violence against children over a 3- to 5-year period. At the center of the End Violence approach in Pathfinding countries is [INSPIRE](#), a package of seven evidence-based strategies for ending violence against children.

At the [Joining Forces](#) meeting in Italy in June 2017, ChildFund and other child-focused organizations (Plan International, Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages, Terre des Hommes, and World Vision) identified joint initiatives to advance implementation of the SDGs for children. The organizations agreed to collaborate around ending violence against children and children's rights and the SDGs.

ChildFund Alliance members and their country offices play a critical role in all of this work. Members collaborate with their country offices to elevate their advocacy efforts and provide leadership through active engagement in the Advocacy Task Force. Members participating in the Child-friendly Accountability Task Force have shaped the Child-friendly Accountability initiative and are supporting their country offices as the project rolls out. Furthermore, steps to mainstream advocacy to end violence against children into ongoing programming and planning are evident in new guidance and strategy documents such as ChildFund International's [Advocacy Guidance](#) and ChildFund Australia's [Elimination of Violence against Children](#) strategy document.

ChildFund Alliance also has a strategic programming commitment among Members to implement programs aimed at ending violence against children. Across our countries of implementation we carry out projects that improve the lives of children with a specific aim to reduce, respond to and work towards eliminating violence. This evidence base of comprehensive programming ensures we are directly responding to SDG 16.2 and provides us with specific advocacy drivers that inform our strategy.

In the context of our advocacy work, we recognize that ChildFund plays a role as an independent advocate for children's rights. In recent years, however, we are witnessing a shrinking space for civil society in a growing number of countries where ChildFund works. At the same time, in line with the adoption of Agenda 2030, UN Member States are demonstrating renewed support for meaningful child participation as a critical input to decision-making processes. As we carry out our efforts to promote children's rights and engage children as key members of society, it is critical that we remain mindful of this tension and take necessary precautions to avoid putting them, their families and their communities (and our organizations) at risk.

Aim and Objectives

The overall aim of our advocacy, as stated in the ChildFund Alliance Strategic Plan 2016-2021, is: *to support the implementation of SDG target 16.2 and related targets and ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence and exploitation.*

Five advocacy objectives will support our aim:

1. Governments report on target 16.2 and related targets in their SDG monitoring and evaluation efforts.
2. Governments meaningfully involve children in the in the development and implementation of child protection policies and in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process.
3. Governments endorse and implement INSPIRE strategies to end violence against children.
4. Governments and international stakeholders take concrete steps to make financial commitments and track allocations to prevent and respond to violence against children.
5. Additional governments join End Violence as Pathfinding countries and existing Pathfinding countries are following through with their commitments.

These objectives are based on three of the Advocacy Asks outlined in the strategic plan:

- *Put in place transparent data collection systems, and listen to the voices of children — particularly in the monitoring and evaluation efforts related to SDG target 16.2 and related targets.*
- *Endorse and implement the INSPIRE package of seven strategies advanced by the World Health Organization (WHO) and other partners.*
- *Ensure a targeted budget and sufficient allocation of resources to prevent and respond to violence against children.*

Priority countries

For each objective there are designated priority countries which have been identified based on strategic value. Within the Advocacy Task Force, the Secretariat has worked closely with Member offices to identify priority countries. Criteria for priority country selection include: End Violence Pathfinding countries that have committed to accelerating action to end violence against children; countries where Child-friendly Accountability is being implemented to support realization/achievement of SDG 16.2; countries reporting to the [High-level Political Forum](#) (HLPF) through the VNR process; countries identified for relevant joint advocacy and programming through the child-focused agencies group; and ChildFund member presence countries where strong relationships with Government can be leveraged to advance our advocacy objectives.

The following countries have been proposed as priority countries as of October 2018:

- Australia
- Cambodia
- Canada
- El Salvador
- Japan
- Mexico
- New Zealand
- Paraguay
- Philippines
- South Korea
- Spain
- Sri Lanka
- Uganda
- United States
- Vietnam
- Pacific Island Countries reporting to VNRs in 2019 (Nauru, Fiji)

See below for the rationale and background information on each of the objectives.

Governments report on target 16.2 and related targets in their SDG monitoring and evaluation efforts.

Targets related to 16.2 are: 4.a provision of safe learning environments; 5.2 elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls; 5.3 elimination of harmful traditional practices such as child marriage

and FGM; 8.7 elimination of the human trafficking and the worst forms of child labor; and 16.9 provision of birth registration. Our Child-Friendly Accountability initiative can supplement this reporting. ChildFund Alliance has developed Child-friendly Accountability to work with children in selected countries to hold governments and local leaders accountable to their obligations to end all violence against children, as per target 16.2 of the SDGs. As of September 2017, we have piloted the Child-friendly Accountability initiative in four countries: India, Mexico, Paraguay and Vietnam and a phased roll-out of the project started in November 2017. It is anticipated that this list of countries will grow over time. Our initial focus will be to bring international attention to the initiative by sharing the findings with UN Missions and at the HLPF.

Governments meaningfully involve children in key processes such as the development of national plans of action for child protection and the Voluntary National Review process.¹

The [Voluntary National Reviews](#) are a critical process for assessing progress towards achieving the SDGs at the national level. Governments conduct these reviews between the annual sessions of the HLPF at the UN and issue reports, which are presented during the HLPF. Each year a different group of governments will be reporting, so all of the countries where ChildFund members are present are likely to report. As governments prepare their reports, they are encouraged to hold consultations with a diverse group of stakeholders. ChildFund members can engage as a lead advocate in this process, facilitating ending violence against children dialogue via evidence-based programming and acting as a key coordinator for NGOs/CBOs working in this area. NGOs that work with children can promote and support the inclusion of children in these consultative processes. The child-focused agencies will be developing guidance and minimum standards on involving children in the VNRs. The ChildFund Alliance Secretariat will provide guidance for member and country offices and will support in conveying results of in-country consultations with children to UN Missions in New York.

Governments endorse and implement INSPIRE strategies to end violence against children.

To meet this objective, we will encourage governments to look at [INSPIRE](#), recognize its value as an approach to ending violence against children, and integrate it into the national context. Two tools will support this advocacy. The first is the set of indicators for INSPIRE. The second is the INSPIRE implementation handbook. Because INSPIRE is an integral aspect of the national-level approach taken by End Violence, engagement of member and country offices in the Pathfinding Countries will also be important for achieving this objective. It is important to note that implementation of INSPIRE is not limited to Pathfinding Countries; it can be an accelerator to ending violence against children in all countries.

Governments and international stakeholders take concrete steps to make financial commitments and track allocations to prevent and respond to violence against children.

Engagement of member and country offices in the End Violence Pathfinding Countries will be a key mechanism supporting this objective at the country level. To promote the achievement of this objective, country offices are encouraged to collaborate with other CSOs engaged in End Violence in Pathfinding Countries to advocate for adequate budget allocation to prevent and respond to violence against children.

¹ Meaningful child participation is about having the opportunity to express a view, influencing decision-making and achieving change. This can be achieved by consulting with children to garner their feedback to influence a process, or by their direct participation.

Research on the economic costs and allocations related to violence against children has been an ongoing area of work for ChildFund since commissioning the 2014 Overseas Development Institute (ODI) to produce a report on the "[The Costs and Economic Impact of Violence against Children](#)." In 2017, ChildFund partnered with other organizations on "[Counting Pennies](#)," a review of Official Development Assistance to End Violence against Children. This topic is being further explored through a follow-up report.

Additional governments join End Violence as Pathfinding countries and existing Pathfinding countries are following through with their commitments.

ChildFund Alliance Members have a presence in many countries that have not yet signed on to become Pathfinding countries. ChildFund Members can support governments in achieving Pathfinding status, particularly in contexts where there is demonstrated interest in joining. Through engagement in civil society coalitions, ChildFund Members can also support Pathfinding countries in their efforts to end violence against children.

Targets, Partners and Allies

In order to reach our objectives, we will leverage relationships with stakeholders through the ChildFund Alliance Secretariat's representation at the United Nations and European Union and in global coalitions, as well as through Members' engagement at the regional, national and subnational levels. Close coordination at all levels with the child-focused agencies that participated in the [Joining Forces](#) meeting will contribute to this work. Stakeholders include key partners and allies, as well as targets for our advocacy.

At the **global level**, the Secretariat will engage with the following UN entities: UN General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the UN Secretariat, UNICEF, WHO, the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Children and Armed Conflict and the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children. Engagement with specific Member States will be based on priority countries identified for targeted advocacy, the End Violence Pathfinding countries and membership in the Group of Friends of Children and the SDGs. The Interim CSO Forum of End Violence and the child-focused agencies will be instrumental to these efforts. Other global coalitions such as Together 2030, Child Rights Connect and TAP Network will be allies for this work.

At the **European level**, the EU Office will engage with the European Commission and the European External Affairs Service. Engaging with EU delegations located in key countries will complement the efforts in Brussels. Engagement with the European Parliament will be done, if and when relevant, through the Intergroup on Children's rights. Engagement with the Member State will be done through the EU Groups of Friends of Children. The following coalitions will also contribute to the strategic efforts: the Child Rights Action Group and, on general matters, [CONCORD](#).

At the **regional level**, we will explore opportunities for engagement with the UN Regional Commissions that organize regional forums for sustainable development feeding into the HLPF. These include: the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP); the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); the Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE); the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). Engagement with the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of Children will be a key mechanism for advocacy with the African Union. Advocacy in the Americas may include engagement with the Global Movement for Children in Latin America and the Caribbean (MMI-LAC), REDLAMYC, Mercosur and the Organization of American States. As the South

Asian Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC) plays an important role in the region on the issue of violence against children, we will seek involvement in relevant opportunities.

At the **country level**, Alliance members will continue to implement programs aligned with INSPIRE strategies to establish our evidence base of effective approaches to end violence against children. Advocacy at the country level will include engagement with national ending violence against children forums coordinated by Governments, ChildFund or relevant civil society coalitions. Strong in-country partnerships with Government representatives will be leveraged to inform regional and global advocacy and programming and to encourage future donor opportunities for programs.

Activities and Outputs

Many of the activities and outputs in support of the advocacy objectives correspond to the key performance indicators outlined in the Alliance Strategic Plan 2016-2021. These include the development of research on the issue of violence against children and the production of evidence-based reports to support advocacy, as well as the compilation of program evidence to serve as the basis for effective joint advocacy. Supporting communications materials and assets will be developed through collaboration with relevant focal points in member offices.

The [Members Only](#) space on the ChildFund Alliance website will be a repository of tools, guidance and resources for Advocacy. Members can share information across offices through a directory of coalition engagement, calendar of key dates and advocacy opportunities. Databases compiling highlights of program and advocacy work on ending violence against children will also be accessible in this area of the website.

The Secretariat will continue to monitor the work emerging from the [Joining Forces](#) meeting of the child-focused agencies at Bellagio Center in June 2017 and will incorporate into the advocacy strategy as appropriate.

Monitoring

Milestones towards achieving each objective will be identified. The Secretariat will liaise with members to monitor and track progress on the advocacy objectives.