



ChildFund[®]
Alliance

HUMANITARIAN ADVOCACY FRAMEWORK MAY 2025



Humanitarian Advocacy Framework

ChildFund Alliance is a global network of 11 child-focused development and humanitarian organizations reaching nearly 30 million children and their family members in over 70 countries.

Members work to end violence and exploitation against children; provide expertise in emergencies and disasters to ease the harmful impact on children and their communities; and engage children, families and communities to create lasting change.

Our commitment, resources, innovation, and expertise serve as a powerful force to help children and their families around the world transform their lives.

Members of ChildFund Alliance

ChildFund Australia
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ChildFund Japan
ChildFund Korea
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Barnfonden (Sweden)
Children Believe (Canada)
Educo (Spain)
Un Enfant par la Main (France)
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1. Introduction

All children and young people have the right to live free from violence and to be protected from harm—especially in times of crisis. Child protection in humanitarian action involves preventing and responding to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence against children, including sexual and gender-based violence.

These principles are grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and its three Optional Protocols¹, and are further reinforced by broader human rights frameworks, including International Humanitarian Law, International Refugee Law, and Human Rights Law.

In emergencies, children are impacted the most, they are active stakeholders with the right to be heard, to have their views considered, and to see their rights upheld. All humanitarian actors bear a collective responsibility to protect children and ensure their safety and well-being at every stage of crisis response—from preparedness to recovery and reintegration to society.

Advocacy plays a vital role in this process by ensuring that the voices and needs of children and their families inform decisions at all levels of the humanitarian system.

At ChildFund Alliance, advocacy is a core pillar of our strategic engagement. It is evidence-based and built on decades of grassroots experience. We work in close partnership with children, our primary stakeholders, as well as with their families, communities, and a wide range of institutional actors. As we implement our 2026–2030 Strategy, which centers on three strategic objectives—Ending Violence Against Children, Humanitarian Action, and Climate Change—advocacy will be essential in achieving transformative change.

This humanitarian advocacy framework aims to ensure consistency and strengthen the Alliance’s approach to influencing humanitarian policy, both within the Secretariat and across our member organizations. By aligning around shared goals, we can expand our reach, enhance our global influence as advocates, unlock new funding opportunities, and more effectively navigate an increasingly complex operating environment. It also fosters greater participation and ownership among members in driving collective advocacy efforts.

The framework sets a clear direction for our humanitarian advocacy during the 2026–2030 period. While it provides a unified approach, it is designed to be flexible, adapting to changes in the external humanitarian context and the ChildFund Alliance’s governance structure. It enables members and partners to advocate nationally and locally, while leveraging the Secretariat’s unique access to UN and EU policymakers to drive systemic change globally.

Our focus is twofold: to advocate for upholding children’s rights during crises and disaster settings and to address the structural barriers that undermine their rights and well-being.

¹ How the Convention on the Rights of the Child works, UNICEF: <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/how-convention-works>

2. The Context

Nearly 1.2 billion children – almost double the number in 2019 – now live in countries with complex emergencies driven by inequality and fragility.

UNICEF Core Commitment for Children, 2022-2025 Strategy

Children and young people are increasingly exposed to overlapping threats, compounded by intersectional vulnerabilities and increasingly constrained capacities to cope and thrive.

Armed conflict, political instability, violence, extreme weather events, and infectious disease outbreaks are growing in both frequency and intensity.

These crises are lasting longer, compounding humanitarian needs, heightening risks, and overwhelming already stretched child protection and humanitarian systems.

Climate change—widely recognized as a child rights crisis—it is both a direct and compounding threat. It not only endangers children’s safety, mental health, and overall well-being, but also amplifies other risks such as displacement, food insecurity, and conflict.

Without urgent action, these escalating challenges will deepen existing inequalities and result in long-lasting, intergenerational consequences.

According to the Global Humanitarian Overview 2025², an estimated 305 million people will need urgent humanitarian assistance and protection in 2025 as crises intensify globally. By mid-2024, nearly 123 million people had been forcibly displaced by conflict and violence, marking the twelfth consecutive annual increase. Around one in every five children worldwide, approximately 400 million, are living in or fleeing conflict zones³.

In 2024, four out of five civilian deaths in conflict occurred in countries with a humanitarian response plan, highlighting the growing disregard for international humanitarian law (IHL). The International Committee of the Red Cross⁴ identifies this failure as the greatest barrier to protecting civilians during armed conflict.

Civilians—and children in particular—are bearing the brunt of a record number of conflicts, marked by widespread violations of International Human rights Laws. The year 2024 was one of the most brutal in recent memory for civilians in conflict zones. Without decisive action, 2025 could be even worse.⁵

² Global Humanitarian Overview 2025: <https://humanitarianaction.info/document/global-humanitarian-overview-2025>

³ ibid

⁴ 2024 ICRC report on IHL and the challenges of contemporary armed conflict: <https://www.icrc.org/en/report/2024-icrc-report-ihl-challenges>

⁵ ibid

In response to global emergencies, ChildFund Alliance members have delivered a range of support to children and their families, including:

- Child protection and general protection
- Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH)
- Education in emergencies
- Health and nutrition
- Livelihood and broader program responses

These programmatic efforts are complemented by targeted advocacy aimed at humanitarian and policy decision-makers at both global and national levels. Our advocacy addresses the root causes of conflict and engages in critical policy dialogue on climate-related threats to children's rights.

Humanitarian advocacy is a strategic and evidence-based process which aims to influence the policies, practices and behaviors of local, national, regional and international stakeholders in a continuous manner to address vulnerabilities in emergencies⁶.

This process can take place across the spectrum of humanitarian crises: before, during and after crisis and in situations of long-term exposure to risk, suffering or conflict. It ensures the human rights of the affected population are protected. It is carried out during both natural disasters and man-made conflicts.

The Alliance humanitarian advocacy work is guided by the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability⁷, Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action⁸, Interagency Standing Committee Accountability to Affected Populations⁹, as well as the program standards of each ChildFund Alliance member. In certain humanitarian situations, specific standards and international laws are also taken into consideration.

Our aim is to find a balance, upholding the relevant principles wherever possible and identifying trade-offs as necessary based on the operational context.

⁶ Introduction to Humanitarian Advocacy, UNICEF: <https://agora.unicef.org/course/info.php?id=33223>

⁷ Core Humanitarian Standard: <https://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org/>

⁸ 2019 Edition of the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (CPMS): https://alliancecpha.org/en/CPMS_home

⁹ IASC Accountability to Affect Populations: A brief overview: https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/migrated/2015-12/iasc_aap_psea_2_pager_for_hc.pdf

3. Advocacy Goals and Objectives

The goal of this Humanitarian Advocacy Framework is to support the key priorities of the ChildFund Alliance Strategic Plan, as outlined below:

KEY PRIORITIES OF THE CHILDFUND ALLIANCE STRATEGIC PLAN		
Ending Violence Against Children	Children in Crisis	Climate Crisis and its Impact on Children
End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children (SDG 16.2)	Advocate for the protection of children and their families in all crises, ensuring accountability to the affected population and respect for international humanitarian law.	Advocate with governments and other stakeholders to put children and youth at the center of sustainability efforts, budget actions and climate policy decisions. Ensuring child-sensitive climate and disaster risks reduction policies.

To unify and strengthen our approach when advocating on humanitarian issues across the Secretariat and the member organizations, we will adopt the process outlined in the Alliance Unified Advocacy Framework:



This framework will identify our priorities for children and their families in humanitarian policy and diplomacy discourse. It will help us develop messages, positions and generate a sustained effort to promote and protect the rights of children and their families during crises. We will be mindful of the sensitive nature of some policy issues and the geopolitical context within which we work.

We will support operational members with tools, materials and guidance to advocate internally and with national governments and other stakeholders. This will include prioritizing our messages on protecting the rights of children and their families in humanitarian response and recovery actions; education in emergencies, and the right to live in a clean environment¹⁰.

Humanitarian advocacy materials developed by the Secretariat and ChildFund members will be largely directed toward the targets listed in this document.

¹⁰ General Comment No 26: <https://childrightsenvironment.org/general-comment-no-26/>

4. Tactics and Approaches

4.1 Children as Partners

We will build on our expertise of engaging with children and youth, using examples and learnings from two core initiatives—the [Child-Friendly Accountability](#) and the [WEB Safe & Wise Children’s Advisory Council](#). Our advocacy initiatives will actively engage children as stakeholders and partners, ensuring their voices, experiences, and recommendations inform policies and decisions that affect their lives.

4.2 Centering children’s rights in our humanitarian action

We will advocate for the protection of children and their families to be at the heart of any humanitarian response by adopting the policies and guidelines of the Interagency Standing Committee¹¹ and pushing for increased accountability and justice for violations in humanitarian settings, including grave violations against children.

Our approach will leverage and align the collective strengths and mandates of the humanitarian sectors – general protection, child protection and Gender-Based Violence, including Mental Health and Psychosocial Support services (MHPSS).

4.3 Technical support across membership of the Alliance

We will strengthen the links between the Advocacy Working Group and other committees and initiatives across the ChildFund Alliance, lending advocacy expertise to create and disseminate technical guidance for messages related to the priority areas.

We will continue to increase support to strengthen advocacy capacity among members. This includes gathering, generating, and sharing examples of successful humanitarian advocacy, and supporting learning on effective strategies and approaches through networks such as the [Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action](#) and the [Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies](#).

4.4 Research and evidence for advocacy

We will prioritize the adoption of strategic and results-oriented approaches to advocacy, linking high quality and robust evidence-generating approaches and research from our members, such as the [ChildFund Alliance World Index](#).

4.5 Locally Led Development

Leveraging our commitments to locally led development, we will build our grassroots community knowledge and adopt a local to global approach.

¹¹ Inter-Agency Standing Committee - key operational guidance: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/key-operational-iasc-guidance>

4.6 Shifting power

We will advocate for the implementation of the localization agenda to ensure that power and decision-making are meaningfully shared with local actors and communities. Additionally, we will support efforts to navigate local power dynamics and strengthen inclusive community engagement.

4.7 Enhance partnerships and build credibility

In the face of growing challenges to multilateralism, we will strengthen our advocacy by deepening engagement with regional networks and improving coordination across global, national, and local levels. Our efforts will focus on building strategic partnerships and participating in cross-sector advocacy in key areas such as child protection, education, health, nutrition, and WASH. We will integrate clear policy recommendations into our messaging and expand relationships with key and emerging donors to advance collective action for the protection of children.

5. Advocacy Targets

Globally, multilateralism is increasingly under threat and civil society space continues to shrink. As governments struggle to meet the needs of their people, we are likely to see more fragmentation within communities, countries and the international systems.

Our humanitarian advocacy engagement will seek to target key governments, donors, member states and other stakeholders within the humanitarian architecture.

5.1 Primary Targets

Donors and governments are crucial players when it comes to the protection of affected populations and in closing the chronic humanitarian funding gap for programs.

Senior United Nations officials and humanitarian leadership also hold substantial power to influence outcomes for children and make potentially life-changing decisions in humanitarian response and policy decisions, such as the UNSC, UN working groups, and Groups of Friends, OCHA, IASC, UNHCR and UNICEF as well as Humanitarian Resident Coordinators and SRSGs and DSRSGs.

Humanitarian financing and pooled funding mechanisms including UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and Country Based Pooled Funds (CBPF).

Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) play a critical role in elevating the visibility and prioritization of affected populations in humanitarian response. By working through key partners, HCTs serve as a vital platform for advancing advocacy messages at the country level. Participation in HCTs—including leadership roles within clusters—allows us to promote adherence to core humanitarian standards and strengthen our presence and influence within the humanitarian system.

Untapped potential among non-traditional humanitarian donors that seek to increase their awareness and understanding of children's protection in humanitarian action.

Trusts and foundations including those interested in strengthening connections to children’s protection in integrated and multi-sector approaches.

International Finance Institutions including global and regional development banks.

5.2 Secondary Targets

This includes national governments, local and national coordination bodies, as well as host communities.

5.3 Our Allies and Partners

In addition to strengthening capacity and coordination across the Alliance membership, we will seek to engage and collaborate with key allies across the humanitarian system.

 <p>THE ALLIANCE FOR CHILD PROTECTION IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION</p>	<p><u>The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action</u></p>	 <p>children in a changing climate</p>	<p><u>Children in a changing climate</u></p>
 <p>Children's Environmental Rights Initiative</p>	<p><u>Children's Environmental Rights Initiative</u></p>	 <p>European NGO confederation for relief and development CONCORD Confédération européenne des ONG d'urgence et de développement</p>	<p><u>European Confederation of Relief and Development NGOs (CONCORD)</u></p>
 <p>Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction & Resilience in the Education Sector</p>	<p><u>The Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction & Resilience in the Education Sector</u></p>	 <p>WATCH LIST ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT</p>	<p><u>Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict</u></p>
 <p>VOICE European humanitarian NGOs. Standing together.</p>	<p><u>VOICE</u></p>		

6. Key Advocacy Moments

These are key moments on the calendar for strategic positioning and advocacy. They offer opportunities to highlight the Alliance’s work and champion the importance of children’s rights across its three strategic objectives to global audiences.

These events will also create space for the participation of children, youth, and practitioners, as well as the promotion and dissemination of new research and advocacy materials tailored to relevant audiences. A separate calendar of key humanitarian advocacy moments will be developed and regularly updated.

EVENTS	DATES
Humanitarian Network and Partnerships Week	Annually in April
United Nations Open Debate on the Protection of Civilians	Annually in May
The European Humanitarian Forum	19-20 May 2025
ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment	Annually in June
United Nations Secretary General Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict	Annually in June
Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction	2-6 June 2025
World Refugee Day	20 June
UN High Level Political Forum	14-23 July 2025
World Humanitarian Day	19 August
UNGA High Level Week	9-23 September 2025
World Children’s Day	20 November
Global Humanitarian Policy Forum	Annually in December
Conference of the Parties (COPs)	Various dates

7. Risk and Mitigation strategies

As a development and humanitarian organization, our advocacy can present risks to our operations and the children and families we seek to protect. To follow are some high-level risks and suggested mitigation measures for the implementation of this framework.

RISKS	SUGGESTED MITIGATION MEASURES
Internal Risks	
Capacity to deliver the framework across the membership.	Consultation and feedback process that ensures the framework aligns with the focus of member agencies resources and capacity where individual agencies are named to lead and deliver on the objectives.
Disconnect between local to global advocacy asks, priorities and approaches of members and the secretariat.	Increasing the space for children, communities and practitioners from the ground to actively participate at the global level in events and advocacy outreach will continue to be a priority. Work with the appropriate committees and leadership within the Alliance where mutual objectives and goals are set for national and international events. Action 3.4 ¹² : Develop and use criteria to guide decisions on the Alliance's strategic selection and level of engagement in partnerships and coalitions based on the Alliance's current strategic and thematic priorities, resources and other factors.
Lack of collective agreement on key language and red flags within the Alliance. Reputational Harm.	Create processes for ensuring collective input and buy-in on solutions and any joint humanitarian advocacy products / messaging. Ensure the member council is aware of the advocacy issue, political tensions and Alliance processes for issuing and signing joint statements.
Retaliatory feedback based on our advocacy messages and positions.	Create and provide clear guidance on sensitive humanitarian advocacy issues such as sanctions, children in arms conflict, children on the move, climate justice and loss and damage, protection of civilians in armed conflict, denial of humanitarian access and assistance.
External	
Crowded Advocacy Space amid rising needs and funding cuts.	Demonstrate examples of good practice and what works based on our experience. Prioritize and amplify children's voices as well as clear, compelling communications with a strong evidence-base and case studies. Increase support and coordination with other sectors for multi-sector and integrated programming. Show and argue the moral and economic cost of doing nothing, cost of inaction.
Child Safeguarding	Ensure all activities with children are risk assessed using the child safeguarding risk assessment tools of members. Follow members' code of conduct when working with children and others.
Lack of collective agreements with other networks and partners.	From the onset, develop clear processes for on sign on and red flags for organizations working on the initiative or as part of the network.

¹² Recommendation from the ChildFund Alliance Unified Advocacy Framework

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

Measuring the impact of advocacy is often challenging, and we are continuously working to improve how we define and track our indicators of success. Monitoring and evaluation help us assess our efforts to influence humanitarian policy and guide us toward achieving meaningful change for children and their families.

The Secretariat is currently finalizing the Strategic Plan for 2026–2030 and will develop a set of success indicators aligned with the workplan activities under each strategic objective. Additionally, a menu of indicators will be created to help measure overall impact. We will also align our advocacy outcomes with the Monitoring and Evaluation recommendations outlined in the Unified Advocacy Framework.

9. Annexes – These are being updated

1. Memo: ChildFund Alliance public Advocacy
2. Advocacy guidance: preparing to advocate with governments, member states and policy makers



Every child deserves to live a life free from violence.

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