

6 August 2019

**COMMENTS FROM CHILDFUND NEW ZEALAND ON PANEL'S FEEDBACK**

Dear members of the Accountable Now Independent Review Panel

We would like to thank the Accountable Now Independent Review Panel for their thorough reading of ChildFund New Zealand's Accountable Now report, and the subsequent telephone conversation between the Panel and ChildFund New Zealand to discuss the report findings. ChildFund acknowledges the findings and suggestions of the panel, with appreciation. This response letter is to acknowledge the feedback given, and emphasize ChildFund New Zealand's continuous commitment to improvement.

As the panel noted, many of the questions raised in the report were because ChildFund was new to Accountable Now, and more information was needed to assist the panel's understanding of the report. In recognition that the time for our second report is fast approaching (there will be an eight-month gap from first report to second report due to us bringing our reporting back in-line with the financial year), we will defer most responses until this second report

However, there are some issues we decided to discuss immediately as a team, and provide feedback to the panel.

**Sharing of policies on website:** These have been uploaded to the website [https://media.childfund.org.nz/files/0\\_Company-Operation-Policies\\_signed.pdf](https://media.childfund.org.nz/files/0_Company-Operation-Policies_signed.pdf) and key words have been added to the search engine 'policies' to assist with making these easy to find.

**More obvious and robust complaints handling:** A clearer complaints system has been added to the website <https://www.childfund.org.nz/code-of-conduct> and key words have been added to the search engine.

**Greater transparency:** We recently held a full team workshop to explore ways we could introduce greater transparency to our work. One idea was to include a blog category in our *Thrive* newsletter (which is sent to our supporters) that illustrates what we are doing to improve our performance and effectiveness. Another idea was to make annual reports more user friendly. We have also decided to add a Frequently Asked Questions to our website and show real examples of how we have resolved problems to supporters.

New staff said that they were perplexed by the use of jargon – particularly acronyms – in our work (and we assume our supporters are sometimes, too!). We agreed we would continually stay alert to this, and we encouraged the team to not feel embarrassed when asking what an acronym means. We will also be more conscious in the way we communicate with our partners and supporters.

We also agreed that, whenever we complete surveys, to provide feedback and conclusions to the people who participated.

We were asked to explain how we worked in greater detail on two specific issues:

**J1 Governance Structure and recruitment of Trustees/Board members**

The question related to how we choose board members, and if there are quotas related to gender, age of geographical representation. The Board responded:

Board members have finite terms, and when board members change the board uses an Appointments and Human Resources Sub-Committee to develop and oversee a considered and deliberate recruitment process. This process starts with a full skills analysis considering existing board members and the skills required to achieve our future strategy, such that the board composition maintains healthy diversity of thought. We then advertise and use networks to identify potential candidates, considering the skills analysis and the experience, expertise and fit of each candidate. We are currently recruiting with an emphasis on leveraging candidates with Pasifika experience relevant to our programme areas and our desire to initiate a programme of impact investment. We do not set quotas but recruit who we consider is the best candidate for the board position available.

#### **K1 The Governing Body and management are held accountable for fulfilling strategic promises**

The Panel's question related to what the Board's accountability to stakeholders 'looked like'.

The Board responded:

In late 2018 we established a group of three Members, whose role is to provide governance oversight. This structure has superseded the previous informal support from past chairs, and in being a new structure it is maturing: we have recruited three members (and intend to recruit a fourth) comprising a past board member and two long term supporters. Board and management provide a written performance and update report to the Members quarterly, the Members attend our Annual General Meeting, and Members are tasked with questioning the Board on its performance and compliance. We intend to develop the role of members further.

#### **Sustaining positive results**

In our next report, we will also look at how we sustain positive results, ensuring the community owns and drive Road Map plans; how we are elevating and sharing 'lessons learned'; and ways in which we can improve 'leading by example'. Sustainability is central to our work and we will share how local partner capacity building efforts have been realised.

#### **Do no harm**

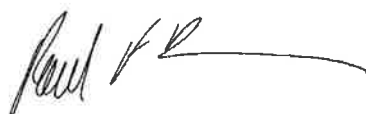
We understand the importance of avoiding negative impacts around our safeguarding practices – particularly to those who make complaints, including children – and will discuss this with our local partners to be assured that, at all times, we do no harm.

#### **Stakeholders' participation outside of programming**

Finally, the ChildFund Alliance is in the throes of developing its next five year Strategic Plan. The suggestion that stakeholders have a role to play in helping us as we develop that strategic plan is timely and important. ChildFund New Zealand will share this feedback with our ChildFund Alliance colleagues who have constructed Working Groups to inform the design process. We recognise the importance of engaging stakeholders throughout in ChildFund's work, from strategy to practice.

Once again, I would like to thank the Independent Review Panel for their time, insights and recommendations. Thank you, Accountable Now, for this important service you provide to the development community.

Ngā mihi maioha – thank you, with appreciation



Paul Brown  
CEO, ChildFund New Zealand