



**Accountable
Now**

GLOBAL STANDARDS LOCAL TRUST



ChildFund Australia
Independent Review Panel Feedback
Accountability Report 2018-2019
Review Round February 2020



ChildFund Australia

Feedback from the Independent Review Panel

Review Round February 2020

19 February 2020

Dear Margaret Sheehan,

Thank you for submitting your accountability report. We, the Independent Review Panel of Accountable Now, appreciate ChildFund Australia's efforts to strengthen accountability to communities, local partners, supporters, staff, donors, or other key constituencies. Our key focus is on accountability to those you serve. It is against this background that we critically discussed your report and came to the individual assessment below.

The Panel is pleased to receive ChildFund Australia's first accountability report, which was easy to follow and provided a good insight into accountability practices. The report indicates a **strong commitment to accountability** and learning, to strengthening organisational processes, and including key stakeholders in ChildFund Australia's work. These points are all brought up in the opening statement.

The Panel appreciated that the report included links to almost all key organisational policies, and that these are easy to locate on the ChildFund Australia website (G1). This is a strength in the report and aids with ease of reading. Further **strengths** include ChildFund Australia's approach to sustainability of programmes (B1), gender inclusivity (C3), minimising negative impacts on stakeholder (C4), and reaching out to engage key stakeholders (D2).

Future reports would be strengthened by the inclusion of more details and examples to illustrate how the described processes work in practice. Key **areas for improvement** in this regard are stakeholder identification (D1), environmental sustainability (C5), and evidence underpinning advocacy work (F1). The Panel is also mindful that more information about stakeholder engagement and participation may be included in the regular "People and Organisational Development Reports" (PODR) made to the board, and suggests consideration be given to either making these reports accessible to the interested public or sharing them (in part or full) with the Panel.

Overall, the Panel commends ChildFund Australia on a sound first report and looks forward to working together to keep strengthening their accountability processes.

We look forward to discussing our feedback with you in a follow-up call, which the Secretariat will be in touch to schedule. This conversation will form the basis for your



response letter, which will be made publicly available on the Accountable Now website along with your report and this feedback letter.

If you have any other feedback or comments on our work, please share them with us by sending them to the Accountable Now Secretariat.

Yours sincerely,

Accountable Now's Independent Review Panel





ChildFund Australia's Accountability Report 2018-2019

Review Round February 2020

Opening Statement from the Head of Organisation

The opening statement by ChildFund Australia's CEO Margaret Sheehan explains that accountability is a vital part of the organisation's long-term mission, and expresses the organisation's excitement at working with Accountable Now to strengthen their practices.

ChildFund Australia's existing commitments to accountability and transparency are outlined, including requirements to demonstrate sound governance and financial practices to the Australian Council for International Development, and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The opening statement also outlines ChildFund Australia's key accountability focuses over the last year. These include launching a new MEL Framework (there is a focus here on internal discussion and learning), reviewing safeguarding policy and guidance documents (a new [PSEA and Harassment Policy](#) and a revised [Whistleblowing Policy](#) were adopted, amongst others), and upgrading policies and procedures around financial wrongdoing.

The Panel appreciates the motivation evident within ChildFund Australia to use Accountable Now's framework within their operations, and looks forward to working together with them to keep strengthening their practices.

Cluster A: Impact Achieved

A. The impact we achieve

A1	Mission statement and theory of change ChildFund Australia's vision , mission, and theory of change are shared. Their mission is to work in partnership with children and their communities to create lasting and meaningful change, which the Panel notes positively as it reflects our key accountability commitments of stakeholder engagement and lasting positive change.	4
A2	Key strategic indicators for success ChildFund Australia's strategic indicators are derived from their 2015-2020 strategic plan , which has five strategic goals, measurable objectives, and key performance indicators (the KPIs are not in the strategy document however).	3



	<p>The response explains how the strategy was developed in participation with key stakeholders. The Board led and formally approved the planning process, which included a review of organisational performance, strengths and weaknesses, as well as feedback from community members, partners, industry leaders, supporters, and staff. The Panel notes this participatory process positively.</p>	
A3	<p><i>Progress and challenges over the reporting period</i></p> <p>The report explains that the board annually conducts a full review of progress on the strategy and KPIs, and provides an overview of progress on each of the five strategic goals in 2018-19. The Panel observes that progress regarding the 3rd and 5th strategic goals listed are not readily tracked by indicators; ChildFund Australia might consider in future how KPIs can be framed in these areas</p> <p>The strongest progress has been made in refocusing programmes to respond to children's changing needs (with a narrower topical focus and increased technical expertise), directing efforts to focus on the Asia-Pacific region (with 71% of funds going to this region in FY19 compared to 33% in FY15), and strengthening the organisation's agility and ability to respond to opportunities.</p> <p>Progress has also been made in terms of ChildFund Australia's preparedness to respond to humanitarian emergencies, though their capacity is still behind the ambition set out in the strategic plan.</p> <p>The biggest challenge is diversification of revenue to enable sustained, long-term growth. Although revenue increased from FY18 to FY19, this was due to success with grants. Whilst a revenue diversification strategy is underway, total public fundraising is still decreasing year-on-year, and the return on fundraising investment is reducing. This is a trend observable in the wider sector.</p>	3
A4	<p><i>Significant events or changes regarding governance and accountability</i></p> <p>Key developments relate to compliance requirements. An independent review was conducted into the prevention of sexual misconduct in the aid sector, with recommendations incorporated into the Australian Council for International Development's (ACFID) code of conduct, which is binding on ChildFund Australia.</p>	4



	The Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission introduced External Conduct Standards governing the management of activities and resources overseas. ChildFund Australia is compliant with the standards.	
B. Positive results are sustained		
B1	<p><i>Sustainability of your work</i></p> <p>ChildFund Australia's approach to sustainable outcomes is embedded throughout different aspects of their work. A two-track approach is taken, focusing on local capacity strengthening on one hand, and formal systems on the other.</p> <p>ChildFund Australia acknowledges that sufficient local capacity is needed for projects to be continued after their involvement with the community ends. To this end, they ensure that programmes focus on strengthening local individual and organisational capacities. The local community is also involved in all aspects of programmes, in order to build local ownership. The Panel notes positively that ChildFund Australia allows sufficient time for stakeholders (especially children) to participate meaningfully. Community participation is also facilitated in sustainability related planning, implementation and reviewing.</p> <p>ChildFund Australia's approach to sustainability is integrated into project documentation, including project proposal templates, minimum standards for project cycle management, and the ChildFund Australia Program Handbook.</p> <p>The response also talks about the importance of strong local government and civil society. ChildFund Australia is also committed to strengthening formal systems, to bring about changes in policy, capacity, and resourcing. They work with government and CSOs to ensure their services reach marginalised groups, and provide technical support.</p> <p>Overall, the Panel finds ChildFund Australia's approach to be strong. The response would be further strengthened in future reports by providing an example of what the described processes have looked like in a particular programme. Some more information could also be provided on how ChildFund Australia works in partnership with local organisations - this is mentioned, but we would welcome some more detail.</p>	2
B2	<p><i>Lessons learned in the reporting period</i></p> <p>The response refers to ChildFund Australia's updates to their Development Effectiveness Framework and MEL Framework in 2018 and 2019. It explains</p>	3



	<p>why both frameworks were revised, and how the MEL Framework was rolled out.</p> <p>However, this question aims to identify specific learnings or takeaways from successes, failures, or feedback received in the reporting period. The Panel would also like to know how learnings are shared internally and externally, and how they shape future activities.</p> <p>This is addressed to some extent under question C1, which states that as part of the MEL Framework, learning papers are generated biannually, tracking how projects have contributed to meeting KPIs. An example is provided of a comprehensive education learning paper, which includes key learnings and how ChildFund Australia is maintaining or changing their approach in response.</p>	
<p>C. We lead by example</p>		
<p>C1</p>	<p><i>Leadership on strategic priorities</i></p> <p>The response refers to ChildFund Australia's leading role in national, regional and international networks and coalitions, and some examples are provided. Some more details about their specific role in these networks and coalitions is provided under question C2. This includes sharing expertise, lessons learned and good practices at workshops, conferences and through communities of practice, co-chairing the ACFID Education Community of Practice, and representing the Asia-Pacific region at a workshop hosted by the Global Partnership to ENd Violence against Children.</p> <p>External project evaluations are also identified as a way of demonstrating excellence in programming, and an example of an evaluation of the Pass It Back programme is given, with comments referring to the programme's processes being amongst "the best in the world for connecting sport and development outcomes".</p> <p>The Panel notes these examples positively. In the next report, can ChildFund Australia also provide some information about their role within the ChildFund Alliance? For example, is ChildFund Australia part of any of the Alliance task forces or committees?</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>C2</p>	<p><i>Expertise is recognised and welcomed by peers and stakeholders</i></p> <p>The response to this question highlights ChildFund Australia's involvement in several working groups, conferences, and other sector initiatives. The majority of these points would better fall under question C1, with this</p>	<p>3</p>



	<p>question aiming to identify evidence of this involvement and leadership being welcomed by external stakeholders.</p> <p>There are some points that indicate this in the response, such as ChildFund Australia's CEO being presented with ACFID's Outstanding Contribution to the Sector award, and the selection of ChildFund Australia as the Asia-Pacific representative at the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children workshop. A few more such examples or further details would further strengthen the response in future reports - for example, was ChildFund Australia specifically invited to join any of the working groups or committees mentioned? Was the presentation of lessons learned and good practice at the DFAT Annual Reflections Workshop met with positive feedback, or is there evidence of any peer organisations implementing the shared findings?</p>	
C3	<p><i>Inclusivity, human rights, women's rights and gender equality</i></p> <p>The response explains how ChildFund Australia aims to protect and advance the rights of children, and how the organisation promotes gender equality.</p> <p>Programmes strive to be inclusive of all children, and to empower them to become active participants in their own development. A Gender Policy, inclusion of gender in the MEL Framework, and a gender transformational approach make for a strong approach to gender equality.</p> <p>The Panel finds ChildFund Australia's approach to inclusivity to be strong when it comes to children and gender. In the next report, can ChildFund Australia provide some more information on how they identify children/groups at risk of exclusion from their programmes, and work to engage them? The Panel would also be interested to know whether ChildFund Australia has any policies or procedures regarding the inclusion of children with disabilities or from minority/vulnerable backgrounds (the response to D2 does mention that disability is also mainstreamed throughout the project cycle).</p>	3
C4	<p><i>Minimising negative impacts on stakeholders</i></p> <p>ChildFund Australia's approach to minimising negative impacts on stakeholders is strong, underpinned by numerous policies and procedures. These include an Employee Code of Conduct, Child Safeguarding Policy, Complaints Policy, PSEAH Policy, and Gender Equality and Diversity Policy (under development), amongst others.</p>	4



	<p>A human rights based approach is incorporated into ChildFund Australia's Child Safeguarding Policy and Program Handbook (can a link to this be shared in the next report?). Regular risk assessments and reviews are carried out at operational and project level to identify and mitigate risks relating to discrimination, violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect.</p> <p>An independent expert review into staff misconduct, particularly sexual misconduct and child protection, identified ChildFund Australia's approaches as being comprehensive, and identified some areas for strengthening. The report lists the policies and procedures that were revised or newly developed as a result. There were also discussions throughout all levels of the organisation following the sexual misconduct allegations in the sector, and appropriate responses and actions were identified to ensure the systems protecting stakeholders are strengthened.</p> <p>All staff and partners are being given trainings on Child Safeguarding and Protection and PSEAH, and these trainings are also incorporated into ChildFund Australia's onboarding process for new staff.</p> <p>The Panel notes positively these policies and processes - ChildFund Australia's commitment to the issue is apparent.</p>	
C5	<p>Responsible stewardship for the environment</p> <p>The report refers to ChildFund Australia's Environment Policy, which outlines key actions required of country office senior management and programme staff. The policy relates to mitigating negative environmental impacts of ChildFund Australia projects. All project proposals require completion of a set of environmental markers, and if environmental impact is anticipated, further analysis and action is required before the project is approved.</p> <p>Whilst ChildFund Australia's approach to the environment seems sound when it comes to projects, the Panel would also like to know about efforts to mitigate environmental impacts of regular operations. For example, mechanisms to reduce the use of energy, water, and other resources in offices, recycling schemes, efforts to reduce travel by plane and car, or other initiatives to reduce carbon footprint. Does ChildFund Australia have an environmental policy and/or any targets with regard to daily operations? Good practices to refer to here are CIVICUS' Environmental Policy and MIO-ECSDE's approach (see their 2017 report, pp. 34-35). You may also want to see Accountable Now's new environmental policy.</p>	2



Cluster B: Stakeholder Involvement		
D. Key stakeholders are identified with great care		
D1	<p>Key stakeholders and how they are identified</p> <p>ChildFund Australia's various stakeholders are listed - the key group being children, young people, their families and communities. Other stakeholders include partner organisations, other INGOs, networks, and the ChildFund Alliance.</p> <p>The response lists the methods and tools used to identify stakeholders, including needs and situational analyses, stakeholder mapping, national and regional consultations, workshops, and referrals. Some more detail and examples are requested in the next report to provide a better overview of how this works in practice. How does ChildFund Australia decide which communities to work in, and within those communities, which children/families to engage? Are community leaders, local partner organisations, or others involved in helping identify stakeholders? Does ChildFund Australia focus particularly on children of a particular age group, gender, social group, etc?</p>	3
D2	<p>Reaching out to those impacted or concerned by your work</p> <p>The report explains how ChildFund Australia reaches out to its key stakeholders in the project design, implementation, and evaluation stages.</p> <p>In the design stage, consultations are carried out with key stakeholders from a cross-section of the community (including girls and boys, people with disabilities, and, ethnic minorities) to inform the project logic, M&E, and resource allocation. ChildFund Australia's Program Handbook includes tools which country staff can use to support this process.</p> <p>When it comes to implementation, primary stakeholders play active roles as facilitators, service providers, campaigners, and mentors, amongst others. They are also engaged in the feedback process, which helps ChildFund Australia improve the work they do.</p> <p>Primary stakeholders are involved in project evaluations, particularly to identify changes brought around by projects. An example is given of an impact evaluation in Laos, which included adults, children, young people, service providers, and government staff.</p> <p>Overall, the Panel finds ChildFund Australia's approach to be strong. The next report would be further strengthened by providing some more</p>	4



	examples (similar to the one of the evaluation in Laos) to better illustrate how stakeholder engagement works in the other project stages.	
D3	<p>Maximising coordination with others operating in the same space</p> <p>ChildFund Australia identifies actors at local, sub-national and national level with whom they should coordinate and collaborate. This information is included in Country Strategy Papers, and an example of the actors identified in the Cambodia Strategy Papers is shared. All of these actors are “engaged where relevant as part of any project design process”.</p> <p>The report explains how ChildFund Australia undertakes stakeholder mapping when moving into new geographical areas, to identify the actors already engaged in the region and how to coordinate efforts. An example is provided of how ChildFund Australia coordinated with governmental departments/programmes and UNICEF to ensure their interventions were complementary.</p> <p>The information about identification of and agreements with partners and peers is comprehensive. In the next report, the Panel also would be interested in what partnerships look like once they are set up. Are there particular policies or procedures which are included in partnership agreements (e.g. around common values, safeguarding processes)? What does ChildFund Australia’s role tend to be in local partnerships; coordination, capacity-building, providing technical expertise, etc? The response to E1 mentions that ChildFund Australia sees partnership as an opportunity to build the capacity of local partners - more information on this is requested.</p>	3
E. We listen to, involve and empower stakeholders		
E1	<p>Stakeholder feedback</p> <p>The response explains that ChildFund Australia fosters dialogue with and the participation of stakeholders and partners, with the focus more on participation - this information would be more fitting under question E2.</p> <p>Here we are looking for a description of the mechanisms ChildFund Australia uses to gather feedback, such as consultation processes, satisfaction surveys, community visits, feedback boxes or hotlines, etc. How often are these mechanisms used, and how does ChildFund Australia actively encourage its stakeholders to give feedback?</p>	2



	<p>We are also looking for a description of feedback mechanisms available to internal stakeholders, and would like to see some examples of how ChildFund Australia has responded to feedback from both internal and external stakeholders.</p> <p>ChildFund Australia may want to refer to CF NZ's 2018 report (pg. 18), which had a good response to this question. Other examples to refer to are Terre des Hommes' approach (see their report here, pg. 14, particularly the case study from TDH Germany) and Educo (report here, pp. 25-26).</p>	
E2	<p>Stakeholder engagement</p> <p>The responses to E1 and E2 both include information relevant to this question. They outline how ChildFund Australia engages stakeholders in various aspects of their work and operations.</p> <p>It is stated that in line with ChildFund Australia's Program Handbook, which includes a section on Program Approach and Principles, ChildFund Australia has a range of policies and procedures to ensure the participation of its primary stakeholders. The Panel notes positively the Child and Youth Participation Policy which commits to supporting participation in all stages of the project cycle.</p> <p>Programme design processes are participatory, actively involving a range of stakeholders. Children are encouraged to express their views, have influence over decision-making, and develop and implement their own initiatives. The Panel requests an example in the next report to provide a clearer picture of what this looks like in practice.</p> <p>It is also stated that children and youth are involved in monitoring and evaluating ChildFund Australia's programmes, with participation in both regular annual and project specific M&E processes. We would also like to see more details and/or an example here.</p> <p>The report states that ChildFund Australia prioritises children and youth participation in the development of key policies and strategies, and includes it in internal governance and decision-making processes. This is positive, and indicates a real commitment to involving ChildFund Australia's key stakeholders in all aspects of the organisation's work. The Panel would encourage ChildFund Australia to provide an example of how this works in practice in future reports.</p> <p>There is also some information about how ChildFund Australia engages other stakeholders such as the broader community, partners, and</p>	3



	<p>government representatives. It is stated that ChildFund Australia aims to progressively increase the degree of community involvement in decision-making processes, and that there is an effort to engage less powerful members of the community.</p>	
E3	<p>Main likes/dislikes from stakeholders and organisation's response</p> <p>Key feedback from the children and communities ChildFund Australia works with, partners, and donors is shared - the Panel appreciates the fact that all of these key stakeholder groups are addressed.</p> <p>At the community level there is regular positive feedback about the ongoing and integrated presence of ChildFund Australia, and as a result ChildFund Australia aims to formally embed their approach into systems and processes, so that it is integrated throughout all countries and communities they work in. In the next report, can ChildFund Australia also share any negative feedback received and how they have responded?</p> <p>Partners expressed the need for more support and resources to meet donor compliance requirements, and in response ChildFund Australia has developed materials and created a new role to support Country Offices' work with partners in this regard.</p> <p>At donor level, ChildFund Australia responded to DFAT's feedback on programme plans, which identified the need to enhance the integration of gender into programme design and development, by commissioning an independent assessment of gender integration across international programmes. Based on the results, an action plan was created to strengthen policies, procedures, and programming, and staff received training on the challenges identified in the assessment.</p> <p>In all cases, it would be interesting to know whether ChildFund Australia closed the feedback loop by following up with the stakeholders to share and discuss the actions they took in response to the feedback and suggestions received.</p>	3
E4	<p>People and partners have gained capacities that last beyond your immediate intervention</p> <p>The response explains that ChildFund Australia implements a variety of projects which focus on increasing the voice, agency, confidence, resilience, and power of community members - including children, youth, and adults. The Panel notes positively that there is a specific focus on empowering vulnerable populations to engage. The approach is a key</p>	3



	<p>component of ChildFund Australia's Theory of Change and MEL framework (included in several of the outcomes and success indicators).</p> <p>The report states that ChildFund Australia has strengthened people's inclusion and participation in decision-making and their ability to speak out and act - some examples of this, and of strengthened capacities in general, would improve the response in the next report.</p>	
<p>F. Our advocacy work addresses the root cause of problems</p>		
F1	<p>Evidence regarding the root causes of the problems you address</p> <p>The response focuses on ChildFund Australia's participatory and inclusive programme design processes as a way of ensuring advocacy work addresses root causes. It also speaks about how ChildFund Australia works in partnership with local communities, CSOs, and governments. This information, including the examples provided, would be more relevant under question F2.</p> <p>For this question, we would like to understand how the evidence underpinning advocacy work is gathered. This could include contextual analyses, and while the above point on participatory design processes is relevant, we would want to see information and examples about this specifically in relation to advocacy. The reference under F2 to project methodology which allows children to get involved in identifying problems and solutions is a good point to build on.</p> <p>ChildFund NZ's response to this question (report here, pg. 22) was sound and might be a helpful reference. The CARE International Advocacy Handbook is also a good reference point which includes illustrative examples.</p>	2
F2	<p>Stakeholders support your advocacy work and value changes achieved</p> <p>ChildFund Australia's participatory and inclusive approach to advocacy ensures that key stakeholders support the organisation's advocacy work. A number of examples are provided here (and under F1) of participatory advocacy efforts.</p> <p>The ChildFund Alliance's Child Friendly Accountability initiative sees children involved in identifying problems and solutions, and participating in discussions with decision-makers about the issues that concern them. The methodology of this initiative provides information about ChildFund Australia's comprehensive approach, from training children and youth on child protection issues, to involving them in mapping the child protection</p>	3



	<p>system, identifying required change, and advocating at local, national, regional, and global levels. Annex 2 of the methodology provides a good overview of where and how children are involved.</p>	
<p>G. We are transparent, invite dialogue and protect stakeholders' safety</p>		
G1	<p>Availability of key policies and information on your website</p> <p>ChildFund Australia's website includes general information about the organisation, annual reports, impact reports, strategic plans, audited annual reports and financial statements, and a wide range of organisational policies. These can all be found easily via the website's Publications and Reports page - the ability to filter for certain kinds of documents makes it easy to locate information. The Panel appreciates the large number of documents made publicly available online, as this is something we are encouraging all AN members to do.</p> <p>There is a separate page regarding complaints, which includes a link to the complaints policy.</p> <p>The Panel is pleased to read that ChildFund Australia's Country Offices are rolling out digital platforms (including websites and social media channels) to enable communication in languages relevant to local stakeholders. We would also be interested in whether any key documents are available in child-friendly formats?</p> <p>The report also explains how ChildFund Australia communicates with donors, supporters, and other stakeholders via its website, publications, mail, email, social media, and direct dialogue.</p>	3
G2	<p>Pay scale, gender pay gap and top salaries</p> <p>The report explains how ChildFund Australia aims at ensuring a fair and equal pay structure by grading positions within an organisation-wide job architecture, classifying jobs to determine remuneration, and referring to external benchmarks to ensure pay is competitive within the market.</p> <p>Gender pay analysis shows that salary ranges are similar and that there are no systematic differences in salaries between male and female staff. This information is currently only for the Sydney office, but remuneration analysis will be extended to country offices.</p> <p>ChildFund Australia does not publish its pay scale, and employees are expected to keep salaries confidential. The report states that key management personnel compensation is disclosed in ChildFund Australia's</p>	2



	audited financial statements (see the 2018 statement , pg. 23), but as this is an aggregated figure and it is not stated how many staff members it relates to, this information is not particularly useful to readers.	
G3	<p>Ensuring privacy rights and protecting personal data</p> <p>ChildFund Australia adheres to the Australian Privacy Principles set out in the Australian Privacy Act. They have a Privacy Policy which sets out the information ChildFund Australia collects, how they collect, store, protect and use the information, and how people can access and amend their personal information. There is also a section on how to complain about ChildFund Australia's privacy practices, both to the organisation directly, and escalation to the Australian Information Commissioner. A separate Privacy Collection Notice relates to information collected about supporters.</p> <p>The report also explains how ChildFund Australia protects the information and data they store, including the use of encrypted and password protected systems, limiting and securing the storage of hard copy files, and limiting staff's access to data to only what relates to their work.</p> <p>The Panel commends ChildFund Australia on their strong approach and their commitment to keep improving their practices.</p>	4
G4	<p>Largest donors and their contributions</p> <p>ChildFund Australia's top five donors are listed, together with the monetary value of their contributions. The largest donor is the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the other four are current and former ChildFund Alliance members.</p> <p>The report states that the majority of funds come from institutional donors and Alliance members, but that there are some anonymous private donors (the amounts are usually under 20,000 AUD). The report lists the safeguards that are in place to ensure anonymous contributions do not have undue influence over activities.</p>	4
Cluster C: Organisational Effectiveness		
H. Staff and volunteers are enabled to do their best		
H1	<p>Recruitment and employment is fair and transparent</p> <p>The report explains that ChildFund Australia reviewed its Human Resource approaches in 2018, and that best practice approaches were rolled out for</p>	2



	<p>all offices, covering recruitment, performance management, remuneration, and more. The Panel would like more information about what these approaches entail/what the key points are, and how they ensure fair recruitment and employment processes. The organisation aims to have a culture which builds on ongoing and open feedback, which the Panel notes positively.</p> <p>ChildFund Australia's regional and local People and Organisation Development teams support best practice throughout the region, with recruitment as one of the focus areas. Again, it would be helpful to know what some of these key best practices are. A recruitment handbook is being developed and will be rolled out in early 2020, together with training for managers. We note positively that there is a focus on behaviour-based questioning, and that there is an effort to help managers understand bias. Do the People and Organisational Development teams' reports also contain information on stakeholder engagement issues, and if so can those reports (or the relevant sections) could be shared with the public or the panel?</p> <p>ChildFund Australia developed and rolled out a new Value System in 2018/2019, and implementation will be strengthened in 2020. Again, the Panel would like to know the key aspects of the value system.</p> <p>Overall, ChildFund Australia's approach seems sound, but it is difficult to assess it without more particular details and examples, which are requested in the next report. A good point of reference here is Restless Development's equal opportunities policy (in their Global Employee Handbook, pg. 24).</p> <p>In the next report, can ChildFund Australia also provide an overview of the composition of staff, including factors such as gender, age, type of contract (full/part time), local vs. expat hiring, and gender and local representation at leadership level? Are there any targets, for example regarding gender or youth representation?</p>	
H2	<p>Staff development</p> <p>Over the reporting period, ChildFund Australia's development strategy was refreshed and a new framework was developed, with a greater focus on development actions, including both on the job and external training. Can ChildFund Australia provide an overview of some of the training opportunities available, and what issues they cover? The Panel notes positively that ChildFund Australia makes use of internal expertise, with lunchtime learning and skill-sharing sessions.</p>	2



	<p>Individual learning and development needs are identified in discussions between staff and managers, and this is linked to goal setting. The Panel requests more information on what the performance management system looks like - how frequently are staff appraised, and are these discussions held with direct managers only, or also with other colleagues?</p> <p>The Panel is pleased to see that pulse checks are conducted to gauge engagement with the new performance management approach and identify opportunities for improvement - can any of this feedback and changes made in response be shared in the next report?</p> <p>The report shares the indicators used to measure progress in staff development - can ChildFund Australia share key results/findings from these in the next report?</p>	
H3	<p>Safe working environment</p> <p>ChildFund Australia has a number of policies in place to ensure a safe working environment, including a Workplace Health and Safety Policy, staff Code of Conduct, Workplace Discrimination, Bullying & Harassment Policy, Gender Equality & Diversity Policy (under development), and a new Values System. Can ChildFund Australia provide links to these policies or share some of the key points? This would help the Panel and readers better understand what standards and behaviours are expected in the organisation.</p> <p>ChildFund Australia's HR policies and procedures are aligned with national regulatory requirements. The Panel notes positively that an Employee Assistance Program is available to staff in the Sydney office, and that ChildFund Australia is exploring options to roll this out to Country Offices as well.</p> <p>The report also explains how ChildFund Australia has reviewed its policies and practices to ensure they protect stakeholders from discrimination, violence, and abuse. An independent expert review found ChildFund Australia's approaches to be reasonably comprehensive, and identified some areas for strengthening. The Panel commends this initiative. Did any of these relate to internal processes relating to the working environment, and if so can ChildFund Australia share the recommendations?</p>	3
I. Resources are handled effectively for the public good		
I1	<p>Resources are acquired in line with your values, globally accepted standards and without compromising independence</p>	4



	<p>ChildFund Australia has a Corporate Engagement Strategy and a Due Diligence Process which explains how they decide whether or not to accept donations from organisations. ChildFund Australia also adheres to the ACFID Fundraising Charter and the Fundraising Institute of Australia's Principles and Standards. ChildFund Australia conducts regular training sessions for their staff and staff of suppliers to ensure they are aware of ChildFund Australia's obligations under these. There is also a requirement for policies and training to be in place for face-to-face street fundraising, around fundraising and vulnerable people.</p> <p>Here the Panel would welcome some more information on how ChildFund Australia ensures the protection of children in fundraising activities. When sharing stories and/or images of children, how is informed consent obtained, and from whom (the child and/or a guardian)?</p> <p>ChildFund Australia also has a procurement policy which expects procurement to be conducted in a transparent and accountable manner, and for staff to act ethically, including dealing with any conflicts of interest, not accepting gifts and not entering into unethical or unsafe contracts.</p>	
12	<p>Monitoring of progress and re-allocation of resources</p> <p>The response explains that progress against the strategic plan is reported to the Board at regular Board and/or Board Committee meetings, with a full review of progress, including against all KPIs, conducted annually by the Board.</p> <p>It is stated that strategy and resourcing is adjusted in response to changing conditions, trends, and internal or external factors, with two examples provided - ChildFund Australia taking over management of the Timor-Leste office, and incorporating health as a sector focus.</p>	3
13	<p>Minimising risk of corruption, bribery and misuse of funds</p> <p>ChildFund Australia's approach appears sound, and is underpinned by a Fraud and Corruption Prevention and Awareness Policy which outlines the responsibilities of staff, and the controls and procedures in place to mitigate the risk of fraud.</p> <p>Fraud risk is assessed at organisation, partner, and project level and is regularly reviewed. There are a number of financial management controls in place, including segregation of duties, delegation of authority, and payment controls. Regular anti-fraud and corruption awareness training is</p>	4



	<p>given to staff and partners, to ensure they are familiar with relevant policies and procedures.</p> <p>The Panel notes positively that ChildFund Australia aims to learn from findings, and to implement control measures to minimise the risk of incidents recurring. In the next report, can ChildFund Australia share any examples of concrete lessons learned or measures implemented?</p>	
<p>J. Governance processes maximise accountability</p>		
J1	<p>Governance structure and recruitment of trustees/board members</p> <p>The response focuses on ChildFund Australia's Board - Article 14 of the organisation's Constitution explains the appointment and termination of Board Directors. Directors are not remunerated, serve for four-year terms and can stand for re-election. The articles of the constitution mentioned in the report seem to refer to the appointment and nomination of members of ChildFund Australia, though it is not clear who would be a member of the organisation.</p> <p>A Directors Handbook provides guidance on the identification and recommendation of candidates to join the Board. The guidance states that every effort should be made to ensure the Board has the necessary skills and experience to adequately discharge its duties - a suggested list of skills and attributes is included. Is this list updated to reflect the current composition of the Board? Also, are there any targets relating to gender, age, or geographic representation when recruiting new Board Directors? The 2018-19 Annual Report (pg. 34) shows that 6 of the 10 Directors were female (including the Chair) and 4 were male.</p> <p>An overview of the governance structure in general was not provided here, though there is information under question K1 on the roles of the Board, its committees, and the Senior Management Team. In the next report, can ChildFund Australia also talk about the relationship between ChildFund Australia and its Country Offices, and ChildFund Australia and the broader ChildFund Alliance?</p>	2
J2	<p>Board oversight of adherence to policies, resource allocation, potential risks, and complaints processes</p> <p>ChildFund Australia's Board reviews and approves all new organisational policies as well as substantive amendments to existing policies. These are discussed at Board sub-committee meetings before going to the full Board for approval. Under K1 the Board's committees are mentioned: there is an</p>	4



	<p>Audit, Risk and Governance Committee, Program Review Committee, and a Communications and Marketing Committee. A Nominations Committee was also previously mentioned in the report.</p> <p>The Board monitors compliance against policies and procedures by reviewing the findings of annual independent audits, internal audit reviews, and monitoring and evaluation activities at programme and project level. Is compliance against specific organisational policies undertaken periodically?</p> <p>Regarding resources, the Board approves the annual budget and monitors performance and resource use at each sub-committee and Board meeting.</p> <p>There is a bi-annual review of organisation risks, and the Board is presented with an organisational risk register as well as the actions being taken to mitigate these risks.</p> <p>Complaints and grievances are reported to the Board at each Board meeting, and any significant issues that arise can be shared with the bBoard outside of regular reporting timelines if required.</p>	
J3	<p>Complaints handling mechanisms and overview of complaints (external)</p> <p>ChildFund Australia sees feedback and complaints as an important way to improve performance and be accountable to stakeholders. Their Complaints Policy explains the scope of the policy (it applies to all external stakeholders including members of the public), the principles underpinning the mechanism, the different channels via which complaints can be submitted, and the procedure for handling the complaint (including escalation options). The Panel finds the policy to be strong, and would only suggest including information about the timeline for handling complaints (i.e. when complainants can expect a response at each stage) as well as including the specific phone number, email, postal address etc. through which complaints can be submitted.</p> <p>Complaints can be submitted through a form on the complaints page of the website, or via email, phone, post, social media, or in person. The Panel notes that the email address provided is the info@ address, and encourages ChildFund Australia to create a dedicated complaints/feedback email address, which is considered best practice. There is a link to the complaints policy on the webpage, and the Panel would also encourage ChildFund Australia to provide links to other relevant policies, such as the Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, etc. - though these</p>	3



	<p>are easily locatable on the “publications and reports” section of the website.</p> <p>Complaints can also be made to ACFID under the ACFID Code of Conduct, and information about this is also provided on the website's complaints page.</p> <p>ChildFund Australia also has an anonymous online reporting mechanism, which is linked to the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure. Although the report and the policy mentions that this mechanism is available for all internal and external stakeholders, it is rather geared towards internal stakeholders - as indicated in the whistleblower report template in Annex A of the policy.</p> <p>Does ChildFund Australia have any child-friendly reporting mechanisms in place? For example, SOS Children's Villages International has separate submission forms aimed at children, which use language that speaks directly to them, provide examples of what kind of behaviour to report, and explain how to submit anonymous reports. Terre des Hommes International Federation has posters in the countries in which they work which are aimed at children, explaining their complaints mechanism with the use of pictures and simple language (this is covered in their interim report on 2018, which will be uploaded to AN's website in the coming weeks).</p> <p>The report provides an overview of the number and nature of complaints received in the reporting period. In the next report, can ChildFund Australia share which office/location the complaints related to, the status of the cases (resolved, ongoing, unsubstantiated) as well as whether any significant actions were taken in response (disciplinary action, dismissal, etc.)? The Accountable Now Secretariat recently put together a paper on good practices around incident reporting, which might be of interest.</p> <p>We would also like to hear about how ChildFund Australia promotes and explains its complaints policies, both internally and externally, to ensure they are known and that people are comfortable using them.</p>	
<p>J4</p>	<p>Complaints handling mechanisms and overview of complaints (internal)</p> <p>The report explains that managers are the first point of contact for internal incidents, but that individuals can also contact the People and Organisational Development team, Country Directors, the COO or the CEO.</p>	<p>3</p>



	<p>The response to J3 refers to ChildFund Australia's Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure, which allows internal stakeholders to submit anonymous complaints. Submissions can be made through a dedicated whistleblowing email address or through an anonymous online reporting mechanism. The Panel notes positively that the online mechanism includes links to the whistleblowing policy and the ChildFund Australia Code of Conduct. The Panel commends the comprehensiveness of the policy, including the helpful flowchart depicting the reporting and complaint handling procedure.</p> <p>The whistleblowing policy also refers to an Employee Grievance Policy - can ChildFund Australia provide more information about this in the next report?</p> <p>The Panel notes positively the plan for the reporting mechanism to be translated into all languages ChildFund Australia operates in, and for all Country Offices to provide local reporting mechanisms. What is the planned timeline for this?</p> <p>The report provides information on the two internal complaints received during the reporting period - both were investigated and dealt with appropriately.</p> <p>The Panel notes positively that ChildFund Australia aims to build a culture of open feedback - this is said to be a work in progress, with the People and Organisational Development team working with and supporting managers and staff.</p>	
<p>J5</p>	<p><i>Protecting confidentiality and anonymity of those involved in complaints</i></p> <p>The Panel finds ChildFund Australia's approach here to be strong. The response states that confidentiality and the protection of the complainant and of survivors guide the handling of all complaints raised through ChildFund Australia's mechanisms.</p> <p>ChildFund Australia's online reporting mechanism allows whistleblowers to remain anonymous, and explains how the reporting platform protects the user's identity. The mechanism is geared towards internal stakeholders, though the ChildFund Australia website does direct viewers to use the mechanism regarding "Reportable Conduct".</p> <p>Apart from this mechanism, it is not clear if/how external stakeholders can submit anonymous complaints. The complaints form on the ChildFund Australia website requires submission of name and email address. However, the ChildFund Australia Complaints Policy does include information about confidential handling of complaints, and states that, "only those</p>	<p>4</p>



	<p>stakeholders directly involved in making or investigating a complaint will have access to information about it".</p> <p>When incidents are reported, ChildFund Australia endeavours to protect the complainant's identity, unless the complainant wishes to be identified, or disclosure is required by law or necessary to further the investigation. This is particularly the case regarding criminal offences.</p> <p>Records relating to complaints are stored securely and can only be accessed by authorised people. Unauthorised disclosure of information, particularly identifying information, relating to a complainant, is taken seriously, and disciplinary action may be taken, including dismissal.</p>	
<p>K. Leadership is dedicated to fulfilling the 12 Commitments</p>		
<p>K1</p>	<p><i>The governing body and management are held accountable for fulfilling strategic promises</i></p> <p>The response states that the ChildFund Australia Board is held accountable by the members - the Panel was not quite clear on who these are, and had requested an explanation under J1. It is also not clear what the process of holding the Board accountable looks like. What evaluation processes are in place – self-assessment, annual performance reviews, etc?</p> <p>The Board holds management to account by monitoring progress on the strategy. It is stated that the CEO and the Chair of the Board meet bi-monthly. Here we would also want to know whether there are regular performance reviews - is the CEO appraised by the Board, and if so what does this process look like?</p> <p>Can ChildFund Australia share any key findings from reviews, and any action taken in response?</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>K2</p>	<p><i>Inclusion of staff in discussing progress toward organisational accountability</i></p> <p>The response explains that ChildFund Australia's approach to organisation accountability is driven by their core values, and articulated in the Vision, Mission, and Strategic Plan. The Panel would like to know if/how key accountability issues are discussed within the organisation.</p> <p>It is stated that leadership teams at ChildFund Australia and Country Offices are involved in reporting progress against the Strategic Plan to the Board - it would be helpful to know what aspects specifically related to accountability are discussed.</p>	<p>2</p>



	<p>Staff across the organisation are involved in discussing and reporting against external standards such as the ACFID Code of Conduct and DFAT's ANGO Accreditation Process. The Panel would like to know how staff are involved in the process of reporting to Accountable Now, and if ChildFund Australia plans to share the report and discuss (key points of) the Panel's feedback and recommendations for improvement with staff.</p> <p>The Panel found ChildFund NZ's approach to this question to be strong, and can recommend it as reference (see pg. 30 of their report).</p>	
K3	<p><i>Scope of this accountability report and influence over national entities</i></p> <p>The report covers ChildFund Australia and the Country Offices they directly manage (these are listed). It does not represent the ChildFund Alliance or Secretariat.</p> <p>The Panel notes that each ChildFund Alliance member plans to report to Accountable Now separately, given the broadly decentralised nature of the Alliance. The AN Secretariat is currently working with the Alliance to map how each Alliance member's report will link up with those of other Alliance members.</p>	3