



ChildFund Australia Independent Review Panel Feedback

**Accountability Report 2021-2022
Review Round January 2023**



ChildFund Australia

Feedback from the Independent Review Panel

Review Round January 2023

10th February 2023

Dear Margaret Sheehan,

Thank you for submitting your accountability report. We, the Independent Review Panel of Accountable Now, appreciate your 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 assessment below.

The report adequately covers the three areas of improvement raised in the previous report. The report includes substantial qualitative information on how the organisation has embedded Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, mainstreaming environmental protection, and feedback from stakeholders.

The Panel recognises that ChildFund Australia is at the beginning of implementing its new Strategic Plan 2022-2026, which includes indicators of progress in those areas and new practices being rolled out. The Panel therefore looks forward to reading about the impacts and results achieved in the next report.

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 via the Accountable Now Secretariat.

Yours sincerely,

Accountable Now's Independent Review Panel





ChildFund Australia

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Significant Changes

Significant changes relating to accountability during this period includes appointment of new Board members, the introduction of a new strategy (mentioned above) and [theory of change](#), the transition from child sponsorship, pivoting of operations in Myanmar, providing long-term support in protracted crises and a large turnover in staff.

The organisation has also been implementing a new Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) strategy, which provides benchmarks for recruitment and employment, alongside workshops that explore privilege and allyship. Additionally, there has been a flexible return to the office.

The Panel notes these changes positively, and in our discussion and the future, it would be great to learn about how the organisation has brought about the new Strategic Plan and Theory of Change, as well as how the transition from child sponsorship is progressing.

Cluster A: What We Want to Achieve

C. We Lead By Example

C3	<p><i>How does your organisation practice being inclusive and protecting human rights, including promoting women’s rights and gender equality, in accordance with commitments 1-2?</i></p> <p>The report shares about the progress made so far in enhancing inclusion and gender equality within the organisation, culminating in the Action Plan for Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Integration in Programming 2022 – 2025. The Plan also includes targets for outcomes that improve gender equality or disability rights.</p> <p>Within the new Strategic Plan, there is also a key performance indicator against GEDSI that will be reported annually. Alongside this, a newly appointed GEDSI Advisor will be working closely with MEL teams to strengthen data collection around changes in attitude in terms of inclusion and gender equality. Similarly, country</p>	3
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	<p>offices have also appointed GEDSI focal points and/or worked with the GEDSI advisor to enhance this aspect of their work. Trainings that explore GEDSI in relevant cultural contexts have also been provided to local implementing partners.</p> <p>An example of how different country offices have been working together to produce a learning paper on disability inclusion in targeted programming is also given.</p> <p>The Panel commends ChildFund Australia on their progress with this specific commitment. This report further follows through with a better expansion of what the gender transformative approach entails, with clear goals to capture changes in social norms. We also note positively how cultural factors are being considered when advancing this line of work, and stress that this should continue to be a priority for the organisation.</p> <p>We acknowledge that this approach remains at an early stage, and to continue progressing, the Panel would welcome reflections and learnings around the results achieved and evidence as per those indicators in the next report.</p>	
C5	<p><i>How do you demonstrate responsible stewardship for the environment?</i></p> <p>The response shows that the organisation has advanced in terms of good environmental stewardship, putting in place an environmental audit and implementing recommendations. The report also shows that the organisation has been tracking and reducing its carbon emissions, travel and minimising waste.</p> <p>During this reporting period, projects are also required to complete an initial environmental assessment as part of their proposal and a plan should be put in place when significant risks are identified. The Panel would be curious to read and learn more about what such assessment and plan would look like in the future, and whether they include guidelines for sustainable and ethical procurement (from programming inputs to fundraising merchandising, if relevant).</p> <p>Additionally, while some information regarding country offices were included, it would be important to learn more about if the same type of carbon tracking is being implemented in these offices, or if some barriers precludes this from happening. Moreover, it would be good to learn about if training on environmental awareness (beyond the guidelines provided) are available for staff across the organisation and different country offices. An interesting approach to environmental stewardship comes from CIVICUS's 2018-19 report, pg 21.</p>	3



Cluster B: Stakeholder Involvement

E. We listen to, involve and empower stakeholders

E3

Main likes/dislikes from stakeholders and organisation's response

The response showcases a set of example feedback from communities, partners and donors that the organisation received over the reporting period. The Panel notes positively the openness of these feedback, and commends the organisation for listening and responding to what they've heard.

The Panel also notes the efforts made to support local partners in terms of reporting compliance issues, and the explorations in alternative types of reporting as a result. Following up on the previous report's comments regarding influencing upwards, the response showcases the engagement with institutional donors to share challenges of downstream partners. To make this practice even more exemplary, the response should also reflect on instances when the organisation is unable to take up feedback from its stakeholders, and how this has been communicated.

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