



**ChildFund Australia**  
**Independent Review Panel Feedback**  
**Accountability Report 2022-2023**  
**Review Round February 2024**



# ChildFund Australia

## Feedback from the Independent Review Panel

Review Round February 2024

11th March 2024

Dear Margaret Sheehan and the team at ChildFund Australia,

Thank you for submitting your accountability core report using the new framework. 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 actions, and came to the assessment below.

The Panel positively notes ChildFund Australia for the efforts that it's undertaking. The Core Report is concise, responds well to the guiding questions and provides the necessary background information for the Action Plan. The Panel recognises the open and proactive efforts that ChildFund Australia is putting in place to ensure that it lives up to its values in its resource acquisition, internal relationship building and programmatic actions.

The Action Plan proves to be quite ambitious. Currently, it is challenging to predict the timing of actions and at which level (country office, headquarters, partnership, etc) each action may take place. Some of the actions included are much more complex than others, and we look forward to learning more about how they are unpacked in the follow-up call and subsequent reports. Despite these minor issues, the Panel would like to commend the efforts taken to work towards localisation, decreasing due diligence and enhancing collaboration with partners.

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 (IRP)





# ChildFund Australia

## Accountability Report 2022-2023

Review Round February 2024

### Opening Statement from the Head of Organisation

The opening statement from CEO Margaret Sheehan outlines the organisation's commitment to accountability and children's rights. It emphasises that such a commitment is only possible through the organisation's work alongside its staff and local partners.

During the reporting period, ChildFund Australia carried out reviews into their own development practices, which included a review of their partnership model as well as incident reporting processes.

### Core Responses (See [Guidelines and Grading](#))

#### 1 What have been your most significant achievements and impacts this year and how has this been validated with your stakeholders?

The response provides three examples from various ChildFund Australia programmes, including ChildFund Rugby, Swipe Safe and the collaboration alongside ChildFund Korea towards education services in Cambodia.

With ChildFund Rugby, ChildFund Australia partnered with the Turkiye Rugby Federation to carry out disaster recovery activities, aimed at providing children with opportunities to participate in rugby activities and build life-skills. The results were impactful, with data collected from the participants themselves showing that the majority of participants improved on social skills, ability to articulate life goals and better emotional articulation.

In terms of Swipe Safe, ChildFund Australia worked with partners in Cambodia, Indonesia and Vietnam to "empower children and young people, as the central part of the solution, to take advantage of the great opportunities the digital world offers and equip them with knowledge and skills to self-identify and be able to protect themselves when online." While the data showcase positive impacts, it remains unclear if the data was collected from the participants themselves - if the latter is true then this is a very commendable set of achievements.

The last example included within the report is the multi-year partnership with Woori Bank where ChildFund Australia and ChildFund Korea are working together on education programming (focusing on digital literacy). There's an interesting note here about this effort being the first step that ChildFund Australia is taking to diversify from child sponsorship. Comments on this end are provided in feedback to question 2 below.

Overall, these examples showcase ChildFund Australia's achievements over the past years. While these are certainly great results, it would also be helpful to illustrate how different stakeholders have been engaged to receive and validate these results (i.e sharing processes more clearly). Additionally, it would be great to provide context



showing why these examples have been shared as the organisation's most significant impact and how they contribute to the overall advancement of ChildFund Australia's strategy.

**PM** The response **partially met** the guideline, with **minor improvements** needed.

**2** **If applicable - How have your organisation's accountability processes been impacted by significant internal or external changes over the reporting period?**

Significant changes noted in the report include the beginning of a transition away from child sponsorship (including country-specific transitions) and the recommencement of activities in Myanmar.

The response includes very interesting data from surveys and focus group research that ChildFund Australia carried out into the perception of child sponsorship. The data indicates that while the public has a strong awareness of child sponsorship as a viable fundraising approach, such perceptions are possible to shift after discussion. As ChildFund Australia transitions away from such a fundraising model towards programmatic and children's well-being-focused giving, such data emphasises a need to strongly communicate to public donors about its rationale as well as reinvigorate the discourse around equity and effective giving. Given the reasoning and rationale provided, the transition is very commendable and brave. Moreover, it is commendable to have carried out in-depth public research and surveys to come to this conclusion.

It is furthermore interesting to see that transitions have begun in Vietnam and Cambodia. The response outlines significant considerations towards ensuring that staff are equipped and ready for the changes made, including further training and development processes. Beyond internal assurances, how has ChildFund Australia discussed such changes to impacted children and community (if such a step was carried out)?

Another significant change is the necessary pause and due recommencement of activities in Myanmar given the military takeover, after careful consideration. Since the situation remains volatile, the report noted that ChildFund Australia has strengthened its risk assessment processes to ensure the safety of young participants in its programme.

**Additional note post-feedback call from the Panel (19th April 2024):**

During the call between the Panel and ChildFund Australia, it was noted that the organisation did not carry out 1 to 1 sponsorship (i.e sponsor directly funding an individual child), but instead ChildFund Australia has always pooled funds together to support communities and thus children were never individually funded. This meant that while certain consultations did take place, the decision to transition out did not have a personal impact. Additionally, the organisation noted that the transition will take place over a five year timeframe, with gradual shifts rather than a sudden exit.

**FM** The response fully met the specific guidelines.



3

**How has your organisation learned from reported incidents, complaints and grievances received in the past year? (These may include safeguarding, fraud, corruption, whistleblowing, integrity violations, etc.)**

The response shares that ChildFund Australia has recently completed a review of their Child Safeguarding Policy, which accumulated into a Child Safeguarding Action Plan for 2023-25. Some (and maybe all) of the plans are included in the Action Plan portion below.

The response notes that in the past year, there were seven cases of confirmed fraud and six unsubstantiated cases. Notably, lessons and learnings resulting from cases are shared across the organisation in various countries. While the processes of how fraud is investigated, escalated, and learned from are provided, and they align with the general good practices of comparable peer organisations, it would still be good to share some key details about what has changed as a result of the confirmed cases and what steps the organisation took as a direct result. Additionally, it would be interesting to share information about how these cases have been received (i.e. through which channels).

Additionally, did ChildFund Australia receive any complaints regarding its programmatic or community-facing work? And if applicable, did ChildFund Australia receive any feedback from complainants on how their grievances were handled?

**Additional note post-feedback call from the Panel (19th April 2024):**

During the call between the Panel and ChildFund Australia, the organisation emphasised that it does have a system in place to track and monitor the different types of complaints. The Panel noted that it is not the exact details that organisations are asked to share since such disclosure will infringe on the trust, privacy and personal rights of complainants; a high level overview of the number, type, and outcomes of the complaints received would prove satisfactory.

**PM**

The response **partially met** the guideline, with **minor improvements** needed.

4

**Internally, how has your organisation practised a more dynamic approach to accountability?**

In 2021, ChildFund Australia collected feedback and input from its staff and this year, it followed up with another review survey. From the response, it seems that the survey was taken by staff from ChildFund Australia's head and country offices, but the survey is not very clear on which country offices participated.

The results demonstrated strong alignment in terms of staff's feelings about the organisation's values, the pride they feel working for ChildFund Australia and how they contributed to the organisation's goal. However, some results are lower (but still the majority of staff are aligned), such as satisfaction with how organisational decisions are made, confidence in mechanisms to deal with when someone is not delivering in their role, and that compensation is fair. The latter of which is footnoted with the fact that low results were observed in countries where inflation was the highest.

In terms of employee engagement, results were generally trending positively in terms of employees' ability to take time off when needed, feeling confident in voicing opposition,



and believing that managers show a genuine interest in their career development. The response moreover provided some areas where it is negatively trending, such as employees' feelings on how decisions are made, resources are being handled, and that leaders are communicating a vision and mission that motivates them.

The response also provides a comparative perspective between the two years where review surveys were carried out, and this is a very positive inclusion as it gives a clear understanding of where things may have changed. While there is some discussion on potential solutions and how the organisation aims to address certain results of the survey in this section, we also note that the Action Plan includes items that specifically address some of these areas.

Furthermore, the response also shared about the organisation's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan to support more inclusive and equitable work environments. The Plan came about after DEI trainings, a staff DEI survey and discussions with staff. So far, the Action Plan includes commitments to progressing First Nation justice (Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan), updated HR processes to include DEI values in hiring and induction processes, making staff meetings fully accessible, and sharing these commitments publically on their website. A Committee to oversee the progress of the Action Plan has also been established; it includes staff from all levels of the organisation and has a dedicated time slot to provide updates at all staff meetings. A dedicated email address is also put in place to receive complaints and suggestions from staff. These are very commendable mechanisms that will support the organisation to make and deliver on its DEI commitments.

Some key questions for the DEI actions include: Is the environment within the committee itself conducive for more junior staff to speak up and raise their concerns on behalf of other lower-level staff? Who is in charge of reading these emails/filtering them? How are they escalated to the Committee?

Potentially, CIVICUS's approach in terms of acknowledging informal feedback as a part of a holistic staff engagement process (see their [2022 Report](#), pg 3) could also be of interest to ChildFund Australia. Another interesting resource for DEI comes from [CARE International, with their Power-Down Approach to DEI](#) (presentation at 6:50 onwards).

**PM** The response **partially met** the guideline, with **minor improvements** needed.

## **5** How has your organisation worked towards being dynamically accountable to your external stakeholders (i.e. partners, communities, programme participants, etc)?

The response shares ChildFund Australia's commitments to locally-led development, zooming in on the recent review carried out by an external consultant on existing partner engagement approaches. Such findings have been complemented by additional desk research and validated through interviews with both ChildFund and its partners' staff.

While this overview has been very helpful in setting the scene for the Action Plan and the items that belong in it, the Panel would welcome further information and details regarding what the organisation has heard from its partners, especially examples of comments and feedback from different stakeholders as evidence of dynamic accountability, how has it engaged partners beyond the review carried out above, how



partners are co-creators within this localisation and rethinking process, and how information from partners contribute to changes (beyond the above).

**Additional note post-feedback call from the Panel (19th April 2024):**

During the call between the Panel and ChildFund Australia, the organisation shared that it has put in place multiple channels for feedback from partners, including anonymous feedback forms and regular partnership meetings. Feedback from these channels is understood to be shaping the relationship and actions within the partnership.

**PS** The response partially met the guideline and significant improvements are still needed.

Key	Explanation (See <a href="#">expanded guidelines</a> )
<b>FM</b>	The response <b>fully met</b> the specific guideline.
<b>PM</b>	The response <b>partially met</b> the guideline, with <b>minor improvements</b> needed.
<b>PS</b>	The response <b>partially met</b> the guideline and <b>significant improvements</b> are still needed.
<b>NM</b>	If the response has <b>not met</b> the specific guideline.



## Action Plan

1	Action	Duty of Care Towards Staff
	Involved Steps (as taken from action plan)	<p><b>A Safe and Inclusive Environment that enhances employee wellbeing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review flexible working arrangements and, with staff, develop an agreed upon approach and suite of options for a flexible, healthy, and safe work environment. Ensure transparency around options and conditions for everyone.</li> <li>● Identify and address barriers to entry into ChildFund Australia employment and reasonable accommodation for Staff with different abilities.</li> <li>● Update Bamboo performance management guide with questions that include a focus on work culture, well-being and inclusion in discussions.</li> <li>● Ensure ongoing focus on staff well-being through:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as standing item in all-staff meetings, where we celebrate how people are demonstrating our values, answer any 'curly questions', and update on DEI actions.</li> <li>○ Continue to facilitate social activities, celebration of key cultural days, and explore a diversity of ways to socialise.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Ensure Transparency and Inclusive Decision Making</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Educate and support decision makers at ChildFund Australia to use an inclusive approach to all decision making.</li> <li>● Document and provide feedback to all staff on key information and decisions shared at all staff meetings as well as board meeting outcomes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strengthen whole of organisation Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Knowledge and Capacity.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue to ensure recruitment and procurement practice meet good practice in DEI, including focus on management diversification and creating opportunities within ChildFund for diverse young people to build their skills in international development.</li> <li>● Systematise opportunities for facilitated self-learning and reflection on DEI topics (e.g. cultural safety, allyship, unconscious bias, discrimination, managing diverse teams) including identification and costing of common training sessions.</li> <li>● Facilitate training for Board members on DEI topics and encourage discussions around Board and management diversification.</li> </ul> <p><b>Accountability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Aligned with our commitment to locally-led development and commitment to pursuing racial justice, provide all staff with anti-racism training and formally articulate ChildFund Australia's commitment and actions towards decolonisation and racial justice.</li> <li>● Measure DEI progress against Board-approved People and Culture KPIs, including regular surveys, tracking staffing diversity and engagement on DEI Learning topics.</li> <li>● DEI as a standing Board agenda item.</li> <li>● Progress on the DEI Action Plan (inclusive of RAP) as a standing executive leadership agenda item.</li> </ul>





<b>IRP Feedback</b>	<p>The Panel recognises that the backdrop to this cluster in the Action Plan has been shared in the Core Report in Q4. However, we do encourage that some further and more up-to-date explanation on the current state of DEI would have been useful, although a lot of the information is also available in previous <a href="#">reports</a>.</p> <p>In terms of the actions themselves, it seems that these items are inline with what the organisation heard from their employee engagement survey and other reviews.</p> <p>Potentially, certain actions such as “Identify and address barriers to entry into ChildFund Australia employment”, “Educate and support decision makers at ChildFund Australia to use an inclusive approach to all decision making”, or “Continue to ensure recruitment and procurement practice meet good practice in DEI, including focus on management diversification and creating opportunities within ChildFund for diverse young people to build their skills in international development.” may need to be unpacked as they are being advanced, and we look forward to learning more about the details of what those barriers, inclusive approaches, and procurement inline with DEI may look like for ChildFund Australia.</p> <p>In terms of ensuring a safe working environment, the Panel wonders if ChildFund Australia also surveyed its staff regarding mental health and considered the potential need for support. Following various reports in the corporate world, Accountable Now has found that staff’s mental health is increasingly important as part of a holistic well-being approach, and allocated mental health time off and flexible working to allow for medical/counselling appointments may be useful strategies to support employees’ mental health.</p> <p>In terms of “ensuring transparent and inclusive decision making”, the Panel notes that the response in Q4 highlighted “concerns for decisions around our new strategy and change in fundraising model” as a reason why there was a decreased satisfaction level of how decisions are made at ChildFund Australia. In this sense, the item of documenting and sharing feedback is very important as socialisation and sharing of rationale support leaders to gather buy-in from stakeholders.</p> <p>A resource that may be useful for ChildFund Australia in terms of “creating opportunities within ChildFund for diverse young people to build their skills in international development” is Accountable Now’s series on <a href="#">Youth Engagement</a>, which includes interviews done by young people on how they’d like to be engaged within the sector and what they find valuable.</p> <p>Lastly, beyond the DEI Committee detailed in Q4, and Employee Grievance Policy and Procedure, are there any other mechanisms for staff to share their ideas and inputs with leadership? Moreover, it would be interesting to indicate in the next report what Childfund Australia has in place to combat sexual harassment and related violence, as this plan indicates that there is something in place, however, there is not enough information provided on this end.</p>
<b>2 Action</b>	<b>Collaboration with Partners</b>



**Involved Steps (as taken from action plan)**

**Increased flexibility in partnership categories**

- Instead of increasing the number of partnership types, merge the existing partnership types and allow more flexibility.
- The long-term partnership category be expanded to allow the inclusion of grassroots organisations and tools to be updated for different size organisations – i.e. move away from the current one size fits all approach.
- Review/revise the Partner Agreement to reflect flexibility and proportionality.
- Update Delegation of Authority in line with the revised partner categories.

**Streamlining the due diligence and organisational capacity assessment process in relation to Gender Equality, Disability, Social Inclusion (GEDSI), Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH), Child Safeguarding, Fraud and Corruption and AML**

- Procedures and training could be developed in partnership with a country office to combine the implementing expertise with the Head Office compliance knowledge and experience.
- Develop separate processes for different sized partners, starting with a reduced process for grassroots organisations using bottom-up approach for the system development, allowing those currently working with small organisations to develop a simplified approach to the process and forms.
- Remove the requirement for a GEDSI policy for partners at the Due Diligence level and focus on the practice.
- Establish a working group to review the due diligence form and guidance notes/process together with the Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA) tool; consult Partnership focal points before submitting to the Executive team.
- Adapt relevant recommendations/actions emerging from the Child Safeguarding Review – specifically separating PSEAH from CSG and review policies and procedures.
- Review Code of Conduct to include behaviour related to partnership.
- Review Counter-Terrorism procedure.
- Review Fraud and Corruption Policy and Procedure.
- After Executive teams endorsement, socialise and test the changes before Implementing Due Diligence and OCA based on the revised partner categories – highlight how practices could be aligned with partnership principles.
- Develop standard CFA intro document highlighting transparency on who we are as a partner, our partnership approach and what it means to be a ChildFund Australia partner.

**Integrating GEDSI, Safeguarding and PSEAH through the partnership procedures such as Due Diligence, Capacity Assessment and Risk Management.**

This streamlines the process and integrates the concepts into the partnership approach. Move away from the current standalone approach, particularly with GEDSI and PSEAH. This will be achieved by:

- Establish a working group to review the due diligence form and guidance notes/process together with the Organisation Capacity Assessment tool.
- Review and revise Organisational Capacity Assessment tool along with other partnership engagement tools with the aim to streamline and integrate related tools, eg. Capacity Strengthening Plan.

**Localise compliance to reflect the context**

- Continue to develop policies, procedures and training for compliance.
- Identify a core group of trainers from SO, CO, and RO who could deliver the topic.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counter-terrorism and Procurement training for all offices.</li> <li>• Fraud and Corruption training for all COs.</li> <li>• Training of Trainers on PSEAH and CSG Policies and Procedures.</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisational Development Approach to Capacity Strengthening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commit to building organisational development costs into projects and core funding (commitment to be built into new projects for the rest of the FY24 and all new projects from FY25 onwards).</li> <li>• This will be part of the broader work being undertaken by the Sydney Finance team around cost recovery.</li> </ul> <p><b>Coordinate with other INGOS to minimise the impact of due diligence requirements, compliance, and to increase funding flexibility and quality of funding to local partners.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapping and identification of common funders/INGOs of common local partners in-country to assist in identifying opportunities for leverage rather than duplication (i.e., avoid duplicating Due Diligence, Capacity Assessment/Strengthening Plan)</li> <li>• Country and Regional Offices engage with common funders/INGOs to agree practical ways to leverage existing partnership due diligence exercises/requirements</li> <li>• Agree commitments/principles to be applied in terms of the same terms and conditions being passed on to the partner as in any agreements between ChildFund and the donor e.g., sharing indirect costs recovery, timeframe for grant agreements.</li> </ul> <p><b>Contextualize and operationalise the dimensions of localisation to reflect the agreed priorities of ChildFund Australia and its partners.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalise ChildFund Australia guidance notes on locally-led development.</li> <li>• Facilitate workshop with partners in Cambodia and Timor Leste (COs with the most numbers of partners) on how respective principles for locally-led development and partnership are applied in the revised partnership approach and systems.</li> <li>• Utilise the outcomes of the workshop to inform final updates on Partnership Engagement, Project Cycle Management, relevant approaches and policies, as applicable.</li> </ul> <p><b>Alignment of human resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest on actualising the Competency Framework by creating all organisation competency model that supports partnership approach; design and deliver training to all CFA staff in SO and CO on basic level of partnership-related competency</li> <li>• Action plan to roll-out Program Competency Framework</li> </ul>
<p><b>IRP Feedback</b></p>	<p>The range of actions here illustrates ChildFund Australia’s commitment towards localisation and shifting power to partners. The Panel positively notes the organisation’s actions to streamline and simplify reporting processes for its partners, including looking to ensure alignment with other donors. The integration of GEDSI, Safeguarding and PSEAH throughout partnership procedures also seems very interesting, as it may also deeply embed these issues in a cross-cutting way in joint actions, as well as mainstreaming these “do no harm” requirements within partners’ institutional processes and policies.</p> <p>If it is not already planning to, the Panel encourages ChildFund Australia to include its local and national partners, beyond country offices, in any working groups or committees on due diligence, as such representation may increase</p>



	<p>the diversity in the perspectives being offered. Moreover, under the heading “Localise compliance to reflect the context”, it seems that the brevity of the outlined steps means that nuances regarding how these steps contribute to effective localisation are not coming through; for example, will policies be co-developed <i>with</i> NOs and POs, rather than developed <i>for</i> those entities? Are trainers identified from POs and NOs <i>because</i> they are knowledgeable in their context? At the same time, it would have been useful to share further what is being required from partners currently (although we do have some information already from a <a href="#">previous report</a>).</p> <p>Additionally, will the item “Commit to building organisational development costs into projects and core funding” apply to ChildFund Australia’s funding from its donors, or its partners’s funding as received from ChildFund Australia? If it is the latter, then it is a very positive step towards ensuring equity and part of a trend that we observe as emerging within the sector (see also Restless Development’s commitments - 2022 report, pg. 3).</p> <p>We also note positively the efforts to invest and align resources towards ensuring that staff competency can support the new partnership approach.</p>
<p><b>3 Action</b></p>	<p><b>Advocacy Addresses Root Causes</b></p>
<p><b>Involved Steps (as taken from action plan)</b></p>	<p><u>Objective 1:</u> Increase and institutionalize advocacy capacity (knowledge, skills, resourcing) across ChildFund Australia’s work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ChildFund Australia is building on its existing advocacy capacity. As such its key is to focus on building a common foundation to operationalise and strengthen our ability to advocate as an enabler for our strategic intent, across both Australia and the region. We are committed to growing a shared approach to advocacy, including the ability to generate evidence for a government audience, to provide robust policy advice, to communicate strategically on policy priorities, to enhance advocacy at the program level are in focus. This will be achieved through; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Development of ChildFund’s Advocacy Approach and Work Plan</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Objective 2:</u> Build influence through informal and formal engagement with government and sector stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our work is nascent in government relations and this objective seeks to strengthen our influence, in order to achieve our policy and program priorities, through engagement with key stakeholders (sector, parliament and government). In focus is increasing government relations understanding across the organisation, growing relationships with key political targets over the long term through identified tactics, and increasing capability internally. It’s important to note that Government Relations is usually a stand alone function and role in organisational machinery. Growing sector partnerships and relationships is essential to amplify our reach, and to indirectly influence decision makers through a number of avenues. This will be achieved through key activities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Participation in ACFID lobby rounds</li> <li>○ Increase in-house capability</li> <li>○ Government engagement on key policy priorities: 2-6 parliamentary trips per annum.</li> <li>○ Targeted submissions and policy advice.</li> <li>○ Sector engagement (ACFID meetings, Taskforce meetings, attending conferences, supporting aligned initiatives, relationship building).</li> <li>○ 12 month engagement plan with review.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<p><u>Objective 3:</u> Have positive impact for children and young people in the region through policy change – focussing on our policy priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <i>Policy Priority: Ending Violence Against Children, focusing on the digital environment.</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ ChildFund is uniquely positioned to lead on online safety in Australia. Online Safety is a priority for the Alliance, with much of the work being led from Australia. ChildFund Australia has progressed critical work to respond to violence, much of it through our Swipe Safe program – but through the strength of child protection work across the region. ChildFund Australia will:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Strengthen online safety regulatory and legislative environment for children in Australia (and therefore influence the policy and protective environment across the region)</li><li>○ Promote solutions that support children and young people's skills and capacity to enact self-protective behaviours (Swipe Safe)</li><li>○ Strengthen the development program focus on ending violence against women and children</li></ul></li></ul></li><li>● <i>Policy Priority: Addressing multidimensional child poverty across the region (including ODA investment)</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ As an international development organisation, ChildFund Australia is a bridge between our roots in Australia and the international community, including key accountability mechanisms. We hold a privileged role that sits across the region, with multidimensional poverty at our core. We can through this unique position, advocate for child and youth focussed approaches to resolving poverty, across the region, positioning Australia as a member of the region – not outside looking in. Politically, a focus both on matters of the electorate, combined with matters regarding our international standing and work to create a region in which all children can thrive gives us better leverage across Parliament and Government. We will:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Promote and strengthen Australian development program and budget that is child and youth focussed.</li><li>○ Support and contribute to child rights-based approaches to addressing poverty in Australia.</li></ul></li></ul></li><li>● <i>Policy Priority: Humanitarian Advocacy</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ ChildFund Australia is an humanitarian actor. Our strategy – across the core programs pillars (1, 2 and 3) - note our work in emergencies and as part of the Australian Humanitarian Partnership. Commiserate with our investment, experience and expertise, ChildFund Australia will:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Focus on advocacy against our existing commitments in Afghanistan and Cox's Bazaar.</li><li>○ Promote partner reports.</li><li>○ Work in coalition for education in emergencies.</li><li>○ Strategically communicate for key moments – such as events or key anniversaries.</li></ul></li></ul></li><li>● <i>Progress advocacy offerings to partners in the Pacific.”</i></li></ul>
<b>IRP Feedback</b>	ChildFund Australia is proactively working to expand its reach and actions to ensure the protection of children in different contexts, including online safety, poverty, and humanitarian settings. In terms of accountability, it is furthermore good to see that institutional capacity is considered an integral and complementary aspect to carrying out advocacy action. Throughout the report, ChildFund Australia's commitment to properly invest in, ensure internal capacity, and provide support to its workforce is commendable.



		<p>Furthermore, it is great to see ChildFund Australia leveraging its unique position and joining forces with other initiatives within the country to enhance advocacy efforts. It would be great to share in the next report how some of these actions are unpacked (i.e. further explanation on what a child and youth-focused budget may look like), how these actions progressed, and how these actions have stemmed from ChildFund Australia responding to stakeholders' needs.</p> <p>Additionally, the Panel encourages ChildFund Australia to reflect on how these policy changes and their impact will be monitored and if there are approaches in place to validate policy change alongside stakeholders.</p>
4	<p><b>Action</b></p> <p><b>Involved Steps (as taken from action plan)</b></p>	<p><b>Safeguarding of Stakeholders</b></p> <p>“ChildFund Australia is committed to improving how our organisation ensures that our programmes do no harm to the children and communities we serve, both in terms of how we engage with them as well as the tools, processes and systems used. The management response has identified and grouped priority actions against the following key areas.</p> <p><b>Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update policy according to review recommendations.</li> <li>• Policy to be socialised and staff trained.</li> <li>• Update Child Safeguarding Procedures.</li> <li>• Policy and procedures translated into official country languages.</li> </ul> <p><b>Child Safeguarding Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop separate Child Safeguarding and PSEAH training (based on risk approach, and level of contact with children).</li> <li>• Form a working group for approving content and roll-out of Action Plan for updated Child Safeguarding and PSEAH training material.</li> <li>• Completing training mapping based on role level of contact with children and separate PSEAH and CSG.</li> <li>• Development of Child Safeguarding Focal Point training material.</li> </ul> <p><b>Code of Conduct</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As per review recommendations, merge the two codes of conduct into one – ensuring all standards are set.</li> <li>• Roll our new code for new staff that is inclusive of CFG and PSEAH principles, rights and responsibilities.</li> <li>• Child Friendly Communication and Reporting Mechanisms</li> <li>• Facilitate children’s input into the design of Safeguarding messaging and reporting mechanisms for ChildFund Australia.</li> <li>• Roll out resources and focal points to gather feedback.</li> </ul> <p><b>Managing Organisational Child Safeguarding Risk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training for staff to monitor project risk to focus on children</li> <li>• Update risk assessment and screening on employment in HR policy.</li> <li>• Review Child Safeguarding Investigation and policy breach procedures in HR Policy.</li> <li>• Review ChildFund Australia policies for including of ChildFund Safeguarding Risk in related policies eg. ICT, Communications and HR.”</li> </ul>
	<p><b>IRP Feedback</b></p>	<p>Some of the background to this strand within the action plan has already been shared in the core response (Q3) above. Such commitments to continuously review and improve safeguarding practices, especially in a child-focused organisation are very well received. Moreover, it is great to hear that children are being involved in inputs to the design of safeguarding messaging and</p>



reporting mechanisms - as the involvement of children and young people also supports them to better understand their rights and empowers them to raise their voices when wrong is done.

It is also good to see that organisational child safeguarding risk management includes training for staff, HR screening, and expanding further into reviews of previous investigations and related policies. Such action demonstrates that ChildFund Australia places children's safety front and centre, and has a wide understanding of what areas of its work may affect children negatively. Potentially, [Plan International's approach to child safeguarding](#) which takes a gender-sensitive and intersectional lens may be a useful reference point.