

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Helping Vulnerable Children around the World Survive COVID-19**

*ChildFund directs nearly \$80 million to help stop spread of virus, provide nutrition and educational support, and prevent violence as countries around the globe continue to see a spike in cases*

(New York, NY) Six months after launching an ambitious [COVID-19 Response Plan](#) in April 2020, ChildFund is directing nearly \$80 million to relief efforts reaching more than 5.6 million children in more than 60 countries. This includes more than \$44 million in new funds raised and more than \$35 million in sponsored funds that ChildFund members repurposed in the wake of the global health crisis.

The need could not be more urgent. While there has been good news in recent weeks about the arrival of vaccines that proved successful in trials, the global pandemic has already fundamentally altered the health, economic, educational, and political landscape of our world. Moreover, it will be a daunting process for countries worldwide to approve, distribute, and administer the vaccines to billions of people.

According to the World Health Organization, as of 15 December, the world had more than 71 million confirmed cases of COVID-19, with more than 1.6 million deaths attributed to the virus<sup>1</sup>. In addition, the World Bank estimates the pandemic will push as many as 115 million additional people into extreme poverty this year<sup>2</sup>, and school closures are affecting hundreds of millions of children<sup>3</sup>.

For many of the world's most vulnerable populations, the growing economic uncertainty of the past several months has resulted in numerous negative impacts on children. The crisis has increased threats of violence against children, the risk of child labor, child marriage and child trafficking. Further, at least a third of the world's children are unable to access remote learning with so many schools closed to in-person learning<sup>4</sup>.

To help minimize the negative effects of the pandemic, and make sure children and families remain healthy, educated, and safe, ChildFund's COVID-19 Response Plan focuses on four key priority areas: stopping COVID-19 from infecting children and families; getting children the food they need; keeping children safe from violence—physically and emotionally; and helping children to continue their learning.

“As many countries are experiencing yet another peak in the number of COVID-19 cases, it is all the more vital to reach those who are suffering as a result of the significant economic hardships this pandemic has triggered,” said ChildFund Alliance Secretary General Meg Gardinier. “The collateral damage from the pandemic will have long-lasting impacts if we don’t take aggressive action to stop the spread of the virus and mitigate its harms to children.”

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<sup>1</sup> <https://covid19.who.int/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/10/07/covid-19-to-add-as-many-as-150-million-extreme-poor-by-2021>

<sup>3</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/covid-19-least-third-worlds-schoolchildren-unable-access-remote-learning-during>

ChildFund has been installing community handwashing stands; educating communities about symptoms, hygiene measures, and locations for testing and treatment; distributing essentials such as soap, gloves and masks; and creating child-friendly spaces. To make sure children get food and other essentials they need, ChildFund is providing cash for families most in need, and where possible, is distributing food and basic household items directly. In all of its activities, ChildFund is carefully abiding by COVID-19 protection measures.

With 80 years of experience, and operations in more than 70 countries across 12 members, ChildFund is well equipped to make a meaningful difference in the lives of the world's most vulnerable children, during and after this pandemic. You can read or [download the plan](#) or visit our website to learn how you can help via [ChildFund's online COVID-19 emergency response site](#).

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### ***About ChildFund***

*Founded in 1938, ChildFund is a child-focused global development organization that helps more than 16 million children and family members in 70 countries. Twelve child-focused development agencies are part of the global network ChildFund Alliance. The members work to end violence and exploitation against children and to overcome poverty and the underlying conditions that prevent children from achieving their full potential. We work in partnership with children and their communities to create lasting change, and the participation of children themselves is a key component of our approach. Our commitment, resources, innovation, knowledge and expertise serve as a powerful force to transform the lives of children.*