

ChildFund's Approach to Policy Advocacy in the Africa Region

OVERVIEW OF CHILDFUND'S POLICY ADVOCACY EFFORTS

Importance of Policy Advocacy

ChildFund is committed to protecting and advancing children's and youth's rights through policy advocacy--from pushing for holistic, common-sense solutions for issues affecting children, to working to make the internet safer, to promoting girls' empowerment – we work with a wide variety of stakeholders, including young people themselves, to demand better laws and policies to protect and support children and youth and build stronger communities at the local, national and global levels. ChildFund believes that advocating and working directly with governments to adopt child-focused legislation and programs leads to sustainable change and greater local ownership that will have impacts far beyond what we can achieve alone.

Theory of Change

ChildFund's organizational advocacy goal is to improve and sustain protection and wellbeing outcomes for children and families through policy and budget advocacy.

To achieve this, we focus our efforts on three main stakeholder groups: **governments, communities and children and youth** themselves. For **governments**, we advocate policymakers, at all levels, to become more proactive and responsive to young people's needs by enacting and implementing effective child and youth protection policies. For **communities**, we build community members' knowledge and understanding on child protection and child wellbeing, so they become champions and drive for inclusive child protection response systems, contribute to policy and push back on harmful social norms that normalize violence against children. For **children and youth**, we provide them with skill-building, safe spaces and opportunities to become change agents within their communities and countries and to meaningfully participate in and inform policy formation and implementation.



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Our History and Approach

Starting in 2017, ChildFund has engaged in policy advocacy, which we define as the **deliberate process of influencing decision-makers in support of evidence-based policy formulation, policy change or policy implementation** that contributes to our organizational vision of a world in which every child realizes their rights and achieves their full potential so that they grow up healthy, educated, skilled and safe.



Over the past seven years, ChildFund's country offices (CO) have developed child protection advocacy goals that are informed by thorough context analyses that examines existing policy gaps, the latest data and evidence on issues impacting young people and feedback directly from children, youth and local communities. Our COs work closely with civil society partners, academia and children and youth to advance these efforts, including through alliances and coalitions.

To further support these efforts, ChildFund engages in global networks, like the WeProtect Global Alliance, and with regional bodies, like the African Union, to influence global and regional level commitments, strategies and action plans and uplift our COs' advocacy priorities with policymakers at all levels during key moments and at strategic events and forums. We also advocate the U.S. government to adopt domestic and internationally focused legislation, funding and programs that respond to ongoing and emerging concerns from our staff in the field both in the U.S. and globally. This includes forming and leading new advocacy coalitions that bring together likeminded partners, like the End Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC) Coalition.

CHILDFUND'S POLICY ADVOCACY IN THE AFRICA REGION

Our COs in the Africa region conduct policy advocacy to improve child protection policies and legislation at all levels: subnational, national, and regional. ChildFund's COs work with local community-based organizations to support grassroots advocacy and elevate communities' concerns to decision-makers. Similarly, we work directly with children and youth to build their capacities, confidence and leadership skills to develop and lead their own advocacy efforts on issues they care about. We capitalize on our knowledge of the community, children and youth's shared needs, ideas and solutions and our programmatic evidence and best practices to advocate governments and policymakers.

African Union (AU)

ChildFund engages closely with the AU and is a member of its End Harmful Practices Programme that advocates against harmful practices like child marriage, female genital mutilation and emerging child protection issues like online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA). Currently, ChildFund serves as the AU's civil society liaison on OCSEA and has partnered with the Africa Child Policy Forum (ACPF) to develop [two policy briefs](#), which focus on OCSEA's scale, drivers and impact and OCSEA-related policy and programmatic gaps. ChildFund is also partnering with ACPF and the Brave Movement to support the AU in developing a continental Model Law on Online Child Exploitation and Abuse.

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Kenya

ChildFund Kenya was at the forefront of the development and finalization of the national [Children Act 2022](#). This includes leading stakeholder forums to gather inputs, as well as validation workshops that brought together key policy experts to review the policy ensuring inclusion of online child sexual exploitation and abuse, climate actions and early childhood development as main thematic areas. ChildFund's advocacy efforts have also led to the development of the National Plan of Action to Tackle Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Kenya, Standard Operating Procedures on OCSEA in Kenya and the Training Manual for the Social Service Workforce on OCSEA.



ChildFund Kenya maintains a strong relationship with the media to support their advocacy efforts. The CO's media messages revolve around the need for strengthened formal and informal child protection systems throughout the country. Last year, the team had 7 engagements with key media outlets, including BBC Africa and Kameme TV. ChildFund Kenya is also a member of the the Kenya Civil Society Organization Network Against Gender Based Violence's Steering Committee and applies a child-focused lens to the issue, highlighting the importance of child protection interventions within the home, as well as online.

ChildFund Kenya contributes to organizational advocacy thought leadership by collaborating with the global advocacy team to test advocacy

monitoring and evaluation tools, including a population statistic-based advocacy reach calculator.

Ethiopia

ChildFund Ethiopia, through their active participation in the National Child Protection Working Group, successfully advocated for the development of a single, comprehensive National Child Law. Once finalized, the law will align with international and regional child rights instruments, ensuring greater protection for Ethiopian children. These efforts led to the establishment of a technical working group (TWG) tasked with supporting the drafting and endorsement of the National Child Law. The TWG has a clearly defined objective, scope of work, membership and member roles and represents a significant step towards realizing this crucial legislation.

To support effective implementation of this advocacy priority, ChildFund Ethiopia partners with government agencies to strengthen their child protection initiatives. The team collaborated with the Ethiopia Ministry of Women and Social Affairs and UNICEF to develop a Training Manual on Child Online Safety for Child Protection Professionals that was shared with 900 stakeholders to improve their awareness of and response to online harms against children.

Our Partners and Memberships

Globally, ChildFund works through approximately 169 local partner organizations to provide services and implement programs. We also partner with a multitude of public, private and corporate partners, donors, coalitions, working groups and academic institutions across all the sectors in which we work.

- African Union
- Africa Child Policy Forum
- Strathmore University
- Cities4Children Global Alliance
- The Brave Movement
- WeProtect Global Alliance

Further Reading

To Learn more, visit: [ChildFund.org](https://www.childfund.org)