

Youth Development

THE CHALLENGE

When young people are not active participants in the decision-making processes that affect their lives, they—and their communities—often suffer worse outcomes. Too often, decisions that will affect young people’s lives are made solely by parents, local and religious leaders, teachers, governments and others without the input of youth themselves. Young people who are in marginalized communities, living with disabilities, or facing unfair gender disparities face even tougher development barriers to having their voices heard.

CHILDFUND'S SOLUTION

Our Approach

By focusing on youth agency and positive youth development, ChildFund supports the principle that young people are empowered to reach their full potential through skill-building, fostering healthy relationships, strengthening families and communities, and transforming systems. Our programming promotes changes in behaviors, skills, and attitudes, and recognizes that youth should be better positioned to advocate on issues that affect them, like employment and climate change. It also ensures a safe and supportive enabling environment¹ which is essential to facilitating youth access to services.

Community-based Solutions

Many of our programs integrate youth participation programming and adolescent sexual and reproductive health so we are able to holistically support youth through this life stage, properly preparing them not only for work, but for being able to stay employed, continue their education and remain safe and healthy. Increasingly, ChildFund programs prioritize inclusion for children who are extremely vulnerable, including those living with disabilities who may have unique needs in terms of program access.

ChildFund’s locally run, and often youth-led, programs increasingly include social and emotional skills training that is necessary to foster healthy and non-violent relationships in the home, at school and at work. Supporting youth participation alongside these efforts also better ensures that young people will act as change agents, using their voices to speak up about issues, including violence in the workplace or within the community.

U.S. Advocacy Initiatives

Through supporting the Girls LEAD (Leadership, Engagement, Agency, and Development) Act², we work together with governments, the private sector and civil society to amplify young people’s voices, demand better laws and policies to protect and support girls and young women to build stronger communities at the local, national and global levels.

¹ <https://www.youthpower.org/youthpower-issues/topics/5-enabling-environment>

² <https://girlsleadact.org/>

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Core Outcomes

The Results Framework outlines how our programming produces positive outcomes for Youth Development.



Evidence Snapshot

Developing Youth as a Change Agent, India, 2018-2019³: This program's goal was to empower adolescents and youth to develop leadership attributes and actively contribute to their community's development. Through the formation of 15 "youth collectives", 400 adolescents were reached, and 109 families benefitted from the project where groups engaged in community sensitization, awareness building, and capacity building. At the end of the project, youth, caregivers, and government stakeholders all identified that the project contributed to increased awareness of gender discrimination, and collective members voiced that they felt empowered through the process of receiving skills development support — and mobilizing themselves as a group into action.



The project has taken a bold approach and challenged community norms, with good results! The biggest result is the youth's transformative leadership qualities, especially of girls, that emerged during the team interactions.

— ChildFund India Staff Member

Our Partners and Memberships

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

For Youth Development, some of these include:

- [The Alliance for International Youth Development](#)
- [Coca-Cola Foundation](#)
- [German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development \(BMZ\)](#)
- [MasterCard Foundation](#)
- [USAID](#)
- [Youth Economic Opportunities 2030 Working Group on Financial Inclusion](#)
- [Youth Systems Collaborative](#)

Further Reading

To Learn more, visit: [ChildFund.org](https://www.childfund.org) and our [2020 Impact Report](#).

³ <https://www.childfund.org/globalassets/uploaded-files/newcf/impact/impact-2020.pdf>