



Chance for
Childhood

2025 STRATEGY



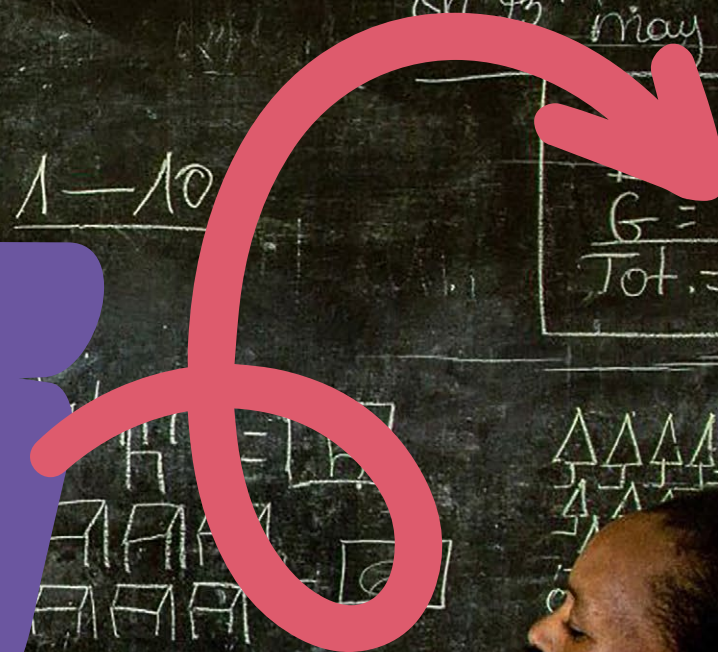
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May 2024

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FOREWORD

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The needs of children and young people living in vulnerable situations remain vast, are not routinely addressed with inclusiveness, dignity, equity or at all.

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AS WE MOVE INTO 2022 AND LOOK AHEAD TO THE NEXT FOUR YEARS, WE ARE REMINDED OF OUR RESOLVE TO CONTINUE TO PRIORITISE INNOVATION AND PARTNERSHIPS.

The international development and humanitarian system is in need of a transformation. The Black Lives Matter movement and the inequalities amplified through the COVID-19 pandemic have forced the aid sector to try and answer some uncomfortable questions about the power structures, rooted in colonialism, that still exist and define the mechanism through which aid and development is delivered and championed all over the world. We cannot understate the importance of deeply understanding our value and purpose within this context.

In examining the value we will bring to children in the most vulnerable situations, we are driven by the following contextual factors:

- The needs of children and young people living in vulnerable situations remain vast, are not routinely addressed with inclusiveness, dignity, equity or at all.
- Covid-19 has led to a drastic increase in education poverty but even before the pandemic thousands of children were out of school.

UNICEF ESTIMATES SOME 69 MILLION CHILDREN IN AFRICA ARE CURRENTLY OUT OF SCHOOL DUE TO COVID-19 AND PRE-PANDEMIC DRIVERS



- The exact number of children living on the street remains unknown, but our partners can attest that Covid-19 has led to a dramatic increase in this number due to rising poverty, family breakdown and deteriorating mental health.
- Children experiencing disability, including those with learning and psychosocial disabilities, are amongst the most impacted by and at risk from the accelerating impacts of climate change.
- Large scale donors continue to invest in a small number of delivery partners who routinely 'crowd out' opportunities for community-based organisations and social entrepreneurs.
- There remains a lack of focus on resilience and sustainability which perpetuates dependency culture across many communities.
- Whilst governments and philanthropists remain critical investors in sustainable development initiatives, business for good will play an increasing role in the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Digital innovations are offering opportunities to scale development progress, but challenges such as the digital divide and online safeguarding risks to children and young people must still be overcome.
- Despite the reduction in the UK's aid budget from 0.7 to 0.5 of national income in 2020, the UK remains the third largest donor country in the world.





While Chance for Childhood cannot seek to tackle any one of these issues alone, we are committed to work collaboratively with individuals, organisations and governments who share our values and passion for ensuring that every child can thrive from their early years to adulthood. We thank you, our supporters for continuing to believe in us and our work, none of which we could do without you.



**ANNA-MAI ANDREWS
AND KATIE FOWLER,
CO-CEOS**



AT A GLANCE

OUR VISION

We believe that no child should have to fight for a safe, happy childhood. We exist to ensure that every child in Africa can thrive from their early years through to adulthood.

OUR MISSION

Together with partners, supporters, children and their communities, we protect, educate and create lasting change for every child threatened by violence, neglect and conflict.

OUR GOAL

To reach 150,000 children in vulnerable situations, providing them with access to **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION** and **SAFE SPACES** so that they can play, grow, learn and thrive.

DEFINITIONS

Safe space

where children have their basic needs met and feel at ease with support from a trusted adult.

Inclusive Education

all children accessing education together in the same setting.



OUR OBJECTIVES

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| 1. PRIORITISE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION
for out-of-school and marginalised children to ensure individualised and equitable quality education for all. | 2. EMBED INCLUSIVE SAFEGUARDING
in families, communities, schools and policy to ensure children in vulnerable situations can access safe spaces to play, grow, learn and thrive. | 3. DEVELOP INNOVATIVE EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY
to ensure national minimum standards of disability detection for children in their early years across 5 countries in Africa. | 4. CHAMPION AND RESOURCE LOCALLY-LED DEVELOPMENT
through an unconventional risk based approach to working with community partners and social entrepreneurs. |
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OUR COMMITMENTS



- ✓ Each child is a **CHILD FIRST**. They should not be defined by their situation.
- ✓ Our programme design, implementation and learning will be **LOCALLY LED**.
- ✓ We will **ENSURE THE INCLUSION OF ALL CHILDREN** in our programming, especially girls, and children experiencing disability.
- ✓ **SAFEGUARDING IS AT THE HEART OF OUR ORGANISATION'S CULTURE**. It is everyone's responsibility and much more than compliance.
- ✓ We will prioritise and **PROMOTE FAMILY-BASED CARE FOR CHILDREN** in their communities.
- ✓ We are driven by **DATA AND EVIDENCE** collected with the children and communities we work with to deepen our impact for children in the most vulnerable situations.
- ✓ **DIGNIFIED STORYTELLING AND IMAGERY** in our communications will respect the children and communities we work with.
- ✓ Our **MAJORITY AFRICAN STAFF AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES** feel included, valued and treated fairly.

WE FIGHT FOR EVERY CHILD

We have five core values. They're supported by the behaviours which we believe bring these values to life and dictate how we wish to operate both internally as an organisation and externally with the children and communities we support as well as our partners and supporters.



WE ARE AUTHENTIC

We operate with dedication, integrity and respect for our staff, our partners and the children we work with. We co-create sustainable solutions to development challenges, by creating spaces that support local ownership and facilitate equal decision-making.

WE ARE COURAGEOUS

We seek creative, evidence-based solutions to emerging problems, respond agilely to take considered risks and drive innovation to continuously increase our positive impact on children's lives.

WE ARE CRITICALLY CONSCIOUS

We are self-reflective, striving to continuously improve our service delivery and accountability. By recognising the knowledge and creativity that lies within the countries we work in, we seek to add value by challenging inequitable power dynamics and structural racism.

WE ARE COLLABORATIVE

We acknowledge the critical role of local experts, in delivering child-centred, sustainable development. We work with others to utilise our resources efficiently, maximising value for money and our impact on every child.

WE ARE CHILD-CENTRED

We believe that by centring the voices of children in all our work, we can seek to rebalance the unequal power dynamics that dictate their lives.



OUR 2025 COMMITMENTS



BY 2025 WE WILL SUPPORT 150,000 CHILDREN IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS. Vulnerable situations include, living on the street, in an institution or as a child headed household. They can also include children and young people caught up in conflict or living in a refugee camp. For some children with disabilities, simply living in their own communities can threaten their safety and protection.

Our focus has always been to reach children in vulnerable situations whose basic needs and rights are not met elsewhere. Over the past five years, Chance for Childhood has worked with our dedicated local staff and partners to define and identify those children most in need of our support. Gender and disability are significant factors of exclusion and marginalisation for children in vulnerable situations. That is why **WE WILL ENSURE INCLUSION FOR ALL CHILDREN, AND ESPECIALLY GIRLS, AND THOSE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES.**



Moreover, our **COMMITMENT TO LOCALLY-LED DEVELOPMENT** will be realised through our dedicated staff and partners, all of whom are nationals living and working in our countries and communities of operation. Our proximity to the community makes us well-positioned to co-design the best solutions to meet the complex needs of children in **'HARD TO REACH' CONTEXTS**, such as urban violent slums, remote rural areas or refugee settlements.

We commit to acknowledging all the factors that lead to a child's marginalisation. This **INTERSECTIONALITY IS THE FOUNDATION OF HOW WE DETERMINE, ALONG WITH THE COMMUNITY, WHO IS IN THE MOST VULNERABLE SITUATION.** This concept is an important explainer to why we find it hard and inappropriate to 'categorise' the children we support. **WE BELIEVE A CHILD IS A CHILD FIRST.** A child should not be labelled a 'street child', a 'disabled child' or a 'refugee child'.

Despite the many different vulnerable situations that they face they are still a child, who has rights like any other. Chance for Childhood's research has consistently found over 40% of children living on the street have a functional disability. This is further compounded by the special educational needs found in a child who has experienced trauma. By adopting an inclusive approach to all of our work we can address the whole issue faced by each individual child and uphold their right to a safe and happy childhood.

We commit to working with local, national and international stakeholders to **PRIORITISE AND PROMOTE FAMILY-BASED CARE FOR CHILDREN IN THEIR COMMUNITIEs** as we strongly believe that children do not belong in institutions.

Throughout our work, we will ensure that our **PROGRAMMING IS INFORMED BY DATA AND EVIDENCE** collected with the children and communities we work with to deepen our impact for children in the most vulnerable situations.

We believe that our values must breathe through all aspects of our work, not just in our programming. That is why we will ensure that our **DIGNIFIED STORYTELLING AND IMAGERY** will respect the children and communities we work with. We will not stop here, but to ensure that our communications are truly child-centred we will stop using imagery that shows children's faces or any identifying personal information. This will highlight the need to raise standards in the ethical use of child-centred imagery in the international charity sector.

To ensure that Chance for Childhood delivers sustainable development that is locally led, we commit to ensuring a majority **AFRICAN STAFF AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES**. Diverse representation across all teams, including our leadership, is critical to ensure good governance and decision making throughout the organisation where each and all of our staff, volunteers, partners and communities we work with feel included, heard, valued and treated fairly.



TWO PILLARS:

SAFE SPACES AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FROM EARLY YEARS AND BEYOND

Chance for Childhood works within the framework of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We endorse and work to fulfil all articles with a specific focus on articles 19 – protection from violence, abuse and neglect, 23 – the rights of children with a disability and 29 – every child's right to an education.

To support these rights, our work focusses on ensuring inclusive equitable quality education and providing safe spaces to grow learn and thrive.

There are two key pillars to our new strategy:
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION and **SAFE SPACES**.



CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES EXPERIENCE POVERTY AT MORE THAN TWICE THE RATE OF THEIR NON-DISABLED COUNTERPARTS AND MENTAL HEALTH, ALONG WITH OTHER 'HIDDEN DISABILITIES', REMAIN UNDER-RESOURCED AND POORLY RECOGNISED IN LOW RESOURCE AFRICAN COMMUNITIES.

Both pillars will drive specific activities but in many ways that are also interdependent. For many children in vulnerable situations their pathway back to education is made possible through a safe space in their community. While for others, their place of education becomes their safe space where they can play and grow as well as learn. These pillars help us focus our interventions in order to meet our commitments and objectives.

SAFE SPACE:

A space for children to have their basic needs met so they feel safe to play, grow learn and to feel at ease. This space typically connects children with safe, trusted adults who they feel comfortable accessing support from.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION:

From early childhood education through to primary, secondary, and tertiary education. Inclusive education means all children can access education together in the same setting. Barriers to inclusive education can be physical, attitudinal, or due to inaccessible pedagogy.

IN 2016, THE LANCET ESTIMATED THAT 43 PER CENT OF CHILDREN UNDER 5 IN LOW- AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES WERE AT RISK OF NOT DEVELOPING TO THEIR FULL POTENTIAL – BECAUSE OF LACK OF ACCESS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.

13 MILLION CHILD MARRIAGES ARE ESTIMATED TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE DUE TO COVID-19 – THAT’S EQUIVALENT TO EVERY CHILD IN THE UK. NOW, MORE THAN EVER, GIRLS ARE MORE AT RISK OF NEVER RETURNING TO SCHOOL.



OUR OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH



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1. PRIORITISE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION for out-of-school and marginalised children to ensure individualised and equitable quality education for all.

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2. EMBED INCLUSIVE SAFEGUARDING in families, communities, schools and policy to ensure children in vulnerable situations can access safe spaces to play, grow, learn and thrive.

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3. DEVELOP INNOVATIVE EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY to ensure national minimum standards of disability detection for children in their early years across 5 countries in Africa.

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4. CHAMPION AND RESOURCE LOCALLY-LED DEVELOPMENT through an unconventional risk based approach to working with community partners and social entrepreneurs.

We will deliver our objectives through four workstreams, specifically focussing on the activities set out below.

PROGRAMME DELIVERY

TRAINING AND ADVISORY SUPPORT

PARTNER HUB

ADVOCACY



The table below provides a snapshot of just how we will achieve our objectives.

	INCLUSIVE EDUCATION	SAFE SPACES
PROGRAMME DELIVERY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support government and low-cost private centres to provide INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION and give all children the best start in life. ● Work with partners and allies to SCALE INCLUSION EDUCATION PROGRAMMES FOR OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN demonstrating the impact of our low-cost ‘Learning Support Assistant’ solution to improve enrolment, retention and learning outcomes for children with special learning needs in mainstream education. ● DESIGN INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS, such as locally sourced teaching aids, to support teachers to ensure that children with special educational needs can access quality education alongside their peers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CREATE SPACES OF REFUGE in the community, as a first point of contact for children threatened by violence, neglect or conflict. ● DELIVER HOME-BASED EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION training for parents where accessing formal centres just isn’t possible. ● Support strategic initiatives to PROMOTE FAMILY-BASED CARE for children in their communities to prevent institutionalisation and street connections.
TRAINING AND ADVISORY SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scale up our non-medical Disability Detection Toolkit (digital and non-digital) through pre-primary and primary education settings in government and low-cost private schools. ● Provide training and advisory support to delivery partners (state and non-state) to deliver inclusive pedagogy by training educators and PROVIDING TOOLS FOR INCLUSIVE LEARNING, assessment and monitoring and to build knowledge around factors of exclusion for out of school children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Roll out Inclusive Safeguarding Training to organisations providing safe spaces for children in vulnerable situations (corporates, NGOs, CBOs and government institutions). ● Provide advisory support to delivery partners to create and STRENGTHEN INCLUSIVE SAFE SPACES in families, communities, schools and institutions such as enhancements to safeguarding and safer recruitment policies and research support to projects understanding rights and behaviours of children in vulnerable situations.
PARTNER HUB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify and resource social entrepreneurs through learning labs and start-up investment to INSPIRE AND CHAMPION A GENERATION OF COMMUNITY CHANGE-MAKERS and advocates for child rights. ● BUILD RESILIENCE in community-based partners and including Inclusive Mental Health support for frontline workers, entrepreneurship, and financial acumen, and mentoring in leadership and governance. 	
ADVOCACY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ADVOCATE AT COMMUNITY, INSTITUTIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL for the early identification and inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood education and for the safety, privacy and dignity of children in vulnerable situations and the elimination of all violence against children. 	

FINDING NEW SOLUTIONS

Chance for Childhood believe strongly in finding new solutions to challenges facing children in vulnerable situations. Young change makers and social entrepreneurs can unlock opportunities not identified by large organisations and many established organisations working in development and humanitarian assistance have a low appetite for risk and failure.

Underpinned by a principle of 'do no harm', Chance for Childhood is proud to innovate where others fear failure. Using our robust due diligence framework, we are able to mitigate undue risks of fraud and corruption, whilst investing in the development of new approaches to enhance the safety and protection of children in vulnerable situations. We propose to make a maximum of two investments per year to support social entrepreneurs or community organisations to test innovative approaches defined by them.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT...

DISABILITY DETECTION TOOLKIT

WHAT IT IS?

The toolkit enables non-medical professionals to screen for and detect developmental delays and disabilities in children aged 0-3, 3-5 and 6-8. This process should not be done in isolation but provides signposting into a referral pathway through existing health, education and social care services. It is based on the Washington Group Questions, but critically, it is adapted for the local context in which it is used.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Disability is a widely misunderstood term. It is often associated with physical disabilities and carries heavy stigma in many communities across the world.

Chance for Childhood's ambition to promote national minimum standards of disability detection aims to demystify disability amongst non-medical professionals and the general public, building knowledge, breaking down social stigma and helping to identify the appropriate support and care that each child needs to grow, learn and thrive in a safe environment. We also aim to help service providers achieve better outcomes for children – be that through increasing life chances, educational outcomes or social cohesion.

HOW CAN IT BE SCALED?

In 2018/19 the toolkit was rolled out to caregivers and educators across early childhood development centres in Rwanda but has since been found to be valuable in many other settings, such as to identify children with disabilities trapped in the care system. We recognise that with identification comes a great responsibility for support with diagnosis and effective referral mechanisms. We will provide a tailored response to the different contexts in which we work to ensure that our interventions are relevant to the individual needs of the child with appropriate referral pathways.

Chance for Childhood seeks to scale through government and private sector partnerships much, as was achieved in Rwanda with a tripartite partnership between Chance for Childhood, Government of Rwanda and UNICEF. Our ambition is to promote national minimum standards in disability detection across 5 countries by 2025.



PARTNER HUB

WHAT IT IS?

Chance for Childhood's partner hub is an initiative that consolidates and builds on our long-standing commitment to work with community-based organisations in Africa who identify, learn from and support children in vulnerable situations. The aim of the hub is to offer long-term partnership which over time can build knowledge and capacity resilience, as well as delivering essential frontline services to enhance access to inclusive pre-primary and primary education and provide safe spaces for children, protected from violence, abuse and exploitation.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Despite being first responders to children at their most vulnerable, and to whole communities in emergency situations, community-based organisations are often discounted from accessing development and humanitarian assistance funding on the grounds that they are too small, lack administrative capacity and thus heighten risk. They are often over-stretched and the poor investment into organisational systems, controls and processes further exacerbates their inability to meet donor reporting requirements and due diligence.

Furthermore, severely marginalised children are often difficult to identify. Hidden away in rural homes or captive by disingenuous 'caregivers', it is often impossible for anyone to reach these children without local knowledge and trusted relationships. That is why community-based organisations and local leaders play such a critical role in ensuring no child is left behind, which is our fundamental goal.

Chance for Childhood recognises the importance of locally led development in delivering our interventions and evidence suggests that local solutions to safeguarding and education are much more sustainable than solutions 'imported' from the global North. Testing new approaches is critical to accelerating change for the most vulnerable children and there are huge barriers to innovation at community level due to poor trust and lack of appetite for failure. Robust due diligence, local supervision and starting small can help to mitigate these risks and drive forward innovation at community level.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

The purpose of the Partner hub is:

1. Identify and invest in early stage entrepreneurs tackling challenges through innovative products or improved ways of delivering services that support marginalised children.
2. Provide Learning Labs to support young people in start-ups and low income communities with technology education, business planning and digitalisation.
3. Build resilience within more established grassroots organisations by providing core funding to meet their running costs whilst supporting investment in longer term sustainability plans.
4. Build capacity for organisations to attract new investment and increase impact by strengthening policies, systems, controls, and upskilling personnel across development areas in governance, finance, fundraising, communications, monitoring, and leadership.

WHERE WE WORK

WE HAVE TWO OPERATIONAL HUBS IN GHANA AND RWANDA.



THESE OPERATIONAL CENTRES SUPPORT A PORTFOLIO OF PARTNERS ACROSS FIVE COUNTRIES: DRC, GHANA, KENYA, RWANDA AND UGANDA



Chance for Childhood works from two locally-led operational hubs in East and West Africa respectively. At the start of 2022, these operational centres support a portfolio of partners across five countries: DRC, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. During the next four years, Chance for Childhood will look to deliver the biggest impact, based around our East and West hubs. We will grow two pools of regional advisors and take opportunities to support our partner and allies across both regions wherever we can add value without compromising our existing commitments.

Chance for Childhood also works strategically at global level to influence better policy and practice for children in vulnerable situations who are unable to access their basic rights to safety, privacy, protection and quality education.



HOW WE WILL MEASURE OUR IMPACT

Each programme has a series of specific indicators which are monitored through regular reporting, learning and adaptation. In addition to this, Chance for Childhood seeks to monitor the following indicators across all our programmes

- I. Increase in number of households that are economically empowered to meet the basic needs of their children**
- II. Increase in number of children and young people meeting age-appropriate development milestones**
- III. Increase in number of children with access to inclusive pre-primary or primary education with an individual learning plan**
- IV. Increase in number of children who have access to a safe space in families, communities or schools**

Through the launch of our innovative education technology to ensure national minimum standards of disability detection, we will add additional measurements to our impact assessments. We recognise that through our toolkit, assessment and monitoring are dynamic and symbiotic processes in which every learner is at the centre.

Chance for Childhood has also developed its own Programme Quality Framework (PQF). This allows us to look at the quality of our activities, rather than just the end result. As we look to redress the power imbalance that donors hold over the communities that they work with, we see the journey as equally important to the destination.

Our PQF is built on two pillars of sustainability and child-centredness.



PROGRAMME QUALITY FRAMEWORK

CHILD CENTRED



INCLUSION AND INTERSECTIONALITY

Young people can exploit their full potentials and opportunities. Programme is built for and by beneficiaries.



SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTING

No harm is inflicted on the beneficiaries or stakeholders and measures are child-centred.

SUSTAINABLE



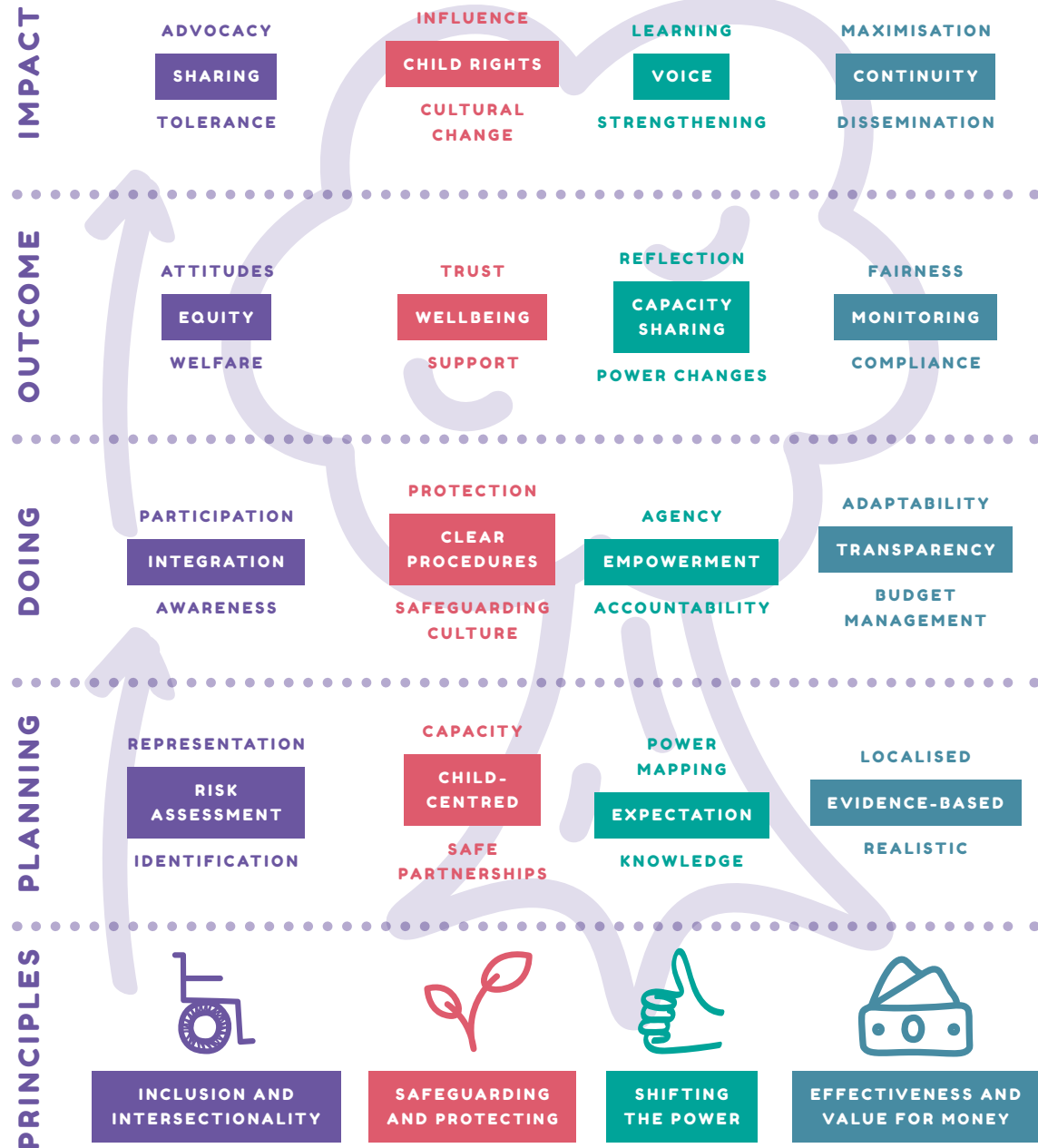
SHIFTING THE POWER

Change is community driven. Power and decision-making are in the hands of in-country stakeholders and beneficiaries.



EFFECTIVENESS AND VALUE FOR MONEY

Activities achieve a sustained impact on beneficiaries with the best use of resources to deliver the desired result.



NO CHILD FORGOTTEN



OUR APPROACH TO ADVOCACY

We will advocate for the rights of children in vulnerable situations in line with the UNCRC and UNCRPD.

We will focus on improving the policies and practices of governments, institutions, educators and caregivers to ensure every child has the right to thrive from early years to adulthood with access to safe spaces and inclusive education.

We will do whatever we can to centre the voices of children and young people to advocate for positive change in their own communities.

We will build awareness of positive, respectful communication practices across the development system which seek to highlight the needs of children in vulnerable situations while contributing to deconstructing the power imbalance between donors and the children and communities we work with.

We cannot achieve our advocacy objectives alone, but we believe that the experience, expertise and perspective of our staff, partners and the children we work with can be amplified through the collective action of our allies.



THE CAMPAIGN

#OVEREXPOSED

As an organisation, we are committed to a child-centred approach and use dignified storytelling and imagery in our communications that respects the children and communities we work with. We are proud to be part of the shift from presenting the communities we support as 'helpless victims' to using more positive and ethically conscious imagery. But we believe this hasn't gone far enough.

As part of our OverExposed campaign, we have now made the decision to stop using imagery that shows children's faces or any identifying personal information.

Our OverExposed campaign is our public commitment to raising standards in the ethical use of child-centred imagery in the international charity sector and will be launched in 2022.





CHANCE FOR CHILDHOOD

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Chance for Childhood Development in Ghana
registration number: **CG1239522019**

Chance for Childhood Rwanda
INGO Number: **011/RGB/17**



**Chance for
Childhood**