

A CHILDHOOD OF
POSSIBILITIES

CREATING A CHILDHOOD OF P O S S I B I L I T I E S

STRATEGY 2022-24



WE ARE
BAL RAKHSA BHARAT

Creating A Childhood of Possibilities



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CREATING A CHILDHOOD OF POSSIBILITIES



Poverty. Hunger. Abuse. Neglect and exploitation. These deprivations faced by children in the early years reverberate over a lifetime in terms of missed opportunities, achievement gaps and lost potential. The losses of childhood spill over to an entire generation as it grows up and ultimately affects the state of a nation as these children enter adulthood and the workforce.

Imagine if we could change this reality and create a world where children no more live in hunger and poverty, are healthy, educated, loved and cared

for, enabling them to realise their full potential.

With a little purpose and determination, we could unlock a more promising future for millions of children as well as for the nation.

Letting children lead

The constitution of India recognises children as citizens with rights, acknowledging their need for care and protection, education and good health.

At Save the Children, we strongly believe in the agency and voice of children, to effectively contribute towards realising child rights in India.

This is why, for the first time, our youngest partners are co-writing our manifesto of change, recovery and rebuilding¹.



“IT’S TIME THAT ORGANISATIONS WORK WITH CHILDREN AND ENABLE THEM TO TAKE ON. WE WANT TO FIGHT FOR A WORLD WHERE NO PANDEMIC CAN TAKE AWAY OUR BASIC RIGHTS”

VIMLA, 16

“WE NEED TO BE TREATED AS EQUAL CITIZENS WITH EQUAL RIGHTS TO SURVIVE, LEARN, PROTECT OURSELVES AND EARN LIVELIHOOD THROUGH DIGNIFIED WAYS,”

ADITYA, 17

¹ Quotes and anecdotes are derived from interviews during children’s consultations

OUR MANIFESTO

By 2024, we aim to catalyse inclusive and equitable development for at least 4 million of the most deprived children and influence policies to positively impact the lives of many more.

Goalpost 2024

1. Health and Nutrition



- Improve equitable access to essential nutrition interventions for children, women and adolescents
- Improve access and quality of essential maternal new born child and adolescent health interventions
- Provide equitable, affordable and sustainable access to WASH services

3. Child Protection



- Prevent and address abuse and exploitation of children forced into labour, trafficking and marriage through empowered and engaged children, community and child protection workforce
- Improve access to community level psychosocial support for children and communities affected by stress and trauma

2. Education



- Improve school readiness skills among children as a result of responsive caregiving and play based learning opportunities at home and centre
- Ensure equitable access to quality and safe learning environment in school
- Ensuring '0' days loss in education for children

4. Poverty and Inclusion



- Enhance social and economic capabilities among adolescents, youth and families to ensure overall wellbeing and pathways to income generation
- Enhance resilience towards frequent and protracted climate and disaster risks among children, families and communities
- Improve the agency of street connected children, by ensuring life of dignity and participation in governance processes
- Improve access and utilisation of select social protection schemes by strengthening 'child sensitivity' in the design, implementation and utilisation of these schemes

BRIDGING THE GAPS

Save the Children in India, believes that we can't set something right till we have completely understood what is going wrong. Since 2016, we have been investing in listening to children. We map their hopes, their aspirations, their disappointments and their ideas for a better way forward.

We use our findings to chart strategic milestones that will help unlock the potential of millions of children while laying a strong foundation for India's ambitions. After every three years, we introspect, analyse and course-correct.

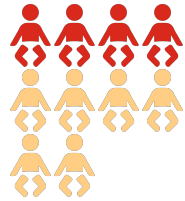
During the last strategic period, 2019-2021, the pandemic hit us like a tidal wave, upending all plans. We shared the despair and grief as communities and children who were already battling disadvantages were left hopelessly scouting for ways to tide over. Children's rights in India were already compromised and, with three concurrent waves of COVID-19, we saw a reversal in the progress



made as many vital child rights indicators began to slip.

We had to act quickly and new plans were set in motion to set up safety nets where they were most urgently needed and to meet the new challenges that India's children were encountering.

Failing towards The Right Start



4 OUT OF EVERY 10

children under 5 years of age are stunted*



2 OUT OF EVERY 10

are wasted**



42 OUT OF EVERY 100

children under 5 die of preventable causes**

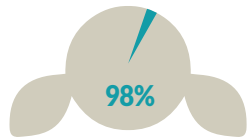


86 OUT OF EVERY 100

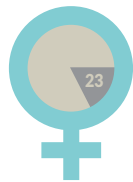
under 5 children do not have access to early learning facilities**

* Stunting and Wasting are both indicators of chronic undernutrition, while stunting refers to the height for age ratio, wasting is the weight for age ratio

Magnified marginalisation



POCSO Act reported 47659 victims of child sexual abuse in India in 2020, 98 per cent were girls (NCRB, 2020)



23 out of every 100 girl children are married off before the legal age**



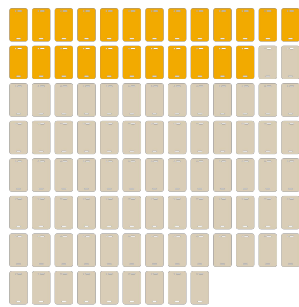
Over 2 lakh

children are connected to streets in just 10 cities of India

(Spotlight on #TheInvisibles by Save the Children in India)

**NFHSS, 2019-20

COVID-19 and other humanitarian challenges



ONLY 24 OUT OF 100

children from all standards in rural India were able to access remote learning in 2021 (ASER 2021)



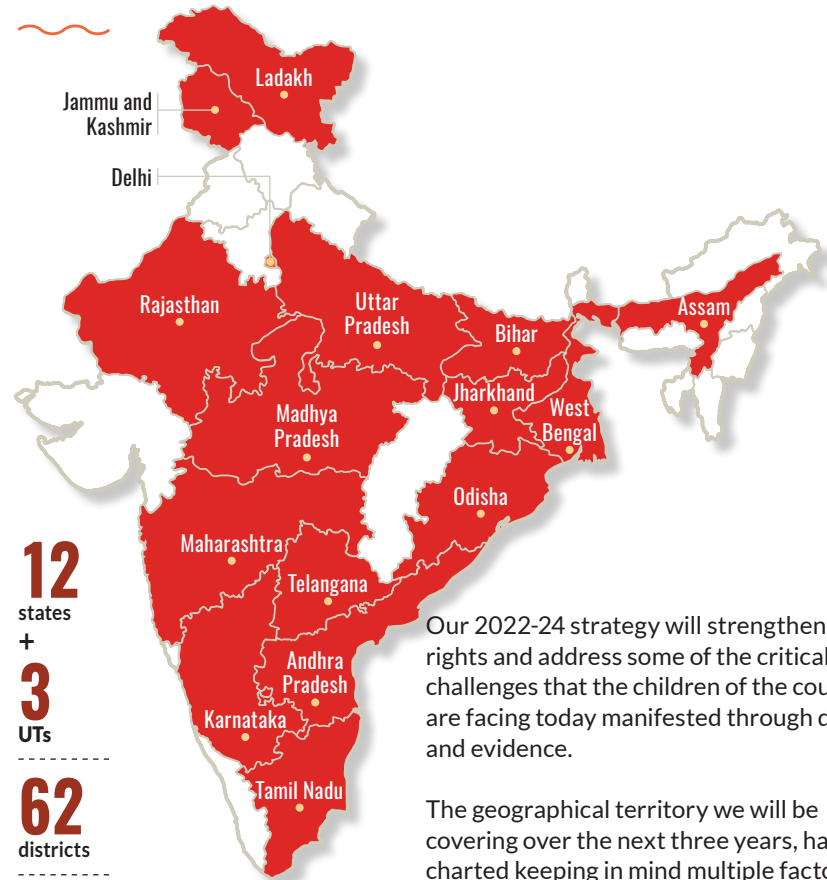
additional children are at risk of being pushed into child labour by the end of 2022 as a result of the pandemic (ILO and UNICEF, 2021)



MORE THAN 80 PERCENT

of India's population lives in districts highly vulnerable to extreme climate disasters (CEEW, 2021)

REACHING OUT WHERE WE ARE MOST NEEDED



12

states

+

3

UTs

62

districts

42

wards

116

blocks

Our 2022-24 strategy will strengthen child rights and address some of the critical challenges that the children of the country are facing today manifested through data and evidence.

The geographical territory we will be covering over the next three years, has been charted keeping in mind multiple factors. Development indicators and the state of children's rights being the most critical one followed by our presence and experience within a state, enabling environment created by all allies for children, especially the government for demonstrating and scaling proven models and children's own opinions, voices, experiences, needs and ambitions.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

When it comes to making a difference, none of us is more powerful than all of us.

children themselves as we co-create a more enabling world for children.

We are building a movement that draws in supporters, partners, governments, communities and



Our Theory of Change



ACCELERATING THE DREAM

Our ambition flows naturally from our organisational purpose of ensuring that all children survive, learn and stay protected from any harm.

It echoes in our programmes, in the work we do in communities and in our commitment to helping build a nation where all children lead purposeful lives irrespective of their gender and social identity.

Having set our sights on making a difference in the areas of health and nutrition, education, child protection and poverty and inclusion, we are putting the catalysts to realising our ambitions in place:

- High-impact programme delivery that nurtures gender equity and social inclusion among children and communities
- Evidence-based advocacy to drive child rights agenda
- Inspired public action
- Strategic partnerships for mobilising resources and sustainable investments in child rights
- Agile organisational structures and systems that allow us to be future-ready

AMBITION 2030

Lead a child rights movement for and with children to create a nation where children have a protected, healthy, enriched, equitable and inclusive childhood.



Survive

No child dies before 5th birthday from preventable causes



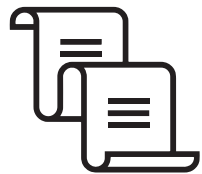
Learn

All children learn from a quality basic education



Be protected

Violence against children is no longer tolerated



Manifesto 2024

By 2024, we aim to catalyse inclusive and equitable development for at least 4 million of the most deprived children and influence policies to positively impact the lives of many more.

Impacts for Children

1

Get a healthy start in life

2

Are school ready and access safe learning environment

3

Live free from violence and abuse

4

Grow up in resilient families and communities

DEMONSTRATING COMMITMENT THROUGH PROGRAMMES

Children are at the core of our programmatic work. They actively participate in and lead change in communities, irrespective of their gender and social identities. Our programme framework highlights the many forms of children's vulnerability amid poverty and advocates for social protection and long-term development goals for children.



2022-24 Thematic priorities

Health and Nutrition	Education	Child Protection	Poverty and inclusion
<p>Reducing undernutrition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health Ensuring behaviour change for adoption of WASH practices 	<p>Improving school readiness through early learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving access to school and learning outcomes among children Creating safe learning environment in schools 	<p>Ending abuse and exploitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring mental health and psychosocial support to the most affected children 	<p>Enhancing access to livelihood and skilling for youth and adolescents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating climate and disaster resilient communities and children Ensuring life of dignity for street connected children Advocating for child sensitive social protection



Health and Nutrition

We aim to improve the nutritional and health status of children, adolescents and women by creating equitable access to essential health and nutrition services at the local level. By taking a life-cycle approach, we will address the rapidly changing health and nutritional needs of children, adolescents and mothers in a holistic manner.

The adverse effects of COVID-19 on food security and health systems

created new challenges for health and nutrition programming. Through 2019-21 strategy period, our health and nutrition strategy prioritised undernutrition and WASH and integrated maternal, newborn and adolescent health with child health to effectively deal with the emerging context.

Moving forward, the results we aspire to achieve are:

Improve health and nutrition status among children, adolescents and mothers using a life-cycle approach.



Reducing undernutrition

Children aged 0-18 years receive at least one essential nutrition intervention



Maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health

Children under 5 receive treatment for childhood illnesses from a healthcare facility or provider



WASH

Children and their families regularly practice handwashing with soap and water

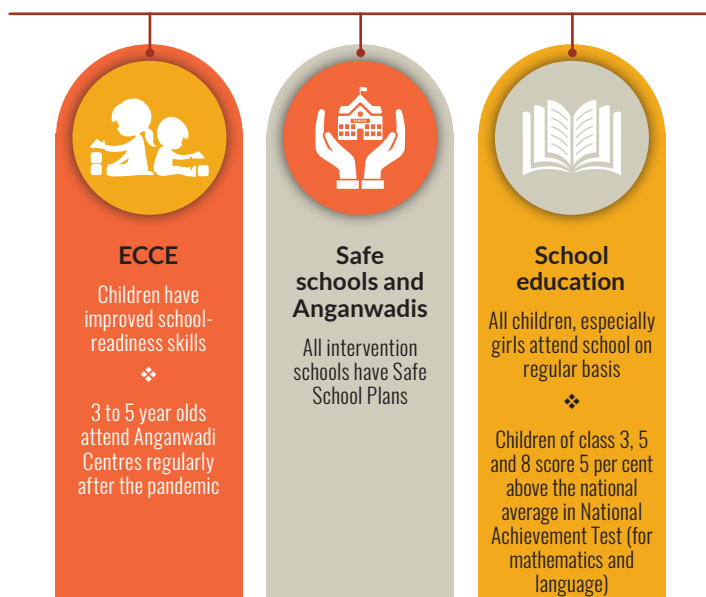
Education

Our education strategy for 2022-24 is shaped by the learning crisis unleashed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the release of the National Education Policy, 2021. 320 million children were affected by school closures over 2020-21 and it is estimated that they have lost one-tenth of their learning². The lockdowns and digital divides exacerbated existing gender inequalities in education, leaving girls worse off than before.

We are committed to ensuring equitable and safe access to quality education for all children aged 0-18 years. We will continue to work in the area of early learning with deeper focus on 'responsive caregiving' and creating 'play-based learning' environments at home. We will prioritise girl's education even as we work towards 'zero lost days' in education by strengthening communities and facilitating a safe, sustained return to school for all children.

The education interventions seek to achieve the following results:

Children (0-18 years) have access to equitable, safe and quality learning



Child Protection

Child abuse and exploitation are old scourges in Indian society and there has been a surge in both through the pandemic. This must stop. We aim to effectively prevent and address abuse and exploitation of children forced into labour, trafficking and marriage through an empowered collaboration between children, communities and

child protection workforce. We also strive to bolster the mental health of children in the wake of the pandemic and to create access to psychosocial support through a multi-sectoral response.

Through our interventions, we hope to achieve:

Children (0 – 18 years) are protected from physical and virtual abuse and exploitation and from being forced into labour, trafficking and marriage.



² <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>

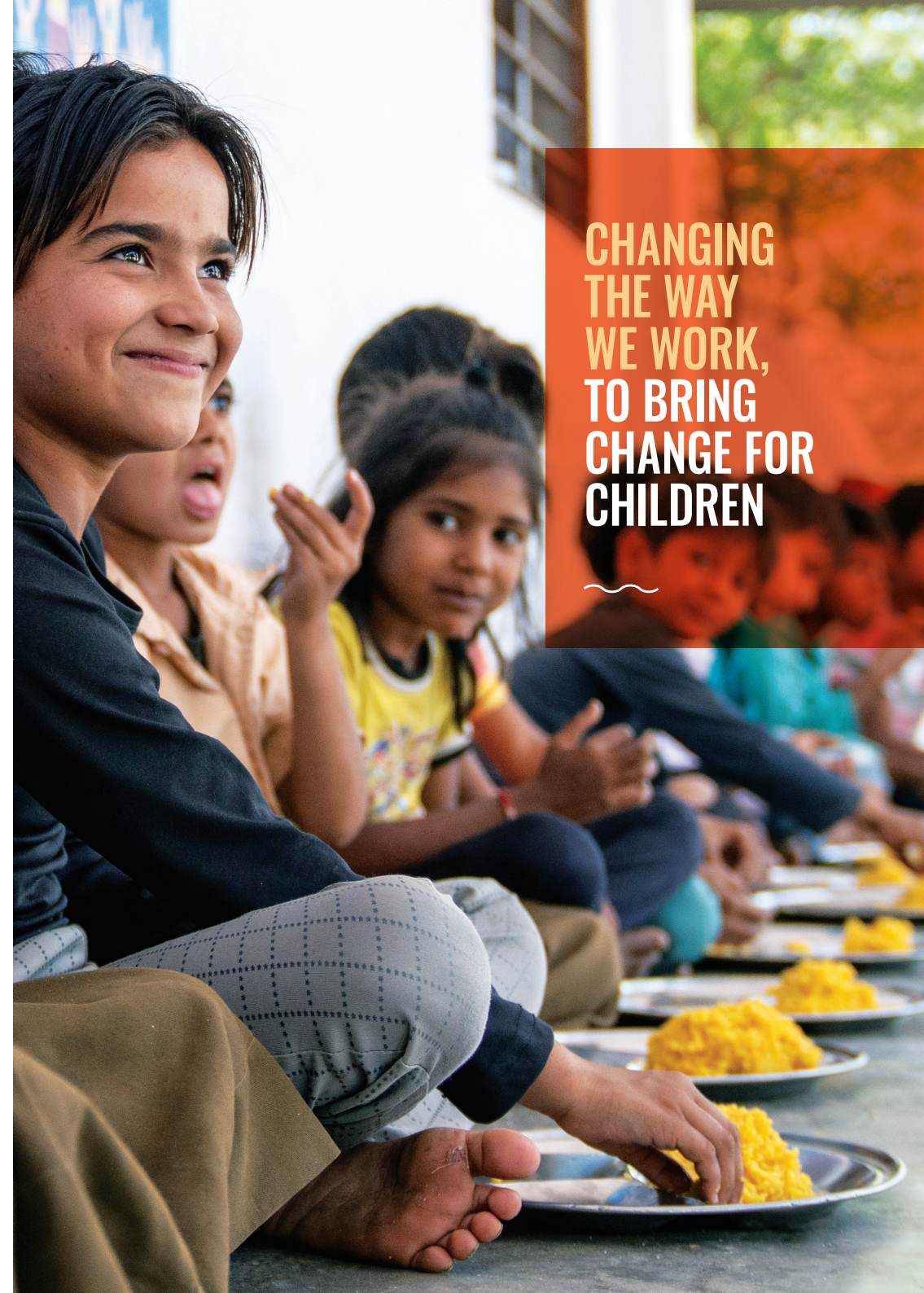
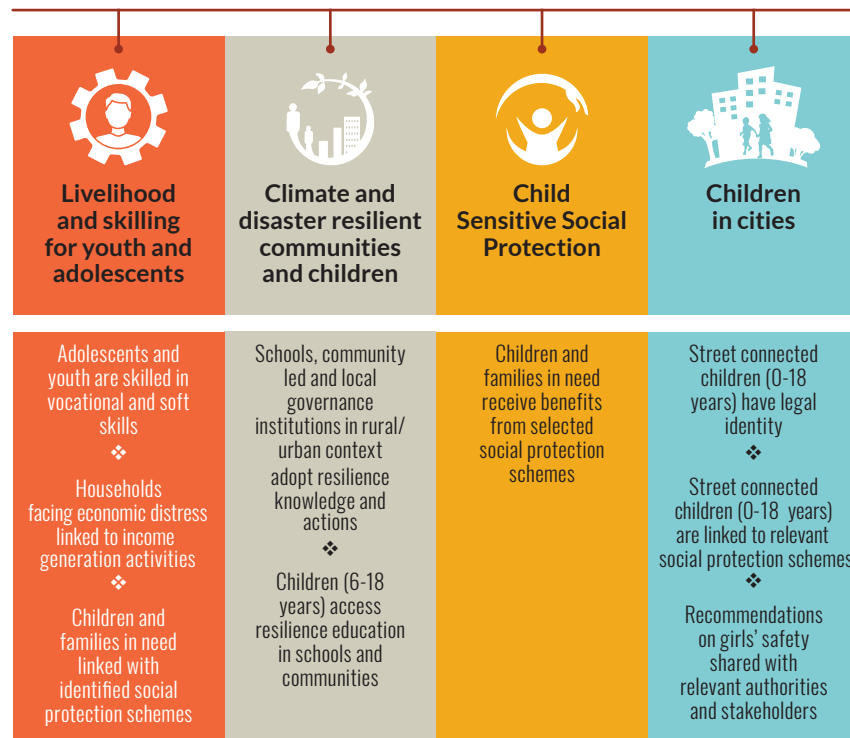
Poverty and Inclusion

We aim to improve the economic and social capabilities of adolescents, youth and families, while building their resilience towards climate and disaster risks. We recognise that street connected children are among the most marginalised and will focus our efforts on getting them legal identities and access to social protection schemes. We believe that social protection measures

need to reduce vulnerability and poverty of children through making meaningful investment in children. Our efforts towards Child Sensitive Social Protection is based on the understanding that many of the vulnerabilities faced by poor children can be curbed by improving access and quality of social protection programmes.

We hope to make the following advances in our areas of operation:

Children, adolescent, youth and their families are socially and economically resilient leading to better survival, development, protection and participation



CHANGING THE WAY WE WORK, TO BRING CHANGE FOR CHILDREN

Change begins from within. For the 2022-24 strategy period, we are transforming the way we work to support the change we want to bring in the lives of the children of India.

Ensuring children and community participation for tangible impacts on ground

Our work at any juncture considers the needs, aspirations, and voices of children and the community to design interventions. These address the real challenges and issues of children and strengthen the supportive mechanisms required within and beyond the community to address the same. The intent is to create a

tangible long-term impact for and with children. We are committed to drawing our programmes through consultations with children and community.

'Children First' common approach to deliver child rights

The 'Children First' approach will provide a set of minimum provisions/standards that shall be used consistently across Save the Children's projects and programmes to ensure that a child receives that minimum information and/or engagement that he/she should have for his/her overall wellbeing. These 'gold standards of programming' will

be brought in all development and humanitarian projects across the organisation. The salient features are:

- Children at the core of our work
- Linking all marginalised children and their families to appropriate social protection schemes
- Zero tolerance towards child marriage
- No child of school going age to be out of school
- All children have access to health, nutrition and personal hygiene
- Gender sensitive programming

Creating development impacts through humanitarian interventions

We stand strong to our commitment of 'leaving no one behind.' With a special focus on children living in conflict, IDPs, refugees, street connected children and COVID affected children and families, we aim to meet the needs through organisational and local preparedness, participatory early action and timely response, and strategic partnerships with other actors. Vitalising a humanitarian culture within the organisational ways of working, partnerships and all communications, we will build internal and external capacities on child-centred humanitarian action contextualised to Indian realities.



DELIVERING HIGH-PERFORMANCE, IMPACTFUL AND GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE PROGRAMME



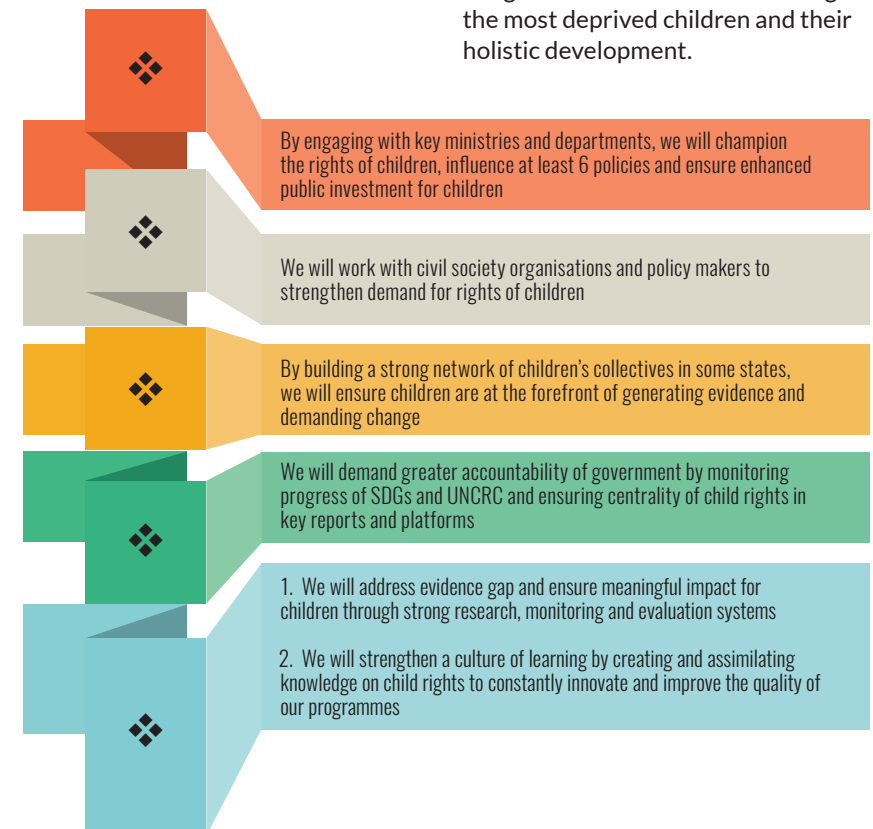
We are set to raise the bar on programme delivery by bringing **innovation and cost-efficiency** to our work in development and humanitarian contexts. Our work hinges on **meaningful collaboration** with stakeholders and building child rights advocates in communities. We seek to build **sustainable and scalable models** and establish **proof of concept** on the ground. While doing so, we will ensure a gender transformative approach that promotes a positive transformation of root causes and barriers of gender inequalities by working with key stakeholders such as governments, communities, women, men, children, girls and boys and their families.

Our operational structure will be **fit-for-purpose** with stronger implementation capacity on the ground. Additionally, we will invest in technical capacity to enhance **competency, work efficiency and organisational accountability**.

ADVANCING CHILD RIGHTS THROUGH EFFECTIVE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, ADDRESSING EVIDENCE GAPS AND INFLUENCING POLICIES

We believe that **evidence and child and youth led advocacy** can bring in critical child rights for the most vulnerable children. National and

state governments see the centrality of the **child rights agenda** to their plans and to nation building. Thus, we aim to be a **partner of choice** to the government on issues affecting the most deprived children and their holistic development.



WE DRIVE STRONGER ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN ALLIES TO CATALYZE PARTICIPATORY CHANGE FOR CHILDREN



Amplifying public discourse and inspiring public action

The status of children in India can only improve when the issue of child rights seeps into public consciousness and each and every individual commits to advancing it. A sustained public discourse is crucial to raising this awareness and creating collective will. We aim to partner with media to build a strong

public narrative around child rights, promote the agency of children and drive empathy for the vulnerabilities of girls and street connected children. In doing this we aim to inspire strong public action that opens possibilities for India's children and unlocks an equitable future.



MOBILIZING FINANCIAL RESOURCES THROUGH **INNOVATIVE, SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS**

We will synergize funding partnerships with individuals, corporates and institutions to raise INR 865 crores, seeking to forge long-term partnerships by exploring

innovative funding mechanisms. We are shifting perspective to align outreach to programme strategy with a sharp focus on expanding transformational impact for children.



TRANSFORMING OURSELVES TO BECOME **A FUTURE-READY ORGANISATION**

A fit for purpose structure: We are re-engineering ourselves to put the right people in the right places and optimise talent and expertise to organisational goals. We seek to create an enabling organisation structure that focuses on decentralisation, efficiencies across functions, cost-effectiveness and focused programme delivery.

Value-driven culture: We continue to promote diversity, inclusion and wellbeing and intend to navigate the new normal manifesting our aim to be an organisation with a truly value-driven culture.

Organisation sustainability: As we adapt to uncertain times, we strive to build competitive advantage and improve organisational performance. We will continue to follow a mature approach to risk management to ensure business continuity.

Robust systems and processes: We will drive automation and cost efficiency to be the lean, future-ready organisation best suited to realise our ambition for children.



OUR VALUES



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- NFHS: National Family Health Survey
- ASER: Annual Status of Education Report
- ILO: International Labor Organisation
- UNICEF: United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
- CEEW: Council on Energy, Environment and Water
- UT: Union Territory
- WASH: Water, sanitation and hygiene
- ECCE: Early Childhood Care and Education
- SDG: Sustainable Development Goals
- UNCRC: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- IDP: Internally Displaced Person
- UDISE+: Unified District Information System for Education Plus
- NCRB: National Crime Records Bureau
- POCSO: Protection of Children from Sexual Offences



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