



# barnfonden

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Alliance

Programme  
Manual Reference  
#2

## Cross-cutting Issues Handbook

Child Rights ○ Child Protection ○ Gender & Inclusion  
○ Environment ○ Conflict Sensitivity/Power/Do No Harm

***Barnfonden: Cross-Cutting Issues Handbook***  
**Version 2, published April 2021**

This handbook should be read in conjunction with Barnfonden's Child Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy, Complaints Handling Process and Whistleblowing Policy, all of which are available on Barnfonden's website.

Should anyone wish to make a complaint to Barnfonden concerning a breach of the standards or a concern that the organisation or someone associated with it is not following the guidelines in this document, please contact us by first visiting the website's Complaints page for guidance: [www.barnfonden.se](http://www.barnfonden.se)

All complaints will be handled with the utmost care and responsibility, as outlined in our Whistleblowing and Complaint Handling Policies and processes.  
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Barnfonden is a non-religious and non-partisan child rights organization. We use our expertise, capacity, experience and resources to do all we can to further child rights. All our work is child focused, long-term, and sustainable. We educate and advocate to keep children safe in a changing world where new risks and unfiltered technology exposes children to violence and exploitation. We realize that environmental degradation and climate change are among the biggest threats to child rights and child protection of our time, as the world is swiftly changing, bringing with it greater inequity, increased climate-induced risks and new conflicts. We have high internal capacity and find collaborations that strengthen us. We draw on the strengths of others to develop and achieve plans made with communities, while also looking at the bigger picture – including addressing the root causes of poverty and how the community’s plans link into the work of government. We work to empower the children, families, communities, local organizations and authorities we work with. We make decisions based on experience, knowledge and evidence, rooted in our core values.



# Cross-cutting issues handbook

## Child Rights, Child Protection, Gender and Inclusion, Environment and Conflict Sensitivity/Power and Do No Harm

### Introduction to this Handbook

There are many issues Barnfonden feels strongly about, but Child Rights; Child Protection; Gender and Inclusion; the Environment and issues related to Conflict Sensitivity, Power and Do No Harm are several that we feel *so* strongly about that we have produced this handbook to guide our staff, board, partners and communities. These are what we call cross-cutting issues: considerations we carry across all our work.

Alongside these is our commitment to partnership, which includes nurturing localisation: ensuring the community is always in the lead when it comes to setting the development outcomes *they* seek. An important goal of Barnfonden's work is to develop civil society, the state, and government's knowledge, will and capacity to respect, protect and fulfill their responsibility to deliver on children's rights. Ultimately, the aim is that our long-term partnership commitment and the work we do together leads us to a point where Barnfonden's support is no longer needed.

This document is primarily a practice guide but it also contains links to our Theory of Change and policies.

It is for Barnfonden's Board, Barnfonden's entire staff, volunteers, contractors and interns, regardless of placement; as well as staff in Barnfonden-funded projects.

As this handbook reflects, the ongoing improvement of Barnfonden's performance is the responsibility of the entire organization. However, certain members of the organization are key to ensuring its effectiveness. In particular:

- The Leadership Team.
- All those people who are responsible for programs and projects, and thus for ensuring that the guidance in this Handbook has been taken into account in their development.
- All those seeking support for the organization, whether financial or in-kind.

- All those in charge of purchasing office equipment and supplies.

These key personnel should provide their full support and collaboration for the design of three-year action plans which will be used to guide staff behavior and outputs towards practice and policy improvements, including how we integrate cross-cutting issues into our work across the organisation. These action plans will establish improvement activities to be carried out in any given period and guide the allocation of resources necessary to implement the plans.

### This Handbook includes:

**Guiding questions for quality assurance.** We use this to ensure the issue is always queried as part of decision-making.

**Key principles and approaches.** What we believe and how we behave on this issue.

**Ways forward.** Three-year organisational improvement goals.

Barnfonden's work should be planned and designed using this handbook as the first reference, accompanied by our **Theory of Change** and **MEL Framework**. Other tools support this document, including those referenced under Guiding Questions for Quality improvement. See also our **Decision-making Process**, **Climate-informed/climate-prepared** guidance, and **Partnerships** paper, in the Programme Manual.

Barnfonden will develop three-year action plans to ensure the Cross-Cutting issues remain relevant and account for new evidence-based learning. The action plans will be monitored and lessons learned will be captured through regular reflection and 'course correct' reviews.

This handbook will be incorporated into the welcome and training pack for new staff. Reports on the five focus issues will be included in annual reporting. Along with the plans, the Handbook itself will also be reviewed at least every three years.





# Child Rights

## Barnfonden stands with children

Barnfonden's organisational values firmly place Barnfonden as an organisation with responsibility for protecting and promoting child rights.

As is stated in Barnfonden's organisational Values Statement, **Barnfonden stands with children**. As a child rights organization, we believe that the rights of the child should be protected and promoted in every area of their life. We are driven to achieve the best possible impact using all means possible, and we measure ourselves by how well we contribute to positive and sustainable development for children.

In short, our commitment and loyalty is to children and we will vigorously champion their best interests at home, school, within their community, as well as at national and global levels. With the child as our focus, we will consistently choose to do right by them – even when that may be the more difficult path to take.

**Barnfonden's work takes as its starting point the Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>1</sup>**. We ensure our programs are planned for, designed and implemented in a rights-based way. In doing this we place equal value and respect the rights of all people, in accordance with the UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and in conjunction with its two optional protocols<sup>2</sup>. Our interest is in ensuring that these rights are respected and upheld.

Rights-based work strengthens the right-holder's ability to claim their rights while at the same time strengthening the capacity of those responsible for upholding those rights. It is the government (state) in each country that signs and ratifies the UNCRC, and thus they have a binding obligation to protect and fulfill these rights. Civil society organizations (such as Barnfonden) fulfill an important role in supporting the state and acting as a temporary bridge between people, authorities and institutions in a country.

**Barnfonden works to educate and influence decision-makers at various levels - local, national, regional, global – and facilitates a holistic and systematic approach to ensure that children's rights are respected and upheld**. Not only do we do this in our program countries overseas, but it is also part of our work in Sweden and within the ChildFund Alliance where we join with others to advocate at global forums.

Others in society also have a responsibility to respect the rights of the child: for instance, parents and close relatives have the main responsibility to care for, support and guide the child. Children themselves also learn to respect the rights of other children and adults, including differently-abled children, in step with their increasing age and maturity. Barnfonden works holistically with communities - families, schools, neighborhoods, organizations and authorities to ensure that everyone has the necessary knowledge of children's rights and are aware of the responsibilities they themselves have. Barnfonden strengthens them (and in turn learns from them) to understand child rights so that those with direct responsibility understand what they must deliver.

**Barnfonden's programs work to strengthen the self-esteem and self-confidence of children, along with their capacity to organize and make their voices heard**. Barnfonden works with children and young people to learn about their rights: about who is responsible for those rights and how they can claim them. As a child rights organization, we see the child as an obvious and important player, even though the responsibility for children's rights lies largely with others. We work to raise and strengthen children's voices, to support them in their own initiatives, to include them and to involve them in various processes. With a child rights perspective, we see that children and young people have an

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<sup>1</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child', United Nations General Assembly, 1989.

<sup>2</sup> [OHCHR | Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

obvious role in interventions that target them directly, but also in other interventions because their perspectives are otherwise easily overlooked. We support children's clubs and other initiatives within projects that build children's opportunities and confidence to make themselves heard.

**Barnfonden takes a strength-based approach.**

Children have tremendous capacity that should be respected, utilized and developed as much as possible. It is therefore important that children are always included in both planning and follow-up processes so that their perspectives and ideas become an obvious part of the analysis of what needs to be done, how and by whom.

**Barnfonden recognizes the fundamental human dignity of all children and the urgency of ensuring their well-being and development.** All children should have equal opportunities and access to education, enough food and water, a place to live, clean water, health care and social services. Basic quality of life should be the right of all children, rather than a privilege enjoyed by a few. Each country should have in place a welfare system to provide basic services and to protect their most vulnerable. Countries should not rely on external assistance long-term. For this reason, Barnfonden does not act out of goodness or charity, but rather supports initiatives that lead to appropriate, community-led sustainable development. In addition, those we work for should not have to thank, feel indebted for, or in any way repay the support they receive from Barnfonden.

## **The core principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child**

According to the UNCRC, children have special rights that give them extra protection and support. It is based on four core principles:

- 1. All children are of equal value, no child may be discriminated against (Article 2).** This means that children shall not be discriminated against on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, age, disabilities, nationality, immigration status or any other reason. Every child has the right to be respected and included. No child should be treated negatively, but those in need should receive extra support.
- 2. The best interests of the child (Article 3).** Children have the right to have their best interest assessed and taken into account as a primary consideration in all actions or decisions that concern them, both in the public and private sphere. Whatever the mechanism and wherever possible, children should be active participants in defining their best interest.
- 3. The right to survival and development (Article 6).** Every child has the right to live and develop, each according to their circumstances. It also means that every child has the right to be protected from violence, exploitation and other abuses that can harm their psychological, emotional, social and spiritual development.
- 4. Respect for the child's opinions (Article 12).** All children have the right to say their meaning and be heard. Every child has the right to express themselves, to be listened to and taken seriously. Children have the right to have influence over their lives in step with their growing maturity. This means that children have something to say about their family, their school and their community. They have the right to get the information they need to understand and take a stand.







## Guiding Questions for Quality Assurance: Child Rights

Refer also to [ChildFund Alliance - ChildFund Alliance Program Standards](#)

### Knowledge and data

- What are the child rights issues inherent in project/programme and what is the plan to address them (refer ToC and multi-level/targeted strategy/focal theme)?
- What evidence is there that this programme/project will be effective?
- What child rights issues will be reported on/measured (refer MEL)?
- How will we share this information and lessons learned?

### Participation, engagement & cooperation

- How is the project/programme promoting child rights?
- How is the project/programme involving and promoting meaningful participation of rights-holders, including children?
- How does this programme/project address root causes and systemic weaknesses?
- Does the programme/project demonstrate cohesion?
- How do participants and staff raise concerns about child and human rights impacts and how do we know these channels work?

### Advocacy & Awareness

- Are there specific policy/process asks associated with this project (refer multi-level approach)?
- How does this program/project build children and parent's knowledge and understanding about child rights, and their ability to meet and claim child rights?
- How does this program/project build Barnfonden's (and our partners') knowledge and understanding about child rights, and how will this be captured?
- How is Barnfonden engaging with stakeholders involved in the project to help them understand and address child – and human – rights risks?
- Are there opportunities for advocacy in Sweden?

### Prevention & Response

- Have any negative impacts been identified –and if so, what is being done to mitigate risks?
- Have opportunities for the climate-informed/climate-prepared overlay been identified and addressed?
- What is the sustainability strategy?

The Preamble to the Sustainable Development Goals asserts that the 17 SDGs 'seek to realize the human rights of all'. The realization of children's rights is the foundation for securing a sustainable future and realizing human rights. Integrating a child rights perspective and ensuring the participation of children as active agents of change in decisions relating to development is crucial for achieving inclusive, equitable and sustainable development.

## Guiding Principles and Approaches

Barnfonden works to ensure that all children in the world are granted their rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We do this in our relationships with partners and participants, the programs we develop and the initiatives we fund by:

- Always focusing on the child and the rights of the child; taking care of the whole child and the specific challenges relevant to their age.
- Always working with a holistic perspective on the child's rights and needs, where different thematic areas are integrated, and that the entire surrounding community is included (children, family, school, neighborhood, government), to create sustainable, systematic and structural change.
- Always working to identify and address the root causes of child rights violations – we do not just address the symptoms. Enduring change relies upon this.
- Working for children to gain greater knowledge of their rights (through stand-alone projects or by integrating child rights education whenever possible into other projects), while advancing children's rights and capacity to be involved and to influence decisions that affect them by listening, learning and being accountable to them.
- Ensuring that children and their parents have increased opportunities to claim their rights in the way we engage with communities, and through the relationships we foster with institutions and government.
- Working to change norms in communities and attitudes and values that discriminate and violate children's rights. This could be through behaviour change campaigns, or by ensuring policies exist and laws are enforced.
- Addressing weaknesses and inequalities within the public and/or local/national welfare systems by supporting systems-strengthening initiatives and providing technical expertise and connections.



“The fact that so many children do not feel safe at school is of great concern, as safety is a pre-requisite for learning. ChildFund Alliance is committed to doing all we can to provide children around the world with a safe, quality education.”

Meg Gardinier  
Secretary General of the ChildFund Alliance



## The Way Forward

### Barnfonden's Three-year Plan, 2021-2023

#### **Improvement goals: Increasing internal knowledge, systems and processes**

- **Donor service** – will build basic knowledge about a rights-based approach and about the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and how Barnfonden translates this approach in its programming.
- **Communication and marketing** – will foster a good understanding of what rights-based work is and about the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Improve knowledge of how we communicate in words and pictures from a rights perspective. This includes ensuring children's participation and permission in storytelling and photography; never portraying Barnfonden or our donors as benefactors; and never eliciting or giving rise to 'gratitude debt'. Our communication materials will seek to empower those we work with, and never promote Barnfonden or our supporters as paternalistic 'power holders'.
- **Programmes** – will ensure Barnfonden's programming follows the guidelines in this position paper across all programmes and projects and includes spot checks on our work to ensure it meets our expectations. Tools and processes will be developed to guide and assess programme performance on child rights. Advocacy will be incorporated into programming ensuring both "top-down" and "bottom-up" advocacy to safeguard children's rights. Programme work will demonstrate Barnfonden's role in bridging gaps - not filling them.
- **Management** – will build greater Board awareness using the expertise of Barnfonden's staff and Board. All members of the management group and the board must have a good understanding of what rights-based work means, be able to refer to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and be able to describe the work of Barnfonden in a way that is in line with our definition of a child rights organization.



## The Way Forward

### Barnfonden's Three-year Plan, 2021-2023 continued...

#### **Improvement goals: Improve the way we operate**

- Donor service - will ensure communication with donors is permeated by rights-based work where Barnfonden and other donors are presented as actors that provide support. Barnfonden and other donors are never painted as charity and we never talk about gratitude.
- Communication and marketing - will ensure Barnfonden's internal and external communication is permeated by active children (as opposed to passive recipients) and children as rights bearers. Text and images are used responsibly and consciously and do not paint the children or families we work with as victims. All stories and images are presented with dignity, with respect for the rights of children and families to privacy, and with a focus on rights rather than needs. In our communication we are keen to raise children's own thoughts and perspectives, for example "Here #NAME feels safe because the yard is lit and there are many people in motion" or "For #NAME it is important that they now get work in groups under lessons because it gives her so much better understanding". Barnfonden and other donors are never presented as charities.
- Programmes - will ensure Barnfonden's programmes and projects are rights-based, from planning to evaluation. This means that we work both top-down and bottom-up, we always have a child rights perspective, we always strive for as high a level of participation from children and young people as possible, we always strive to be better, we include children and young people in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, we ensure that children and young people have real access to material and information that is relevant to them, we work to influence decision-makers, we do not assume the responsibility of local/national authorities.
- Management - will ensure Barnfonden's strategies and management are permeated by a child rights perspective and a rights-based approach. The organization will develop an evaluation tool to allow us to regularly assess how well we meet internal criteria representing where we want to be as a "Child Rights Organization". Emphasis is also placed on continuous improvement.



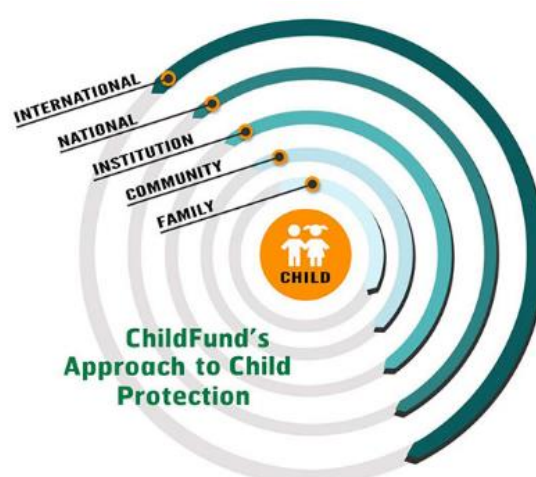




Source: ChildFund International



Source: WHO



Source: ChildFund International

# Child Protection

## There is no excuse for violence against children

In partnership with other ChildFund Alliance members, Barnfonden is committed to ending violence against children and to keeping children safe from all forms of harm.

In 2013, Barnfonden and eleven other ChildFund Alliance partners globally agreed to join together to end violence against children. Planning for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was just beginning, and ChildFund was determined to see a goal committed to ending violence against children. Much research and collective action by ChildFund Alliance members followed, contributing to a body of evidence the UN decision-making bodies couldn't ignore. The result was that SDG 16.2 was eventually passed to 'End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children'.

Every day, millions of children throughout the world are subjected to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence in different settings, including in their homes, schools, communities and work environments. Evidence across the world shows violence against children can have lifelong adverse health, social and economic consequences for survivors, including behavioural problems; mental health conditions; cognitive dysfunction; increased likelihood of high-risk behaviours; higher risk of delinquency, adult criminality and violent behaviour; greater risk of chronic diseases; lasting impacts or disability from physical injury; reduced health-related quality of life; lower levels of schooling; lower levels of income; and overall reduced levels of adult economic wellbeing. High prevalence of violence against children and its many negative short- and long-term consequences mean the economic costs for the individual, family, community and state are substantial. The global costs related to physical, psychological and sexual violence estimated by the ChildFund Alliance/ODI study are between 3% and 8% of global GDP.<sup>3</sup>

Barnfonden continues to actively support child protection through programming and advocacy.

**Barnfonden supports projects that help children to understand the law and their own rights and responsibilities.** We help children become agents of change, advocating for themselves and others.

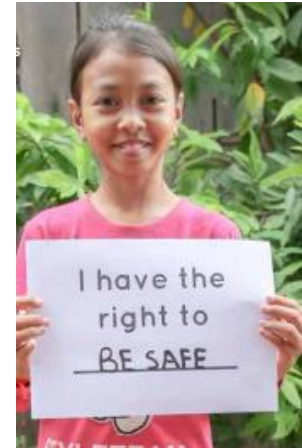
**Barnfonden strengthens families ability to promote their children's wellbeing within safe environments.** This means educating caregivers about how to help advance their children's development, and it also includes social and economic strengthening to build family stability.

**Barnfonden promotes awareness-raising activities in communities.** This includes lead-mother groups, child protection committees, and parent-teacher association and teacher training.

**Barnfonden tackles some of the most violent forms of cultural practice,** such as female genital mutilation and early and forced child marriage. This sensitive work is led by people from within the community who recognise that not all cultural practices are positive or support child rights.

**Barnfonden supports child protection system strengthening,** ensuring organisations working directly with communities on child protection are supported and have the tools they need to do their work, set policy and implement laws.

**Barnfonden advocates for international policy change,** calling upon world leaders to make child protection a global priority.



<sup>3</sup> From From the ChildFund Alliance-commissioned ODI report: *The costs and economic impact of violence against children* by Paola

Pereznieto, Andres Montes, Solveig Routier and Lara Langston, 2014.










Barnfonden is guided by the INSPIRE strategies, below. The various approaches indicated in the table are designed to complement one another to address the root causes of violence against children. As is noted by the emanating circles diagram on the same page, solutions need to be addressed at key entry points of individual, family, community, and societal levels.

Gender norms are a key society-level factor that make children and adolescents vulnerable to violence; they can reinforce the low status of girls and women in society and increase the likelihood that boys and men perpetrate violence.<sup>4</sup>

**Barnfonden supports child protection in emergencies.** Barnfonden focuses on providing psychosocial support for children and their families, who are often distressed in the aftermath of a disaster – while also providing food, emergency shelter and education spaces. Barnfonden recognises that prior planning is crucial in an emergency response – and if possible, staff work with communities to think ahead to avoid or prepare for disaster.

**Barnfonden sees opportunities to improve.** In the current INSPIRE strategies, we see gaps related to climate change and links to violence against children. More evidence is needed, and Barnfonden will actively seek to gain it.

**Below: Overview of INSPIRE package for preventing and responding to violence against children aged 0-18 years. We see a gap relating to climate change and its downstream effects.**

Strategy	Approach	Sectors	Cross-cutting activities
 <b>Implementation and enforcement of laws</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laws banning violent punishment of children by parents, teachers or other caregivers</li> <li>• Laws criminalizing sexual abuse and exploitation of children</li> <li>• Laws that prevent alcohol misuse</li> <li>• Laws limiting youth access to firearms and other weapons</li> </ul>	Justice	Multisectoral actions and coordination
 <b>Norms and values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing adherence to restrictive and harmful gender and social norms</li> <li>• Community mobilization programmes</li> <li>• Bystander interventions</li> </ul>	Health, Education, Social Welfare	
 <b>Safe environments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing violence by addressing “hotspots”</li> <li>• Interrupting the spread of violence</li> <li>• Improving the built environment</li> </ul>	Interior, Planning	
 <b>Parent and caregiver support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivered through home visits</li> <li>• Delivered in groups in community settings</li> <li>• Delivered through comprehensive programmes</li> </ul>	Social Welfare, Health	
 <b>Income and economic strengthening</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cash transfers</li> <li>• Group saving and loans combined with gender equity training</li> <li>• Microfinance combined with gender norm training</li> </ul>	Finance, Labour	Monitoring and Evaluation
 <b>Response and support services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counselling and therapeutic approaches</li> <li>• Screening combined with interventions</li> <li>• Treatment programmes for juvenile offenders in the criminal justice system</li> <li>• Foster care interventions involving social welfare services</li> </ul>	Health, Justice, Social Welfare	
 <b>Education and life skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase enrolment in pre-school, primary and secondary schools</li> <li>• Establish a safe and enabling school environment</li> <li>• Improve children’s knowledge about sexual abuse and how to protect</li> </ul>	Education	

<sup>4</sup> INSPIRE, *Seven Strategies for Ending Violence Against Children*, WHO 2016

## Guiding Questions for Quality Assurance: Child Protection

Refer also to [ChildFund Alliance - ChildFund Alliance Program Standards](#)

### Knowledge & Data

- What are the child protection issues inherent in project/programme and what is the plan to address them (refer ToC and multi-level/targeted strategy/focal theme)?
- How is this program/project promoting Child Protection using INSPIRE?
- What child protection issues will be reported on/measured (MELF)?
- How will we share this information and lessons learned?

### Participation, Engagement & Coordination

- How is the project/programme promoting child protection?
- Have children been involved in identifying protection issues?
- How does this programme/project address root causes and systemic weaknesses?
- Does the programme/project demonstrate cohesion?
- How do children (and others) raise concerns about child protection and safeguarding issues in a child-friendly, safe way?

### Advocacy & Awareness

- Are there specific policy/process asks associated with this project (refer multi-level approach and consult INSPIRE)?
- How does this program/project build children and parent's knowledge and understanding about child protection/safeguarding?
- How is Barnfonden engaging with stakeholders involved in the project to help them understand and address child protection and safeguarding risks?
- How does this program/project build Barnfonden's (and our partners') knowledge and understanding about child protection?

### Prevention & Response

- Have any negative impacts been identified –and if so, what is being done to mitigate risks?
- Have opportunities for the climate-informed/climate-prepared overlay been identified and addressed?
- What is the sustainability strategy?



### Sustainable Development Goals related to ending violence against children:

- **SDG Target 5.2** Eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls
- **SDG Target 5.3** Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation
- **SDG Target 16.1** Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere
- **SDG Target 16.2** End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against children
- **Other SDGs referenced:** 4a, 8.7, 11.7, 17.6.

## Guiding Principles and Approaches

Barnfonden works to ensure that all children in the world are free from violence. We do this in our relationships with partners and participants, the programs we develop and the initiatives we fund by:

- Ensuring our own policies are robust. Barnfonden has strict child safeguarding and code of conduct policies to ensure our own employees, contractors, volunteers and sponsors do not place children at risk. These can be found on [www.barnfonden.se](http://www.barnfonden.se) and include a complaint handling process should any person need to report a complaint. We always try to make these processes as child friendly as possible.
- Addressing child protection in a coordinated way with other stakeholders and addressing it across the program to take into account different sectorial interactions and opportunities.
- Incorporating accountability monitoring, evaluation, reflection and learning on child protection in our work.
- Following INSPIRE recommendations and working with our ChildFund Alliance colleagues to find and address the root causes leading to violence against children.
- Conducting advocacy to encourage child protection to be a cross-cutting issue in aid programming and a priority for donors. We would like to see more funding being spent on ending violence against children.
- Taking an anticipatory approach to child protection in our programming: we need to think ahead to anticipate future scenarios, including disaster scenarios, and plan and prepare for them.
- Ensuring Barnfonden's work follows a 'do no harm' and conflict sensitivity approach.

See [www.barnfonden.se](http://www.barnfonden.se) for Barnfonden's safeguarding policies that support this position paper and work plan





## The Way Forward

### Barnfonden's Three-year Plan, 2021-2023

#### Increase internal knowledge, systems, operations and processes

- **Donor service** – They will receive child safeguarding training at least 3x per year. They will ensure all processes are in place for safeguarding concerning supporters and donors.
- **Communication and marketing** – They will receive child safeguarding training 3 x per year and ensure all processes are in place for communication that safeguards children and respects their dignity and safety. Ensure there is a clear understanding about the difference of child protection and child safeguarding. Engage the C&M team in enlisting advocacy support.
- **Programmes** – will conduct a skills inventory to identify technical strengths/weaknesses and build the team so there is sound competency in child protection programming and practice. Ensure Barnfonden's programming follows the guidelines in this position paper across all programmes and projects and includes spot checks on our work to ensure it meets our expectations.
- **Management** – will appoint Child Safeguarding focal points and ensure they are appropriately trained, including in how to handle complaints and how to implement the Whistleblowing policy. They will deliver training at least 3 x per year. Provide induction training to new staff and quarterly training to all staff. Report to the Barnfonden board on safeguarding activities and incidents. Conduct spot-checks on practices and annual reviews of all policies and procedures.







**Gender equity** means fairness of treatment across all genders, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different, but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.

**Gender equality** is the aim, requiring that all human beings are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes or pre-determined gender roles. It is about equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities for all genders related to a person's identity. Gender equality means that a person's rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on the gender assigned to them at birth.



# Gender & Inclusion

## Barnfonden promotes equality to achieve social justice

Gender equality and social inclusion are essential pre-conditions to sustainability.

Equality is first and foremost a universal human right. Barnfonden's goal is not simply to engage with and target the development needs of children, whatever their gender, belief, ability or ethnicity, but to transform their future into a world where equality can be assured as they grow into adults and take on the responsibilities of shaping their own future, as well as the future of their family and their community.

To ensure all children and adults have equal rights and opportunities all actors must challenge existing systems and promote equality to achieve social justice. This includes governments, corporates, civil society actors, education systems, health systems, etc. Barnfonden promotes gender and inclusion at a number of levels, from national and international legal conventions and policies, to within the communities and families we work with, and the realities of how peoples' perceptions of gender affect relationships and lives. We acknowledge inclusion as a power dynamic. We acknowledge that men and women experience poverty differently and understand that gender and status influences how power and resources are distributed, accessed and experienced. By applying a gender approach to our work, we enable identification of the role that gender and inclusion plays in shaping power as it relates to the change we want to influence. Our work on gender and inclusion therefore aims to address inequalities that constrain women, men, girls and boys, as well as all other gender identities and people with disabilities.

### A Gender and Inclusion Approach

Barnfonden believes that equal participation - while important - is not enough in itself. To attain the goal of equality, we must understand and address the multiple and complex issues related to discrimination. We need to investigate the issues inhibiting an individual's sense of power, resilience and well-being as they relate to people's gender and other discrimination and their ability to apply their rights. As such, Barnfonden's approach aligns with Gender and Development discourse.

A contextual analysis (which includes a gender analysis) is the preferred foundation to guide planning, design, implementation, monitoring and learning. This kind of analysis is the systematic attempt to identify key issues contributing to inequalities, many of which also contribute to poor development outcomes. In identifying these issues (see Key Issues diagram), we must also be alert to other intersectional biases that impact on people relative to gender, such as ageism, ethnicity, caste, class, religion, ableism, colonial history and sexual orientation and ability. The social, environmental, political and economic context of a community, and the intersectional influences as noted above, are constantly interacting with and influencing inequalities and power relations.

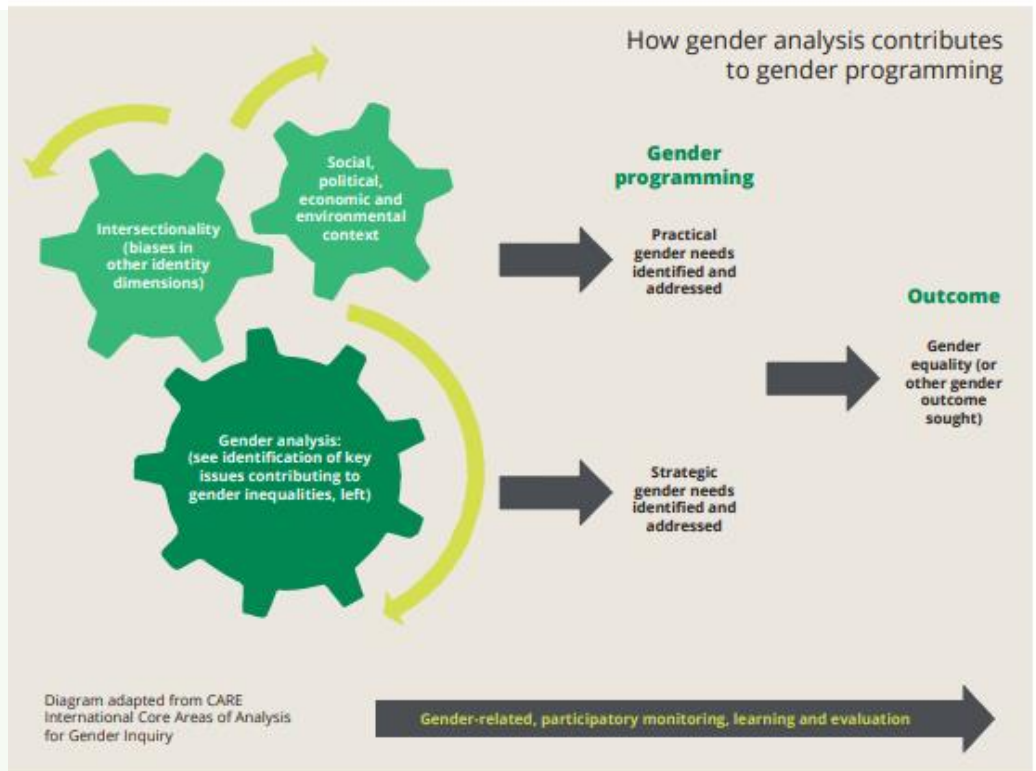
The next step is to identify practical and strategic needs and solutions, and the approaches to reach expected results; integration of equality, targeted gender or disability activities (for instance), and/or gender aware dialogue. Practical gender and inclusion needs seek solutions that make people's everyday life easier. Examples of Barnfonden's work in this sphere includes bringing water closer to people's homes, or building toilets in schools (a key obstacle to girls' attendance). Other examples is the creation of a helpline for survivors of gender-based violence, or the creation of village-based savings and loans schemes targeted specifically to women. These solutions will not directly challenge power relations, but may remove important obstacles to women and girls' empowerment.

Strategic gender needs refer to the actions women, men, girls or boys require in order to improve their position or status in regard to each other. These actions would place them in greater control over their own lives instead of limiting them to the restrictions imposed by socially defined roles. These might include such actions as influencing national legislation in regards to gender-based violence, providing equal access to credit and financial services, or increasing participation of women in decision-making.



### Key issues contributing to gender inequalities

- The sexual or gendered divisions of labour and use of time
- Household decision-making
- Control of productive assets including income, land, equipment or tools
- Access to public spaces and services, including such things as healthcare and education
- Control over one's body
- Aspirations for oneself
- People's ability to claim their rights and meaningfully participate in public decision-making
- Environmental degradation and climate disasters
- Access to water and sanitation
- Harmful traditional practice
- Corruption



Barnfonden is committed to integrating gender and equality into every aspect of our work in order to reach our common vision and programmatic objectives. Gender and inclusion integration (or mainstreaming) is the process of assessing the implications for women and men, girls and boys of any planned action, including programs, policies or legislations, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of people of those who are typically excluded an integral dimension of the design,

implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programs or policies. Under gender and inclusion integration, everyone benefits, and relational and structural inequalities are not perpetuated. This approach recognizes the need to consider the interdependent or complementary roles of different genders, and to take differences between them into account (whether social, economic or other) to ensure that the proposed programs or policies have intended, fair results for all.

### Inclusion

Inclusion is the process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society. It involves improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity which, as well as gender, may include dimensions of gender, age, location, occupation, race, ethnicity, religion, citizenship status and disability, among other things.

Inclusion should be inherent in a human/child rights approach to ensure no one is left behind. This includes confronting and challenge discrimination and human rights violations that exclude people based on issues of identity, and challenging stereotyping and unequal power relations. However, how various members of society are included or excluded varies greatly depending on context and requires an understanding of laws as well as perceptions that influence behaviours. Inclusion must be with the express permission of those who are excluded as, in some contexts, inclusion can put people in jeopardy where, for instance, it exploits cultural identities, stigmatises groups or influences people's perceptions of safety. Identifying 'appropriate' inclusion (as determined by those excluded) is therefore an important part of the contextual analysis, of which the gender analysis, noted above, is a part, to ensure we 'do no harm'.

## Guiding Questions for Quality Assurance: Gender & Inclusion

Refer also to ChildFund Alliance Program Standards & ChildFund Alliance Gender Equality Position Paper

### Knowledge & Data

- Has a contextual analysis been undertaken with specific reference to gender? Disability? Other disadvantaged/excluded groups?
- What is the plan to address these issues (refer ToC and multi-level/targeted strategy/focal theme)?
- What evidence is there that this programme/project will be effective?
- What gender/inclusion issues will be reported on/measured (refer MELF – ensure gender disaggregation & disability record-keeping)?
- How will we share this information and lessons learned?

### Participation, Engagement & Coordination

- How are other excluded groups identified in the programme/project engaged and their rights promoted to ensure equality?
- How are gender and inclusion issues specifically addressed in the programme/project to promote equality, fairness of treatment and reduction of disparities (relevant to the lifestage of the child)? Is it specifically addressing root causes and systemic weaknesses?
- How does this programme/project empower women, girls and other genders and people with disabilities by removing barriers that hold them back from exercising their rights and achieving their full potential?
- How does this program/project facilitate equal access to, and control of, the benefits of development actions to people of all genders, ethnicities and abilities (etc)?
- How is Barnfonden engaging with stakeholders to help them understand and address gender, disability and inclusion?
- Does the programme/project demonstrate cohesion?

### Advocacy & Awareness

- How does this program/project address inequalities exacerbated by discrimination, including in laws, policies, institutions, budgets, investments and social relations?
- Are there specific policy/process asks associated with this project (refer multi-level approach)?
- How does this program/project build children and parent's knowledge and understanding about gender?

### Prevention & Response

- How does this programme/project empower women, girls, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities (etc) by removing barriers that hold them back from exercising their rights and achieving their full potential?
- How does this programme/project support boys to embrace positive masculinities and support them to promote gender equality?
- Have any negative impacts been identified –and if so, what is being done to mitigate risks?
- Have opportunities for the climate-informed/climate-prepared overlay been identified and addressed?
- What is the sustainability strategy?

## Guiding Principles and Approaches

Barnfonden commits to being guided by the following principles and programmatic processes. We will do this by:

- Supporting country and international commitments such as UNCRC, CEDAW, as well as SDGs related to gender and inclusion.
- Facilitating equal access and control over services and benefits and building agency in recognition that this may require a change of social norms. This may also lead to gender-targeted /disability-targeted actions to tackle certain disparities.
- Promoting the active involvement and leadership of women and girls across all levels of the project cycle and decision-making, and in the leadership structures of our own organizations and those with whom we partner.
- Influencing a shift in norms that perpetuate inequalities, including the power dynamics and structures that reinforce inequalities (whether within homes, communities or at national levels). This may include ChildFund's involvement in advocacy at national and international levels to change legal conventions and policies that perpetuate inequality.
- Analyzing the gender and inclusion dynamics of every partner community and referencing these dynamics in relation to every project throughout the project cycle.
- Measuring performance and progress (including gender outcomes). Where possible, this should include a baseline data parameter that ensures disaggregated data, gender sensitive targets, making people with disabilities visible in statistics, etc. This measurement should combine quantitative and qualitative data.
- Developing a partnership strategy by discussing and agreeing with partners and stakeholders on the importance of gender and inclusion. The strategy should be designed to: a) support partners in improving their institutional capacities to support equality and b) hold implementing partners responsible for integrating gender and inclusion into programming to develop indicators and consistently report on results and outcomes.
- Contributing to the development of a gender equity /inclusion culture, which consists of a wider organizational change process. This includes building staff capacity on gender equality and inclusion, and sharing lessons within the ChildFund Alliance and externally, so we may contribute to a growing understanding of why and how inequalities form, and help build effective approaches for ending inequalities. To undertake robust gender analysis, programme design and MEL strategy, the organization and our partners must be sensitive to norms, relations and power in terms of gender (and other axes of power) and social relations.

### SDGs promoting inclusion

- SDG 8: to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable growth with employment creation.
- SDG 10: to empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.
- SDG 11: to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;
- SDG 16: to promote peaceful and inclusive societies as well as inclusive institutions.

### SDGs promoting gender

- While being a goal in its own right (**SDG 5**: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), gender equality cuts across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals and is reflected in 45 targets and 54 indicators for the SDGs.



## The Way Forward

### Barnfonden's Three-year Plan, 2021-2023

#### Increase internal knowledge, systems and processes

- **Donor service** – They will equally promote girls' sponsorship and boy' sponsorship. All staff will attend gender and diversity training.
- **Communication and marketing** – They will understand gender issues and ensure children are portrayed respectfully and equally. Shine a light in communication on gender and inclusion issues being addressed in programming, including the importance of involving men and boys in gender equality mainstreaming, and how children benefit. All staff will attend gender and diversity training.
- **Programmes**– They will conduct a contextual review including scoping gender and disability and other exclusion issues, and design projects and programmes with gender and inclusion considerations to promote equality. Support gender- and disability-targeted projects in communities where significant discrimination exists. Capture and share best practices and lessons learned. Ensure Barnfonden's programming follows the guidelines in this position paper across all programmes and projects and includes spot checks on our work to ensure it meets our expectations. All staff will attend gender and diversity training.
- **Management** – They will ensure Barnfonden staff are trained in gender and diversity at least annually, and that Barnfonden's gender approach is mainstreamed throughout the organisation, including to internal staffing and board members.







Detail from a picture by Ly Srey Nich, Cambodia



# Environment and Climate Change

## Barnfonden actively engages in environment and climate change issues

Mitigating the impact of climate change is imperative to protect the world's children. This cross-cutting issue is reinforced by the inclusion of Barnfonden's climate-informed, climate-prepared overlay. See Programme Manual Reference #4.

Environmental degradation and climate change are undermining and reversing child development and child protection work. Economic and social development cannot be sustained unless we deal decisively with this issue. The children we work with are and will continue to be impacted by environmental degradation as well as more frequent and intense weather events. Disasters result in declining food security and access to water,<sup>5</sup> increased migration,<sup>6</sup> poor access to essential services like health, education, and child protection, and generally more stress on households.

Given Barnfonden's commitment to child protection, it is important to recognise how climate change – both slow onset and extreme weather events, can increase the incidence of violent behaviour. There are three key reasons for this: one involves direct effects of uncomfortably warm temperatures on irritability, aggression, and violence. A second involves indirect effects of global warming on factors that put children and adolescents at risk for developing into violence-prone adults.<sup>7</sup> The third involves indirect effects of rapid climate change on populations whose livelihoods and survival are suddenly at risk – effects that influence economic and political stability, migration, and violent intergroup conflict.<sup>8</sup>

Vulnerable children often live in the most degraded environment and their vulnerability

limits their ability to respond. This has tremendous negative impact on children as households tend to adopt poor coping mechanisms to survive, including forcing children to find work (often hazardous and dangerous due to the changed circumstances<sup>9</sup>), forcing young girls to get married,<sup>10</sup> and increasing school and domestic violence.<sup>11,12</sup>

According to antislavery.org, “Experts are more convinced than ever that climate change is rapidly becoming the biggest driver of **forced migration**. This in turn is leading to greater numbers of people becoming vulnerable to **contemporary forms of slavery**.”<sup>13</sup> Many experts are warning about the emergence of a generation of **child brides** as a direct result of a changing climate. The Malawian government, in its report on the 2015 floods, listed child marriage as one of the side effects, a view shared by the anti-child marriage campaign group [Girls Not Brides](#). Other forms of violence against children also increase during climate emergencies, such as **psychological abuse and violence in schools**.

Thus, there is an urgent need to help their environment and improve their lives. Finding a way to adapt our programming to make children, families, and communities anticipate risk and become more resilient to environmental degradation and climate change and related disasters is essential as a cross-cutting need across Barnfonden's entire program.

<sup>5</sup> Unless We Act Now (UNICEF 2015):

[https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Unless\\_we\\_act\\_now\\_The\\_impact\\_of\\_climate\\_change\\_on\\_children.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Unless_we_act_now_The_impact_of_climate_change_on_children.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Migration and the climate crisis: the UN's search for solutions (UN News 2019): <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/07/1043551>

<sup>7</sup> See Barnfonden's own research [Barnfondens klimatrappporter | Barnfonden](#)

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Craig\\_Anderson19/publication/242623056\\_Implications\\_of\\_Global\\_Climate\\_Change\\_for\\_Violence\\_in\\_Developed\\_and\\_Developing\\_Countries/links/580e7b4a08ae47535247b5f7.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Craig_Anderson19/publication/242623056_Implications_of_Global_Climate_Change_for_Violence_in_Developed_and_Developing_Countries/links/580e7b4a08ae47535247b5f7.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Child Labour Report 2017. The Neglected Link: Effects of Climate Change and Environmental Degradation on Child Labour (Terre des Hommes):

<https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/13899/pdf/cl-report-2017-engl.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Child Marriage in Humanitarian Settings (Girls Not Brides 2018): <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Child-marriage-in-humanitarian-settings.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> The Challenges of Climate Change: Children on the Front Line (UNICEF 2014): [https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/ccc\\_final\\_2014.pdf](https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/ccc_final_2014.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Toward a world free from violence (OSRSG VAC 2013): [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2461Toward\\_a\\_world\\_free\\_from\\_Violence.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2461Toward_a_world_free_from_Violence.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.antislavery.org/climate-change-slavery/>



Over the coming years, Barnfonden will raise its engagement in environmental issues. We will:

**Be a global voice with and for children on the threat of climate change to child rights and violence against children, in both development and humanitarian settings.**

- Galvanize children's voices in advocacy on environmental degradation and climate change.
- Promote partnerships with youth networks and actors specialized in environmental degradation and climate change.
- Influence the agenda of global coalitions, such as Children in a Changing Climate and Joining Forces, to prioritize the threat of climate change on violence against children.

**Prioritize the needs and voices of vulnerable children in climate change adaptation efforts through global, regional and national advocacy engagement.**

- Support communities in their adaptation to the changing climate and thereby reduce vulnerability and the risk for violence against children.  
Support disaster risk reduction, e.g. through schools and by improving youth participation in local processes

- Incorporate child protection in climate change adaptation efforts

**Strengthen resilience and support communities in anticipating climate risks, and in adapting to the changing climate and thereby reduce vulnerability and the risk for violence against children.**

- Incorporate climate change adaptation in child protection outreach efforts, including taking an Anticipatory Approach.
- Protect children when impacted by the effects of climate change.
- Diversify income generating activities related to prevention and adaptation to environmental degradation and climate change.
- Ensure all Barnfonden programs and projects are as environmentally smart as possible, e.g., support sustainable energy for children (such as safe lighting, heating, and cooling) and environmental sustainability in schools.
- Work with the ChildFund Alliance to establish a global program for CO2 emission compensation through projects around e.g. afforestation, renewable energy, energy saving stoves or other solutions – all including clear child protection aspects.



## Guiding Questions for Quality Assurance: Environment & Climate Change

Refer also to **ChildFund Alliance Environmental Sustainability Standards** and Barnfonden's Climate-Informed and Climate-Prepared paper, Programme Manual Reference #3.

### Knowledge & Data

- Could this program/project lead to any negative environmental impacts –and if so, what is being done to mitigate risks?
- How does this program/project build Barnfonden's and partners' knowledge and understanding about the environment, and how will this be captured and shared?
- What environmental targets will be measured and reported on?
- How has Barnfonden included carbon-offsetting in its planning and budgeting to meet CO2 emission targets?

### Participation, Engagement & Coordination

- How is the project/programme promoting stewardship?
- How is the project/programme anticipating climate change risk and building preparedness and household /community resilience?
- Has the Climate-informed/Climate prepared approach been applied?
- How is the project/programme involving and promoting meaningful participation of rights-holders, including children?
- How does this programme/project address root causes and systemic weaknesses?
- Does the programme/project demonstrate cohesion?
- How do participants and staff raise concerns about environmental impacts?

### Advocacy & Awareness

- Are there specific policy/process asks associated with the environment in this project (refer multi-level approach)?
- How does this program/project build children and parent's knowledge and understanding about environmental issues and climate change risks?
- How does this program/project build Barnfonden's (and our partners') knowledge and understanding about environment and climate change issues, and how will this be captured?
- How is Barnfonden engaging with stakeholders involved in the project to help them understand and address environmental and climate-change risks?
- Are there opportunities for advocacy in Sweden?

### Prevention & Response

- Have any negative impacts been identified –and if so, what is being done to mitigate risks?
- Have opportunities for the climate-informed/climate-prepared overlay been identified and addressed?
- What is the sustainability strategy?

## Guiding Principles and Approaches

Barnfonden will integrate environmental considerations into its own operations in Sweden, and its work with communities overseas. We will:

### **Reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, especially those related to energy consumption and travel.**

Barnfonden shall identify, measure and monitor emissions of greenhouse gases as a result of our activities. We will therefore develop our own register where we collect data for our various emissions. Based on this, we can calculate our climate footprint and compensate for this. Activities to reduce our emissions include reviewing travel and transportation, reviewing energy consumption, reducing paper usage and disposable items.

### **Reduce the negative environmental impact of the office**

Barnfonden work to reduce the use of disposable articles, paper and other items that are not necessary for the business. We will reduce waste, recycle what can be recycled, reuse if possible and repair whenever possible. When appropriate, we are looking to buy used furniture and office supplies. Barnfonden uses ecolabelled office supplies, buys organic and locally produced goods, and offers vegetarian food as the first choice.

### **Promote respect for the environment and environmental protection in our projects.**

Barnfonden will put an environmental lens on all projects we finance to make them as environmentally smart as possible. We will seek collaborations with companies and organizations that can help us reach out with environmentally sustainable solutions to the problems we see in the program areas and we will have specific projects that are directly linked to preventing and preparing for climate change.

### **Promote a positive attitude change among the people participating in programs and projects with regard to conservation of environment and natural resources.**

Barnfonden will strengthen the capacity of collaborative partners, both within the ChildFund Alliance and local partners, to incorporate an environmental perspective into projects and programs. This includes both what activities are carried out and how they are carried out.

### **Contribute to sustainable development by integrating environmental protection and respect into all management issues.**

Barnfonden must set requirements for environmental sustainability in procurement processes and choice of suppliers. We will work internally to keep the knowledge and understanding of environmental impact and climate change up to date and in a way that the individual employee can relate to in their everyday lives. We will also work externally to raise public awareness of, and commitment to, environmental degradation and climate change linked to children's rights.



The SDGs set a goal to protect the planet “so it can support the needs of the present and future generations”. Of the 169 targets and 244 indicators in the SDGs, 93 are environment related. Climate change is a roadblock to achieving the SDGs and has disproportionate effects on the poor. Without concerted action, it could drive 100 million more people into poverty by 2030.



## Program and project process

The cross-cutting theme of ‘environment’ is applied at each stage of the project cycle.

Scope	Study the program context and assess vulnerability and risks of the community and environment. Ensure community participation. Include Anticipatory Planning. Apply the climate-informed, climate prepared overlay. Does this suggest additional activities that can be built into the project design?
Assess	Carry out more detailed assessment around the vulnerability of specific projects and exposure to climate stressors, as well as the capacities of stakeholders to deal with potential impacts or take advantage of opportunities. Incorporate discussions with local stakeholders and establish how the climate-informed/climate prepared overlay can be applied.
Design	Identify, evaluate and select actions to reduce environmental impact, climate and non-climate stressors, including actions that minimize potential damage. Take advantage of opportunities to build community resilience, to ‘build back better’ and prepare for and mitigate risk.
Implement and regularly review	Put actions into practice. Regularly review and ‘course correct’.
Evaluate and adjust	Analyse progress and adjust the strategy, program, or project as needed. Provide support to improve performance and outcomes.
Learn and share	Collect evidence. Reflect on performance and outcomes. Capture lessons and continuously improve. Share the lessons widely.



## The Way Forward

### Barnfonden's Three-year Plan, 2021-2023

#### **Increase internal knowledge, systems and processes**

- **Donor service** – They will foster a good understanding of Barnfonden's environmental work and offsetting to be able to converse with donors about how we prepare communities for climate change, and how we act as an environmentally responsible agency within our own operations. Encourage their support for activism to address climate change.
- **Communication and marketing**– They will understand and promote the issues around climate change and play a part in environmental education to our supporters and donors, including setting communication targets. Share stories about environmental challenges affecting Barnfonden's partner communities to encourage constituents' to consider their part (e.g. in making lifestyle changes and supporting development programmes that inform communities and help them prepare and adapt to climate change and its downstream effects). Develop partnerships to advance development education and the support we can give to country programs through funding or other initiatives. Drive fundraising and communication campaigns to support humanitarian crises and anticipatory approaches. Grow Barnfonden's reputation as an organisation committed to this issue and the importance of bringing child rights and climate change together. Raise children's voices and include stories about and from children.
- **Programs** – They will ensure Barnfonden's programming follows the guidelines in this position paper and in our **Climate Informed/Climate Prepared Overlay**, Paper #3 and **Humanitarian Guidelines**, Paper #6. Ensure our work is grounded in environmental understandings of the local context: that our work Does no Harm and promotes stewardship of the environment.  
Include spot checks on our work to ensure it meets with the expectations we have set for ourselves. Build a body of research demonstrating the link between environment and climate change and violence against children. Develop advocacy campaigns that build Swedish and global support to address climate issues, anticipate the future and assist communities to prepare. Promote climate change adaptation and environmental sustainability at the ChildFund Alliance level. Seek partnerships that link the communities we work with to appropriate and relevant Swedish technology, research and funds.
- **Management** – will ensure Barnfonden's environmental policy is understood and being implemented. Environmental data collection and reporting is integrated into Barnfonden's work to ensure carbon emissions from Barnfonden's operations are measured. A carbon offset program is established. Review procurement policy to ensure environmental considerations are built into major purchases such as photocopying machines, the printers we use and travel we purchase. Foster office-wide environmental initiatives (kitchen waste composting, recycling, energy-efficient lightbulbs etc). Ensure staff and board can enthusiastically and proactively advocate to end global warming, support the Paris Climate Agreement and promote sustainable, environmentally-sensitive behaviours to do all we can to curb the impending impacts of climate change on children.











# Conflict Sensitivity, Power & Do No Harm

## Aid should support peace – but it can also fuel conflict.

Barnfonden uses a power-aware and conflict sensitive approach by designing programming to contribute to conflict prevention and maximise the positive impacts of interventions to build peace.

Conflict sensitivity requires that organisations like Barnfonden understand the context in which they are operating and the interaction between their work and the context. It is about considering the unintended consequences of our programmes on the relationships between groups of people in the context, and actions we need to take to address those consequences – as well as what we can do to promote peace. Conflict is natural and can sometimes stimulate change for the better leading to more peaceful, just environments. However, it can also do the opposite, with the effect of doing harm.

One of the great lessons in this comes from ChildFund's own experiences and the concept of sponsorship. Around 20 years ago, many organisations involved in sponsorship – including ChildFund Alliance members – had an 'a-ha' moment and stopped funding contributions from sponsors going directly to children and their families. They recognised that this could lead to issues of inequity and sometimes conflict within communities. They recognised a much more equitable, impactful and efficient way was, instead, to pool sponsorship funding towards community projects that benefit *all* vulnerable children, and where the families themselves directed what happened in the community. In the areas where ChildFund worked, democratic structures were established where representatives from different zones within the community were voted by families onto a guiding Board. This Board designed the intervention programme and was held accountable by the community. Many of these structures went on to form the backbone of the local community-based organisations we work with today.

From the lessons learned through these roots, Barnfonden understands the need to build in-depth

understandings of the local context. We recognise 'dividers' and 'connectors' promoted through the work of actors in this space such as CDA<sup>14</sup>, and our catalytic role to do both good and harm through our actions and behaviours.

### Concepts of Power

Barnfonden recognises the varying types of power within and between those we work with and for. This is useful within our work as we seek to build transformational power for the most marginalised, supporting them to make choices that will improve their quality of life. But it also keeps us alert to our own use of power – its opportunity to do good, and harm, and to disrupt or build peace. In line with our principles of partnership, Barnfonden is especially mindful of our ability as donors to exert 'power over', and our need to constantly keep in check our ability to influence and control. This requires us to understand the different types of power...

**Power over:** Controlling power, which may be responded to with compliance, resistance (which weakens processes of victimization) or manipulation.

**Power to:** Generative or productive power (sometimes incorporating or manifesting as forms of resistance or manipulation) which creates possibilities and actions without domination

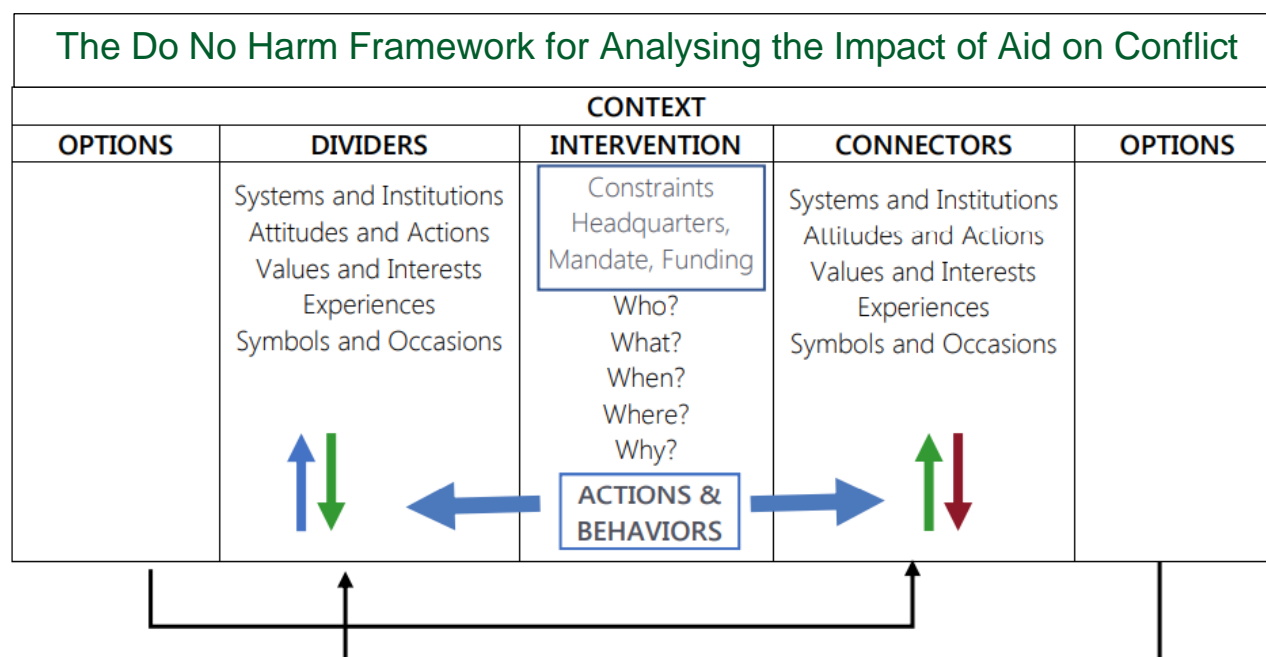
**Power with:** A sense of the whole being greater than the sum of the individuals, especially when a group tackles problems together.

**Power from within:** The spiritual strength and uniqueness that resides in each one of us and makes us truly human. Its basis is self-acceptance and self-respect which extends, in turn, to respect for an acceptance of others as equals.

*Summarised from the work of Jo Rowlands.*

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<sup>14</sup> [www.cdacollaborative.org](http://www.cdacollaborative.org)



Above: CDA's Do No Harm Framework helps us to analyse how an intervention affects the Dividers (sources of tension) and Connectors (opportunities for peace), yielding predictable patterns of impact through the Actions of organizations and the Behaviours of staff.

Conflict sensitivity requires an understanding of the notion of 'power' and its contribution to sustainable development. This includes recognising the importance of local control, and the value of 'agency' and, with that, Barnfonden's role in building agency – including the voice and agency of children and youth.

Power (and empowerment) are complex and multidimensional societal processes, defined by pervasive social norms, conditions, constraints and opportunities. These can be best understood by the Power Cube ([What is the powercube?](#))

A conflict sensitive approach involves the ability of an organisation to develop a sound understanding of the two-way interaction between activities and context and acting to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive impacts of interventions on conflict, within an organization's given priorities/objectives (mandate).

Sida Peace & Conflict Tool, 2017

[Understanding power for social change | powercube.net | IDS at Sussex University](#)).

The Power Cube is made up of forms, spaces, dimensions, and expressions of power. The 'forms' dimension of the cube refers to the ways in which power manifests itself, including its *visible*, *hidden* and *invisible* forms. The 'spaces' dimension refers to the potential arenas for participation and action, including what we call *closed*, *invited* and *claimed* spaces. Finally, the 'levels' dimension of the cube refers to the differing layers of decision-making and authority (see Barnfonden's multi-level diagram in our Theory of Change). The 'expressions of power' (power to, with and within) refer to different forms of *individual* and *collective agency and power*.

Understanding these tools helps us to make decisions in the way we act and behave as partners, and in the way we implement our programmes.

**Barnfonden's staff are coached in power relations, conflict sensitivity and do no harm.** Use and abuse of power and the drivers of conflict start with our own understandings of what power and conflict is, and how it is applied by us and others, and by our stakeholders and within the communities in which we work. Thinking about it, discussing it, and using the words and challenging



each other on the use of power are as important as the tools we apply to analyse and check it.

**A conflict analysis is applied as part of a contextual analysis.** Power and conflict must be robustly explored and considered as the analysis will be used to guide and focus content, delivery approach, entry points and partnership. It should assess conflict dynamics and risk, and identify dividers and sources of tension as well as connectors and opportunities for peace. When addressing power, it should explore not only formalised and institutional power, but local power such as traditional or customary power and an understanding of gendered power (which should also be regarded under the gender analysis). It also relates to invisible power such as the beliefs, thoughts and feelings of those involved.

**Reflection and review is applied throughout a partnership or project.** The use of CDA's tool, above, allows Barnfonden to reflect on opportunities to act as Dividers and Connectors in our partnerships, projects and programmes, and to make sound judgement. While our work does not tend to be in conflict-intense settings, some conflict exists or has the potential to exist within all settings, especially in areas of high inequity and vulnerability. Barnfonden works as adaptively as possible, with care and, where necessary, speed, to prevent conflict and seize opportunities to promote peace. We will plan, implement, monitor and evaluate the programme with conflict sensitivity in focus (making sure that all voices are heard, risks are considered and mitigated, etc.)



## **Recognise the shrinking space and support local partners' resilience**

As the space for NGOs and other civil society organisations is shrinking, our engagement for conflict prevention and peacebuilding may also be constrained. In some countries, governments are shutting out those working to promote human rights, democracy, equality, participation and peace where these provide a challenge to their way of governing. Dialogue, participation and inclusion are the cornerstones of peacebuilding, and as the door closes on these opportunities, our opportunities for acting as Connectors also closes. In this environment, we must:

- Strengthen our Do No Harm approach.
- Build organisational resilience of our local partners, strengthening their capacity and capability and ability to demonstrate value.
- Communicate the value of civil society: demonstrating they are an important actor in community development and highlighting their role, working alongside not against government.
- Adapt our funding and operational practices to the circumstances when necessary, including the way we channel funds and allowing more flexibility for funding use.
- Continue to advocate for human rights, equality, peace and democracy.
- Work safely and take precautions to protect staff, partners and programme participants.

### **Sustainable Development Goals promoting peace building:**

The most relevant goal for building peace is **SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions**. However, the goals do not sit in isolation, and peace, inclusion and equality are essential for all areas of development.

## Guiding Questions for Quality Assurance

Refer also to [ChildFund Alliance - ChildFund Alliance Program Standards](#)

[What is the powercube?](#) | [Understanding power for social change](#) | [powercube.net](#) | [IDS at Sussex University](#)

### Knowledge & Data

- What are the conflict sensitivity and power issues inherent in project/programme and what is the plan to address them (refer ToC and multi-level/targeted strategy/focal theme)?
- Have we adequately triangulated information to deeply understand issues of power, in order to ‘do no harm’?
- Have we appropriately accounted for and mitigated risk?
- What evidence can we draw on from other project/programmes or advice in this community or similar that could hold lessons for our work?
- What issues will be reported on/measured (refer MEL)?
- How will we share this information and lessons learned?

### Participation, Engagement & Coordination

- Acknowledging that local partners could shield us from power and conflict issues (including where *they* could be the problem), what systems have we put in place to check with other layers (with reference to the socio-ecological model) of engagement?
- How is Barnfonden engaging with stakeholders involved in the project to help them understand and address conflict sensitivity and power?
- Are whistleblowing procedures understood and accessible?
- Are the right processes in place to alert when power is abused or conflict arises?

### Advocacy & Awareness

- How does this program/project build knowledge and understanding about conflict and power, and how will this be captured and shared?
- Are there specific policy (or other advocacy) asks associated with power/conflict or peace building issues?
- Are there advocacy initiatives that the Swedish public can engage with relating to country safety/security?
- Are there any alerts concerning ‘shrinking space’, and what can we do to address these?

### Prevention & Response

- Are there trusted local partners who can alert and advise on issues where potential conflict could arise in project, programmes and partnerships?
- Are we regularly reflecting and discussing conflict divider and connector opportunities and power issues with our partners?
- Are we appropriately holding each other to account on issues of power?



## Guiding Principles and Approaches

Barnfonden understands the dynamics of power and the potential of our work to create harm. We anticipate the scenarios where harm could occur, and develop strategies to avoid this – continuously checking and adapting what we do across our multi-level programme approach. We do this by...

**Conducting a conflict sensitivity and power analysis** and part of our contextual analysis.

Document the issues and the plan that considers the power dynamics, root causes, drivers of conflict (sources of tension) and drivers of peace (sources of cohesion).

**Ensuring staff and partners** understand conflict sensitivity, do no harm and power dynamics.

**Understand different identify groups** (ethnicity, age, religious belief, clan, faction, gender, etc.) and how they are affected by conflict, and the differential impacts of conflict on the lives of women, men, boys and girls are considered.

**Identify ways to strengthen the programme's potential** to contribute to conflict prevention and peace-building during implementation.

**Incorporating conflict sensitivity and power into our monitoring, evaluation, reflection and learning**, ensuring it incorporates opportunities to monitor the positive and potential negative impact of programme activities on the peace and conflict context.

**Allow adequate funding for a conflict sensitivity and power analysis** in key programme areas, which are updated for every project over a SEK500,000.

**Consider environmental/land aspects as a potential driver of conflict**, and link the environmental impact assessment with the conflict sensitivity and power analysis.



## The Way Forward

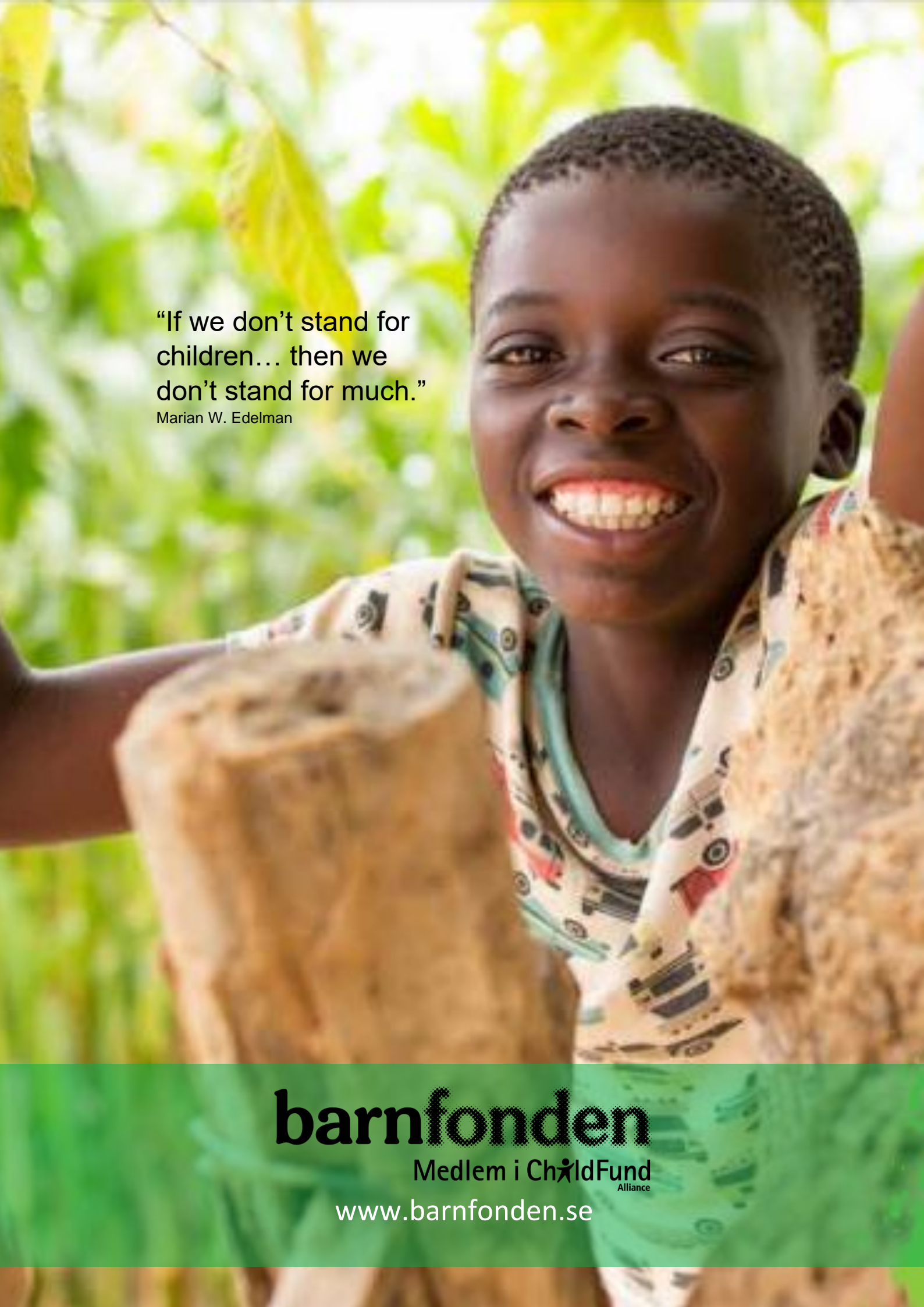
### Barnfonden's Five-year Plan, 2021-2025

#### **Increase internal knowledge, systems, operations and processes**

- **Donor services** – They will be trained in power relations, relevant to donor/recipient relations. This will allow them to manage expectations (for instance, with sponsor visits) and steer appropriate communication through letter writing.
- **Communication and marketing** – They will understand the power of written and visual mediums and their potential to unintentionally incite tension and conflict. Ensure campaigns are assessed by the program team who have a deeper contextual understanding of the context. Highlight the work of local actors in development, and the importance of civil society working in collaboration with government to attain the country's development goals.
- **Programs** – They will use Sida's Peace and Conflict Toolbox ([Peace and conflict toolbox | Sida](#)) and ensure a conflict sensitivity and power analysis is incorporated into the contextual analysis, and is properly applied. Partner staff should also be familiar with these tools. We will systematically review conflict and power situations through our meetings with in-county partners and in our monitoring process. It will be a standardised topic for discussion and learning. We will support local partners to sustain themselves in the face of 'the shrinking space'.
- **Management** – They will reflect on the power dynamics within our own organisation, and through our staff surveys and regular reviews, analyse situations and establish remedies where conflict and inappropriate power is applied. Reflect on the power dynamics of our donors – their impact on Barnfonden, and the impact on our partners and, again, establish remedies where conflict and inappropriate power is applied.





A close-up photograph of a young boy with dark skin and short, curly hair. He is smiling broadly, showing his teeth. He is holding a large, round, golden-brown piece of bread in front of him with both hands. He is wearing a light-colored shirt with a pattern of small, colorful cars. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting foliage.

“If we don’t stand for  
children... then we  
don’t stand for much.”

Marian W. Edelman

**barnfonden**

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