



Save the Children

**WHAT WE BELIEVE,  
WHAT WE'LL DO**

Save the Children UK's  
2019–2021 strategy

# WHO WE ARE

**Save the Children UK is a member of the Save the Children movement, which is made up of 28 member organisations. We operate in more than 120 countries and directly reached 50 million children in 2017.**

**This document sets out Save the Children UK's 2019–21 strategic plan, which supports the global strategy of our movement.**

Save the Children fights for children every single day.

We stand side by side with children in the toughest places to be a child. We do whatever it takes to make sure they survive, get protection when they're in danger, and have the chance to learn.

Because every child should be able to make their mark on the world and build a better future for us all.



100 years ago an extraordinary woman drew a moral line in the sand. Confronted with evidence that a humanitarian blockade was killing children in other countries, she defied the law, organised an event to raise money for the innocent victims of the blockade, and created an organisation with a simple remit – saving children.

That woman was our founder, Eglantyne Jebb. And the organisation she created is now part of a global movement.

All of us in Save the Children UK are custodians of the legacy Eglantyne Jebb created. This strategy sets out how we will build on that legacy.

Over the next three years we will sharpen our focus on the most deprived children, both in our programmes and our campaigning. We will work harder to engage the UK public, providing a platform for people who want to make their voices heard. We will strengthen our use of evidence. And we will build an organisation that reflects the values of dignity and respect on which we were founded.

Above all, we will work relentlessly with children and for children to advance their rights.

There is no greater cause – and I hope you will join our mission.

**Kevin Watkins**  
**Chief Executive Officer,**  
**Save the Children UK**



# WHAT WE BELIEVE

**In our centenary year, we've gone back to our roots. We were founded to stand up for children in conflict and to fight for every child's right to a future.**

**Today, these values remain at the heart of our organisation. Over the next three years, every step we take will help to create a world where children don't just survive, but thrive – and go on to shape the future we all share.**

Save the Children's  
founder, Eglantyne Jebb

# 100 YEARS FIGHTING FOR CHILDREN

In 1919, in the aftermath of the first world war, a British naval blockade left children in parts of mainland Europe starving. Spurred on by the belief that “all wars, whether just or unjust, disastrous or victorious, are waged against the child”, a woman called Eglantyne Jebb began handing out protest leaflets in London’s Trafalgar Square.

She was arrested, tried and fined. Out of that protest, Save the Children was born.

Today, faced with devastating conflicts in Yemen, Syria and South Sudan, that determination to protect children in war remains at the core of our mission.

Jebb brought to life the idea of children’s rights. As a campaigner, she paved the way for what became the United Nations

Convention on the Rights of the Child – a document that, in the words of Nelson Mandela, “enshrines the rights of every child without exception, to a life of dignity and self-fulfilment”.

Today, those rights have been adopted as the promise of the world in the form of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Signed by governments in 2015, the SDGs are a universal call to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

The goals include ending preventable child deaths, malnutrition and extreme poverty, and expanding opportunities for education by 2030. We advocated for and welcomed the promise from governments to ‘leave no one behind’ by putting the furthest behind first.



**“ALL WARS...  
ARE WAGED  
AGAINST  
THE CHILD.”**

Eglantyne Jebb

A Save the Children  
nurse with children  
in Lebanon, 1952

# NOW MORE THAN EVER

Despite those commitments by global leaders, the gap between the world we're capable of creating and the real experiences of children has never been greater.

The world is off track for achieving the SDGs. On current trends there will still be over **3 million** preventable child deaths in 2030. The number of children affected by conflict is at record levels: **420 million** children – close to one-fifth of children worldwide – are living in a conflict zone. More than a quarter of a billion are out of school, with many more in school but not learning. **151 million** children suffer from malnutrition.

Changing this picture will require a relentless focus on the most deprived children. That means challenging the inequalities that deny so many children a fair chance in life.

In seeking to address these injustices we face huge challenges.

While national governments are today the most important actors in delivering children's rights, the emergence of populist regimes and other political changes have shrunk the operating space of non-governmental organisations and other civil society groups in many countries.

In the UK, Brexit could narrow the bandwidth for government action on other international questions, and there is a hostile media climate on UK aid. Alongside this, a Charity Commission inquiry into the governance of Save the Children led us to withdraw temporarily from submitting new funding bids to the UK government.

Mylene and her daughter Mary Anne, who is malnourished, outside their home in the Philippines.



Carlo Gabuco/Save the Children

**A RELENTLESS  
FOCUS ON  
THE MOST  
DEPRIVED AND  
MARGINALISED  
CHILDREN**

Yet this is also a moment of real opportunity. The world has unprecedented resources, technology and know-how to achieve the 2030 ambition of the SDGs. Through our programmes, our campaigning work for and with children, and our commitment to strengthen our organisational culture, we can make a difference. Our strategy sets out how we'll help make the 2030 promise to children a reality.



A young girl gets a health check at a clinic in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Charlie Forgham-Bailey/Save the Children

# WHAT WE'LL DO

**We fight for children every single day. Everything we do is aligned behind three broad 'breakthroughs for children' to make sure more children survive, more children have the chance to learn and more children are protected when they're in danger.**

**Because every child should be able to thrive and to make their mark on the world.**

**We target our efforts at those children who have been left behind – for example, because they're poor, disabled or from an ethnic minority; or because they're a girl.**

**CENTENARY  
COMMITMENT**

**Under each breakthrough, we're focusing on a specific strategic priority – a Centenary Commitment – to enable us to make the biggest difference in children's lives.**



**“PNEUMONIA IS  
SOMETHING THAT ...  
SHOULD NOT  
KILL A CHILD.”**

Jedidah, Save the  
Children health worker

Akokote, age one, from Kenya, was diagnosed with pneumonia. “I thought she was going to die,” says her mother Akuan.

Thankfully, with support from a community health worker trained by Save the Children, Akokote made a successful recovery.



## HELP MORE CHILDREN SURVIVE

To ensure more children survive, we'll focus on:

**CENTENARY  
COMMITMENT**

### **Tackling childhood pneumonia**

Although pneumonia is preventable and treatable, it's the biggest infectious killer of children. Children who are poor and disadvantaged are at by far the greatest risk.

To fight this disease, we're building powerful coalitions and partnerships in countries and at the global level with UNICEF, the World Health Organization and others. We're calling for – and will work closely with – governments in Somalia, Nigeria, India and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to develop fully budgeted pneumonia action plans that will make real and sustainable change for children.

### **Fighting malnutrition**

Malnutrition is the underlying cause of one-third of children's deaths. We'll focus on five countries – DRC, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen – to develop community-based approaches to prevent and treat malnutrition. Working with new partners we aim to raise £20 million by 2022.

### **Protecting health in humanitarian emergencies**

The lives of children are threatened by the diseases and hunger that come with humanitarian emergencies. Through our Emergency Health Unit and other interventions we will reach up to 1.5 million people in emergencies.



# EMPOWER MORE CHILDREN TO **LEARN**

We'll focus on children living in **conflicts and emergencies** – including refugee children – making sure they get the education they and their parents invariably tell us is children's number one priority.



Haaniya, age three, attends one of our **Families Connect** projects in the UK.

We'll build evidence of what works for education in emergencies and use this knowledge to influence policy-makers and practitioners. We'll engage the World Bank, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the EU on funding for education in emergencies, making girls' provision a priority.

We'll continue to co-lead with UNICEF the 'global cluster' that coordinates education in emergency responses. And we will continue to take part in the Education Cannot Wait global fund.

**CENTENARY COMMITMENT**

Here in the UK, where early inequalities blight so many young lives, we'll focus on **early years learning** to make sure that young children, particularly those growing up in poor families, get a great start in life.



Hamnah Maule-Finch/Save the Children

**"I HAVE FOUND  
THOSE WHO CAN  
SPEAK MY  
LANGUAGE...  
THEY TEACH ME"**

Munguiko, Uganda

Munguiko\*, 14, at a child-friendly space we run in a refugee camp in Uganda.

"At first, I was alone. I didn't have any friends to play with and some of them spoke a language I didn't understand," he says.

"As I began to come to the centre, I have found those who can speak my language, people my age who I can play with. And they teach me."





Mohammed Awadh/Save the Children

**“I WISH THE WAR  
WOULD STOP,  
SO I CAN GET BACK HOME  
BACK TO MY FRIENDS  
AND SCHOOL.”**

Razan, Yemen

Razan, from Yemen, was injured when shrapnel from a bomb pierced her eye. Her family couldn't afford medical fees, but our staff helped her get hospital treatment. She has now recovered.

“I'm happy,” she says, “I'm not going back to the hospital and I'm happy that I'm alive.”



## PROTECT MORE CHILDREN FROM HARM

Children are more at risk from war and conflict than at any time in the last 20 years. This is the crisis of our time. And it's what we were born to respond to.

### CENTENARY COMMITMENT

To help protect the most vulnerable children, we are launching a global campaign to **Stop the War on Children**. We'll mobilise the public, politicians and our own programmes to generate attention, accountability and action. In line with our belief in children's rights, we'll increase the scale, quality and impact of our protection work in **conflict-affected countries**.



Sam Turling/Save the Children

Girls return home from school in the conflict-ravaged city of Mosul, Iraq.

# OUR CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITIES

Our three breakthroughs – to ensure many more children survive, learn and are protected from harm – spearhead our impact.

They are underpinned by three cross-cutting priorities that define how we effect change in children's lives.

Save the Children staff play with children who survived an earthquake in Indonesia.



Uncredi Uko/Save the Children

## 1 Improve the quality and impact of our programmes

We'll use evidence-based approaches; capture and adapt to what we learn; and explore innovative solutions, including digital approaches. Drawing on the best available evidence, we'll prioritise the delivery of high-impact, cost-effective interventions – and our programme evidence will inform our campaigning work.

## 2 Hold governments to account for delivering the Sustainable Development Goals.

We'll:

- track and report on disadvantaged groups (using our group-based inequality database) and work with the World Bank, UN agencies and governments to strengthen reporting on children who are left behind
- call for equitable funding and service delivery for children who are left behind
- campaign with children and for children, sharing best practice from our own campaigning in the UK with other members of the Save the Children movement to scale up children's advocacy.

## 3 Sharpen our global footprint

Aligning with the global presence of the wider Save the Children movement, we'll prioritise up to 30 countries over three years, reviewing this annually. Priority countries include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, DRC, Ethiopia, Iraq, Kenya, Lebanon, Malawi, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, the occupied Palestinian territory, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Uganda, the UK, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

We'll continue to respond to all category 1 emergencies regardless of country, and to category 2 emergencies in non-priority countries where 80% of preconditions are met. Our response to category 3 and 4 emergencies will focus on our priority countries.

## Fighting for children's rights

Children's rights are at the heart of everything we do. Fighting for the rights of every child means not only delivering food, medicine and protection, but holding governments accountable to providing these basic needs themselves. And it means including children, listening to them and amplifying their voices for the world to hear.

It's our duty to reach and create change for children left behind – those in deepest poverty or in remote and dangerous places, and those who face discrimination and disadvantage.

For example, we'll accelerate efforts to tackle gender inequality, focusing on ensuring protection services are available to all teenage girls we work with in conflict settings and in category 1 emergencies.



Allen Gichigi/Save the Children

**CHILDREN'S RIGHTS  
ARE AT  
THE HEART OF  
EVERYTHING  
WE DO**

Louren, age eight, from Kenya, at a centre for children with disabilities where he comes every day for physiotherapy



# HOW WE'LL DO IT

**For a century we've stood side by side with children – delivering life-saving aid and development, connecting the public with our cause and campaigning for change.**

**This joined-up approach is at the heart of Save the Children. It defines how we work to transform children's lives, so that they have the chance to realise their potential and make their mark on the world.**

**But we know we need to adapt to new challenges. Over the next three years we'll invest in our local offices and our global infrastructure. By boosting our country offices' capacity to deliver programmes and influence national policies, we'll shift resources and expertise closer to children.**

# OUR ORGANISATIONAL PRIORITIES

## Build our Save the Children movement's presence on the frontline

Being part of a global movement enables us to achieve more change for children. That's why we will work with colleagues across the world to strengthen our movement, extending its reach and strengthening its impact.

Over the next three years we'll invest in country offices, so that power, resources and accountability move to where they're needed most – closer to children. We'll build more, collectivised resources that can be shared across all members of Save the Children. And we'll help build a clearer and more effective governance structure for our movement.

## Deepen our connection to supporters

100 years ago our founder understood that lasting change for children required not just effective programmes, but advocacy and campaigning for children's rights.

Building on her legacy, we'll create a platform for our supporters in the UK to make their voices heard – and to make a difference – for children around the world.

We'll nurture and grow active, long-term relationships with our supporters and expand our campaigning work with children to create substantial and sustainable change.

To inspire the public to act for our cause, the power and potential of children will be at the heart of all of our communications.

## Strengthen our organisation

Save the Children's mission is rooted in a commitment to dignity, respect and basic human decency. Over the next three years we'll build the workplace culture our mission demands and our staff deserve.

Through building strong capacity and capability we'll enable and inspire everyone who works for us to achieve their best for children.

We'll deliver a diversity and inclusion strategy and hold ourselves accountable for progress by measuring staff engagement annually.

DELIVERING THE  
BEST FOR  
CHILDREN,  
SUPPORTERS  
AND OUR STAFF



A young fundraiser at work

# DELIVERING CHANGE

We have a number of key approaches to help us achieve our goals:

## **Safeguarding**

This is the cross-cutting priority for us. If we fail in our commitment to do no harm, our entire mission fails: the most vulnerable children and adults will be harmed, we'll lose the trust of those we serve, and the impact on our wider strategy will be profound. We'll work with the rest of the Save the Children movement to build safeguarding capacity, enlarge our pool of trained and accredited investigators, and take a leading role in implementing international safeguarding standards.

## **Use insight to build our impact**

We'll build evidence and insight across all our programmatic, policy and public-facing work. That means investing more in the generation of evidence and the deployment of evidence to advance child rights

## **Be accountable and transparent**

We will be open and accountable to our beneficiaries, supporters, donors and other stakeholders. The key elements of our strategy (set out in this document) will each have their own accountability mechanism to track and report on progress.

# 7 KEY APPROACHES TO HELP US ACHIEVE OUR GOALS

## **Strengthen our organisational infrastructure**

We'll invest in staff and technology to improve our programmes for children, our relationships with supporters and the efficiency of our internal processes and systems.

## **Deliver value for money**

We'll initiate a number of projects to maximise our efficiency, reduce our cost base and strengthen controls. We will push for value for money in the design and execution of our programmes. And we'll work with the wider Save the Children movement to harmonise systems and processes, and to develop shared services.

## **Develop creative, equal and productive partnerships**

To achieve our goals it's crucial for us to work closely with national governments, the private sector, local organisations, global funders and other organisations in our sector.

## **Build a clear brand**

Our brand positioning summarises who we are, what makes us different and how we're relevant to our audiences. Reflecting our brand in everything we do better connects us to our audiences and inspires their support.

# SAVE THE CHILDREN UK 2019–2021 STRATEGY

## WHAT WE BELIEVE, WHAT WE'LL DO

We hold children's rights at the heart of everything we do, amplifying young voices and challenging ourselves and others to listen

We prioritise the most deprived and marginalised children

We fight for large-scale and lasting change for children

We are committed to moving power, resource and accountability to where change happens: closer to children

## GLOBAL BREAKTHROUGHS



### SURVIVE

By 2030, no child will die from preventable causes before their fifth birthday



### LEARN

By 2030, all children will learn from a quality basic education



### BE PROTECTED

By 2030, violence against children will no longer be tolerated

## OUR HIGHEST PRIORITIES

Malnutrition

Pneumonia

Education in emergencies

Impact for UK children

Protect children in conflict

Humanitarian public health

Hold governments to account for equitable financing and tracking SDG progress

## HOW WE'LL CHANGE AS AN ORGANISATION

Build our movement  
Deepen our connection to supporters  
Strengthen our organisation and workplace culture



Jonathan Hiyams/Save the Children

Noura, age two, with her sister, Shadia, eight, at a camp in Yemen. Noura is being treated by our mobile health team for severe acute malnutrition.

**The threats faced by millions of children – poverty, conflict, hunger – are daunting. But in a world of unrivalled wealth and potential, we have both a remarkable opportunity and a responsibility to transform children’s chances – and the future we all share.**

**The prize is extraordinary. Together we can ensure that every child survives, learns and is protected – so that they can have the chance to fulfil their potential and to go on to build a better world.**

**This strategy shows how, together, we can help make that promise a reality.**



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