OUR AMBITION
We have a big, bold ambition: we want a world in which all children survive, learn and are protected. Through our work we strive towards achieving three breakthroughs in the way the world treats children:

GLOBAL BREAKTHROUGHS 2030

SURVIVE
No child dies from preventable causes before their fifth birthday

LEARN
All children learn from a quality basic education

BE PROTECTED
Violence against children is no longer tolerated

Save the Children
MESSAGE FROM COUNTRY DIRECTOR

As Save the Children in Afghanistan Country Director, I am pleased and privileged to introduce the 2017 Annual Report. I arrived in October 2017 for my second assignment in Afghanistan with Save the Children. My first assignment provided me with a very positive memory on the motivation and determination of the Afghan people and the beauty of this country and its culture. Hence I did not hesitate when I was presented with the opportunity to come and lead the team.

During the past year, Save the Children played a substantial role towards its Global Breakthroughs, Survive, Learn, and Be Protected. With a key focus on Education, Health and Nutrition, Child Protection, Food Security and Livelihood, and Humanitarian response we reached over 1.9 Million people directly including 1.5 million children. Save the Children also continued its effort in addressing the needs of returnees and internally displaced populations in Afghanistan, most especially children. In 2017, over 550,000 Afghans returned to Afghanistan from Iran and Pakistan, whereas a further 445,000 people were displaced internally in Afghanistan due to both conflict and natural disaster.

Save the Children has given a particular focus to the role of education in breaking the cycle of poverty for the most deprived and vulnerable children in Afghanistan. We have contributed to the coordination of Education in Emergency through our role as co-lead of the EIE Working group and to Girls Education through our STAGES Program. Protection remains a concern for many vulnerable children in Afghanistan and includes early marriage, child recruitment in armed forces and groups, child abuse and exploitation at the expense of the opportunity for education. Therefore, through our Every Last Child Campaign, we continued to support and advocate for children rights with our partners and for the enactment of the Child Act by the parliament. Save the Children also commissioned a Knowledge Attitude Practice (KAP) survey focused on Child Protection issues including sexual violence, physical and humiliating punishment at school, home and community, child labor, gender based violence and child protection mechanisms. The resulting report has been launched and shared with all the relevant stakeholders. Another one of our key programs that we have successfully continued is our “working street children” project that supports vulnerable children working in the streets of Kabul and Balkh provinces with opportunities for vocational training. Save the Children continues to play a significant role alongside other agencies and the government to push the barriers in ensuring that children know, understand and access their rights. Last but not least I would like to highlight the “Let’s write for Children” project that was a real success and ensured the creation of 3,400 children books in both Pashtun and Dari languages.

Furthermore, Save the Children has increased its focus on program quality with the role out of our quality benchmarks that allow us to have consistent pulse check on how our programs are performing and address any inadequacies. All of these efforts have been achieved by our amazing team of staff, community workers and volunteers to which I owe my gratitude for their dedication and hard work which in turn has been made possible through the support and acceptance of the communities we work if and for. Our programs would also not have been possible without the support of our donors as well as our partners including Government Ministries, Provincial Departments and many more, whom I thank for their continued support. Let me finish to say that despite the challenges we have met in early 2018 with our office in Jalalabad we remain committed to improve the lives of Children in Afghanistan.

Onno van Manen

Country Director Save the Children in Afghanistan
SAVE THE CHILDREN

Save the Children is the world’s leading independent organisation for children. It is comprised of Save the Children International and 30 member organisations working to deliver change and ensure the greatest possible impact for children in more than 120 countries around the world.

Save the Children in Afghanistan is a non-governmental, non-profit, non-political, and independent international organisation which has been working for Afghanistan since 1976. Save the Children is committed to implementing programs in various provinces of Afghanistan, either directly or through partners, reaching over 1,000,000 children in the recent years.

Save the Children in Afghanistan works closely with communities and other stakeholders at all levels. We work with children, parents, teachers, village councils, religious leaders, ministries and other national and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Our approach of closely engaging the communities has enabled us to deliver lasting change to thousands of children in Afghanistan.

Our Vision is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation.

Our Mission is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.

OUR VALUES

Accountability: We take personal responsibility for using our resources efficiently, achieving measurable results, and being accountable to supporters, partners and, most of all, children.

Collaboration: We respect and value each other, thrive on our diversity, and work with partners to leverage our global strength in making a difference for children.

Creativity: We are open to new ideas, embrace change, and take disciplined risks to develop sustainable solutions for and with children.

Integrity: We aspire to live to the highest standards of personal honesty and behaviour; we never compromise our reputation and always act in the best interests of children.

Save the Children’s Coverage in 2017

- Save the Children and Partners
  - Kabul
  - Nangarhar
  - Kunduz
  - Balkh
  - Sari Pul
  - Jawzjan
  - Faryab
  - Kandahar

- Through Partners
  - Bamiyan
  - Laghman
  - Kunar
  - Takhar
  - Badakhshan
  - Daikondi
  - Uruzgan
Financial Overview
Total Expenditures USD 18 MILLION

- Support Cost
- Program Cost

Expenditures: Through Save the Children $0.5
Expenditures: Through Partner $17.5M

Program Input by Thematic Area in USD

- Health and Nutrition: 2,453,000
- Education: 3,348,000
- Child Protection: 1,630,000
- Emergency Response and Disaster Risk Reduction: 4,524,000
- Food Security and Livelihoods: 476,000
- Cross Thematic: 922,000

Program Input by Country Office and Sub-Offices in USD

- Badakhshan: 595,600
- Balkh: 613,400
- Bamyan: 141,100
- Farah: 1,424,500
- Jawzjan: 602,400
- Kabul: 3,496,600
- Kandahar: 1,174,600
- Kunduz: 2,073,900
- Nangarhar: 2,135,500
- Sari Pul: 1,094,500
- Takhar: 900

1. Support cost covers the organization’s support staff salaries (Human Resource, Finance, Logistics, and Admin), and administration cost (office rent, utilities, communication, transportation, office supply, and all equipment that run the organization’s operation).
COUNTRY OVERVIEW

Program Overview
Total Beneficiaries Directly Reached 2 Million

- Direct Reach: 4.6M
- Indirect Reach: 2.0M

- Boys Directly Reached: 0.77M
- Girls Directly Reached: 0.19M
- Women Directly Reached: 0.18M
- Men Directly Reached: 0.86M

Direct Reach by Thematic Area

- Health and Nutrition: 533,400
- Education: 1,231,400
- Child Protection: 27,300
- Emergency Response and Disaster Risk Reduction: 181,600
- Food Security and Livelihoods: 52,200

Direct Reach by Province

- Badakhshan: 60,000
- Balkh: 119,800
- Bamyan: 34,100
- Farah: 180,300
- Jowzjan: 152,000
- Kabul: 527,000
- Kunduz: 128,000
- Nangarhar: 240,000
- Sar-e-Pul: 380,000
- Takhar: 152,000

2. In 2017, Save the Children reached a total of over 4.6 million people indirectly through social media, Radio, TVs, reports, and communities at the Save the Children’s coverage areas and nationally.
HEALTH AND NUTRITION

In 2017, Save the Children provided support to its target beneficiaries through delivering and increasing access and quality of primary health, nutrition and trauma care services aligned with its “Survive” breakthrough. Save the Children specifically responded to acute health and nutrition humanitarian needs, capacity building of facility and community-based health workers and support to static and mobile health teams.

Save the Children directly reached a total of 533,400 individuals (65% children) and approximately 200,000 individuals indirectly, through the implementation of various projects in Kunduz, Kandahar and Nangarhar provinces of Afghanistan:

- “System Enhancement for Health Action in Transition (SEHAT)”, with the main objective of reducing the mortality amongst the target population in Kunduz province with a specific emphasis on maternal, newborn and child health and nutrition (MNCHN) services.
- “Life-Saving Trauma Care Services to Conflict Affected Populations” with the main objective of reducing morbidity and mortality among conflict-affected population through provision of trauma care in Kunduz province.
- “Emergency Health, Nutrition and Protection for Returnees and IDPs” with the objective to reduce vulnerability of crisis-affected people, specifically women and children.
- “Targeted Supplementary Feeding Program” aimed at providing supplementary feeding for moderately acute malnourished children 6-59 months, and acutely malnourished Pregnant and Lactating Women.

Key Achievements of Health and Nutrition Program in 2017:

- 13,972 pregnant and lactating women benefited from the distribution of supplementary food for nine months.
- 3,972 pregnant and lactating women received counseling on optimal infant and young child feeding (IYCF).
- 1,009,200 health consultations were provided.
- 9,070 deliveries were attended by skilled birth attendants;
- 18,137 children under the age of one received Penta 3, and 16,161 received measles vaccine.
- 13,192 cases of pneumonia and 56,453 cases of diarrhea were treated in under five year old children.
- 8,841 conflict and non-conflict affected trauma cases were treated/referred.
- 5,856 children under the age of five were screened for malnutrition.
Nargis

Nargis is 26 years old, and a mother of five. Her eldest and only son is ten years and goes to school. Twelve years ago she got married. Nargis is originally from Jalalabad city of Nangarhar province but after she got married she went to Pakistan to live with her in-laws. She was a refugee with her husband for ten years. Nargis never had an opportunity to go to school as a child because her family was poor. She married into a very traditional and religious family and her in-laws are very sensitive on issues of culture and women rights. Nargis was rarely allowed to go to the clinic for any health issues, and she was quite unhappy and dissatisfied with her life. Her husband was jobless and the family was generally struggling to meet their basic needs. She lived in one room with her five children, and did not have access to quality food and water. Nargis had only one son and she was trying to get more children with the hope of getting a son, as expected by culture, with the belief that life gets better with more boys.

Nargis along with her family and in-laws returned to Afghanistan last year. She conceived, and during her pregnancy she never visited a clinic because there was none in her village. She gave birth without any midwife or healthcare. After the establishment of the IHA clinic by Save the Children; to treat and respond to child and maternal emergency health, nutrition and protection services for returnees and IDPs, Nargis started going to the clinic regularly for her child’s vaccines and malnutrition treatment.

Madina is eight months old now, although she was born underweight. She suffered from malnutrition, because Nargis never received any healthcare from a clinic while pregnant. When Nargis gave birth, Madina was suffering from malnutrition, and she was referred to the clinic to make sure Madina recovered. Nargis started going regularly to the clinic five months ago, and received malnutrition treatment as well as vaccines. Within five months Madina gained two kilograms. She is now normal weight and most of her vaccines are done. Nargis also received training on hygiene in order to avoid diseases like diarrhea and infections, and on breastfeeding and how to feed her children.

“When Madina was born, she was very weak and she was not able to breastfeed for several days. I lost hope thinking she was going to die. After sometime I got to know about a clinic where I could take her for treatment. When I showed my daughter to the doctor he gave me hope that she would recover soon. I received the feeding schedule and advice on breastfeeding for Madina, and the special food for malnutrition provided by the clinic. I visited the doctor regularly for five months, and now I am very happy because my daughter completely recovered. After I received the hygiene training, most of the diseases that my children were suffering from decreased. Now I have knowledge on what I must to do to avoid diarrhea, nausea and other diseases which are due to poor hygiene practices. I am very happy and appreciate Save the Children for providing health facilities that save many lives here!”
LEARN

EDUCATION

Save the Children significantly contributed to children’s education in 2017, aligned with its global breakthrough “Learn” by delivering and increasing children access to education at the community level in all its operational provinces.

Save the Children directly reached a total of 1,231,400 individuals (92% children) through the implementation of various projects in all its coverage areas which included:

- “Steps towards Afghan Girls’ Education Success (STAGES)”, which is a flagship girls’ education program in Afghanistan with the aim of helping the most marginalized girls to access education, stay in school and achieve improved learning outcomes.
- “Sponsorship” program is aimed at improving child development outcomes, care giving practices, and quality basic education for boys and girls including their knowledge, attitude, practices and behaviors.
- “Let’s Write for the Afghan Children (LWFAC)”, aimed at promoting and improving the reading habits amongst students, teachers and communities, with a focus on early grade reading in Faryab and Sari Pul provinces.
- “ECHO supported Education in Emergency” aimed at providing access to safe formal and non-formal education to 2000 returnee, Internationally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and host children, and to enable them build linkages and integrate with the host-communities in Kandahar province.
- “Community Based Education (CBE) for Children in Dehsabz” with the main objective of ensuring the fulfillment of fundamental rights of school age boys and girls to basic education in Dehsabz district of Kabul province.
- “CHF funded Education in Emergencies” with the aim of providing access to education for returnee, IDP and host children in Nangarhar and Kandahar provinces.

Key Achievements of Education Program in 2017:

✓ Reading fluency per minute of girls CBE and Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) classes in Kabul, Faryab and Kandahar provinces increased.
✓ 2,350 CBE graduate students were handed over to formal schools for mainstreaming into formal education system.
✓ 449 CBE classes in the target communities were established in Kabul, Kandahar and Faryab provinces.
✓ Approximately 80,000 textbooks and 2,500 teachers/students’ kits were distributed.
✓ Over 300 Emergency in Education-CBE classes in high returnee/IDP settlement areas of Nangarhar and Kandahar provinces were established.
✓ 66 Shuras, with 201 members received training and mentorship to manage and ensure quality classroom lessons, learning environment and protection support to the children especially girls in CBE classes and formal schools.
✓ 8,500 returnee/IDP/host children were reached with quality education and psychosocial support in EIE classes.
✓ 15 existing public schools were supported with infrastructure, supplies, equipment capacity building and 48 classes received maintenance support.

A female teacher, teaching English lessons to the girls in Lower Secondary CBE class in Kandahar STAGES H

A photo of CBE students in a Save the Children’s CBE class in Kandahar province of Afghanistan in 2017.
Lima is a CBE student 2016-2018 and a seven year old girl live in Dey Yahya village, Dehsabz District, Kabul, Afghanistan

Lima- A CBE student (2016-2018)

Lima daughter of Sayed Waziruddin, lives in Deh Yahia village of Dehsabz district of Kabul province, with her family of eight members (father, mother, one sister and four brothers). Her father is a mason and her mother is a house wife. The family has their own house in Deh Yahia village as well as farm lands inherited from their ancestors. They used to try to fulfil their financial requirements through agricultural cultivation, but that was not enough. So her father started working as a mason with individuals and private companies to fulfil his family’s needs. Lima used to help her mother in her daily work at home but her father felt differently. He wanted his daughter to be educated because he had a visual depiction of the benefits of education in his daily work through relationships with educated people. Lima also wished to go to school, seeing other children going to school in their village.

The main challenge however was not the permission from her family as a daughter, but the long distance to the school because there were no schools in in her village. Finally with the start of the CBE classes in her village, Lima talked with her family to enroll her in the CBE class. Lima is now a CBE student in Deh Yahya village CBE class and this was made possible with the support of her father.
CHILD PROTECTION

In 2017, Save the Children strengthened existing formal and informal child protection systems and contributed to reducing child poverty and vulnerability in alignment with its “Be Protected” breakthrough.

Save the Children directly reached a total of approximately 27,300 individuals (54% children) through implementation of various projects in Kabul, Nangarhar, Jawzjan, Balkh, Sar-i-Pul, and Faryab provinces of Afghanistan which included:

- “Holistic Community Based Child Protection System Strengthening” whose main objective was to strengthen child protection prevention initiatives and quality access to child protection response services, and reduce instances of violence, exploitation and neglect against children.
- “Enhancing Equity for Children Connected with Life-on-the-Streets in Balkh and Nangarhar” with the main objective of reducing childhood poverty and vulnerability of children through increasing access to the basic services and changing the social acceptance and tolerance of households towards children harmful work.
- “Building Capacity of Child Rights Governance actors in Faryab and Kabul provinces” with the main aim of strengthening the implementation of the child rights policies and the enactment of Child Act through enhancing the knowledge and capacity of relevant child rights actors.
- “Promoting capacity of CSOs & LA for Developing Afghan Communities” with the objective of empowering an active and strong Afghan civil society to hold its local authorities accountable.

Key Achievements of Child Protection Program in 2017:

- 12 Child Protection Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Action were prioritized, contextualized and will be utilized by child protection actors in their strategic planning and in measuring the impact of protection interventions through joint initiatives of the CPIE cluster.
- 200 vulnerable children (95 boys 105 girls) were provided with livelihood support through vocational skills training and apprenticeship program.
- 100 vulnerable street working children (50 girls 50 boys) were referred to the health and education services, and 150 parents of these children also received income generation support.

Capacity of members of Child Protection Action Networks (CPANs) (303), District Child Protection Action Networks (50) and Community Based Child Protection Networks (CBCPN) (1,600) was built on various topics including; monitoring of children’s rights violations, case management and follow up mechanism.

Built capacity of eight youth groups, 30 Civil Society Organizations, 80 members of CSO networks, and 80 staff of local authorities on programmatic, networking, and advocacy through capacity enhancement sessions.
Mohammad

Mohammad is 14 years old and the oldest among his family of two sisters and six brothers. He lives with his brothers, sisters and parents in Mazar city of Balkh province in Afghanistan. The family is poor with no steady source of income. To support his family, Mohammad started working on the street, selling snacks and cigarettes where he was able to earn about 150 Afghanis per day. Before this, Mohammad was fixing tyre punctures and had also been doing carpentry work before that, where he earned less than what he earned selling snacks and cigarettes on the streets.

One day Mohammad met a Save the Children’s social worker who had seen him on the street. The social worker informed him about the Save the Children Centre where he could enroll for vocational training. Mohammad was interested and enrolled for vocational training at the Centre, where he acquired the skill of repairing mobile phones like Nokia and Samsung.

He says;

“I am happy to have had the opportunity to acquire the skills to fix mobile phones. When I graduate from school, I will open my own shop to make more money.”

He also says that he learned about child rights; right to live, right to growth, right to education and right to participate in the family discussions, at the Centre.

He finally said;

“I can see a better future for me and have hope that the situation will get better and no child has to work on the streets.”
HUMANITARIAN

EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Save the Children supported the beneficiaries by delivering emergency response with Non Food Items (NFIs) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in 2017, aligned with its “Be Protected” breakthrough.

Save the Children directly reached a total of 181,600 individuals (60% children) and indirectly reached approximately 530,000 individuals through the implementation of various projects in Bamyan, Laghman, Nangarhar, Kabul, Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Kunduz, Kandahar, and Sari-Pul provinces:

- “Strengthening the Resilience of Afghanistan’s Vulnerable Communities Against Disasters (SRACAD)” with the objective of increasing the capacity of vulnerable communities to plan for, respond to, and mitigate the impacts of natural hazards and climate change.
- “Waka Waka project” provided an opportunity to distribute solar lamps to returnee children for lighting during the night.
- “START FUND” a seed grant used to respond to conflict affected IDPs in Sari Pul with NFIs.
- “Building a culture of resilience in Afghanistan’s provinces” with the aim of strengthening the capacity and resilience of communities, local civil-society organizations, and key government authorities at the community, district, provincial, and national levels, to reduce disaster risks through mitigation, preparedness, early warning and resilience; and to respond rapidly and effectively to emergencies, thus preventing the loss of life.

Key Achievements of emergency response in 2017:

- 2500 vulnerable households were provided with livelihoods to cope with the impacts of natural hazards and climate change.
- 30 CERTs and 30 children councils were established at community and in schools respectively.
- 55,384 affected individuals (IDPs and natural disaster) were provided with NFI kits.
- 7,532 individuals were supported with shelter repairing tool kits, 875 tarps were distributed during emergency situations and 30 CERTs were supported with CERT kits.

- 500 government staff at national and sub-national institutions were strengthened with institutional capacity to support communities against natural hazards and climate change impacts.
- Capacity of 171 government staff, 118 communities, children in 72 schools, and 960 CERT members, was built on various key topics including; preparedness against natural hazards and climate change, First Aid, Search and Rescue and CPIE among others.
Abdul Ghafor

Abdul Ghafor is a 58 year old man, who had a fairly good life with his wife and two children in Koursyad village of Shirin Tagab district in Faryab province of Afghanistan. This was before he was forced to leave his village and job due to fighting between members of competing armed opposition groups. He was displaced to Mazar-i-Sharif city of Balkh province with his family when active armed conflict got to his village. Although temperatures were dropping and the cold affecting his vulnerable household, Abdul Ghafor did not expect much support from the community and his relatives.

“I was a teacher in a school in Koursyad village in Shirin Tagab district. The school was closed due to active armed conflict, and all the teachers ran away for fear of abduction and getting killed. After 10 to 15 days of continuous fighting, we finally decided to leave our homes to save our lives”, Abdul Ghafor recalls.

Following reports of the displacements, Save the Children conducted a humanitarian needs assessment, and Abdul Ghafor was selected as one of the beneficiaries for assistance. He, together with other beneficiaries received; blankets, a tarpaulin, a kitchen kit, hygiene kit, and a winter kit that included warm clothing for his family.

“With nothing in this cold weather, this blanket and tarpaulin provided by Save the Children are everything for us. Otherwise, I really did not know what we were going to do in this alien city and with nothing in our possession”, Abdul Ghafar said.

Arifullah

Arifullah is 11 years old and lives in Haijrat Abad village, Rodat district in Nangarhar province of Afghanistan. He used to study and do his homework in the evenings using his small fuel lamp which did not provide sufficient light and was always producing smoke. After receiving the solar lamp from Save the Children, he is much happier when studying and doing his homework because it is brighter and does not produce smoke.

“I am happy with the solar lamp, which I received from Save the Children. It does not need fuel. My father helps me while I am doing my homework and holds the lamp so that I can see well. He always encourages me to study hard and be a good leader in the future so that I can help my people in need”.

A photo of Arifullah, doing his homework using the Solar Lump provided by Save the Children in 2017.
FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOOD

In 2017, Save the Children provided livelihood opportunities for the most vulnerable and poorest families affected by shocks including conflict, natural disasters, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and returnees, through the provision of food security and livelihoods support aligned with its “Be Protected” breakthrough.

Save the Children directly reached a total of 52,200 individuals (53% children) and indirectly reached approximately 350,000 through the implementation of various projects in Balkh, Nangarhar, Kunduz, Kandahar, and Sari Pul provinces:

- “Support to Afghan Returnees for Reintegration”, with the main objective of building resilient communities for Afghan returnees and IDPs, in order to minimize secondary migration, through support to livelihoods and secure basic services.
- “Afghanistan Joint Response” to provide life-saving assistance to address immediate food needs of conflict-affected people, IDPs, returnees and refugees, and also to provide them with basic NFIs and winterization NFIs.

Key Achievements of livelihoods and food security program in 2017:

- 990 households (27,930 individuals) were provided with two months food assistance through unconditional and unrestricted cash transfers.
- 320 IDPs and returnee households were financially supported to restart income generation activities which contributed to their financial resilience.

![Image of children from Helmand province to Kandahar province who received NFI support from Save the Children in 2017.]

**Guldana**

Guldana is a mother of eight, has one son and seven daughters. She was displaced from Sangeen district of Helmand province to Panjwai district of Kandahar province due to conflict. Guldana along with her family had to leave their village for fear of getting killed. Last year an Armed Opposition Group (AOG) killed her son and her brother in-law for not supporting them, however before the incident she was satisfied with her life in Helmand, even with the limited resources. Guldana’s husband was a farmer in their own field, and was able to make some money for their day to day living.

When Guldana along with her eight children arrived in Kandahar they had nothing at all, however she was very happy when she received support (unconditional cash and house kits) from Save the Children after just a few days. The support was through Save the Children’s Afghanistan Joint Responses project that provided life-saving assistance to address the immediate food needs of conflict affected people, IDPs, returnees and refugees, through unconditional cash and house kits. Guldana is very appreciative of Save the Children because she along with her family received support in very hopeless circumstances with nothing to help them survive. They used the cash for food and used the house kit for cooking at home. She now has two impressions; escaping and saving their lives from the conflict, and Save the Children’s support that provided them the opportunity to start a new live!

“I left all my life assets in Helmand when we escaped from AOGs. They killed my young son and my brother in law last year. If we had stayed by, they would have killed us too. I was scared of sending my other children to school as I was concerned that the AOGs would also kill them.”
In 2017, Save the Children increased its efforts towards advocating and campaigning to securing lasting change in children’s lives and with the key aspect of Save the Children’s Theory of Change: be the voice – build partnerships – innovate – achieve results at scale and align with its Country Advocacy Strategy 2016-2018. Throughout the year, Save the children conducted over 100 campaigns at national and local levels and, influenced policies and decisions to achieve lasting change for children. In alignment with its one of national level campaign “Every Last Child-Street Working Children”, Save the Children specifically advocated for the passing of the Child Act by the government to enable a conducive environment for the protection, development, and participation of children in Afghanistan. Save the Children conducted advocacy on policy change in close coordination and collaboration with other powerful child rights actors at the national level.

**Key Highlights of Advocacy Events in 2017**

**Universal Children’s Day**

Save the Children convened the Universal Children’s Day with the theme “National Commitment towards Child Rights in Afghanistan” in November 2017, together with Ministry of Labour Social and Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD), and other Child Rights Actors in Kabul, Afghanistan under its Every Last Child Campaign. The event brought commitments by high government officials and parliament towards increasing support on child rights, especially supporting the enactment of the Child Act by the parliament and resourcing its implementation through the national budget. The event was attended by the H.E. Sarwar Danish- Second Vice President of Afghanistan, Mrs. Fawzia Koofi, Head of Women Affairs, Civil Society and Human Rights Commission of parliament (Wolse Jirga), Ms. Sita Qasimi-a powerful child rights actors from NGOs, children, and media, with the total participation of over 400 individuals. Besides of commitment from the authorities to further support child rights, the event also provided opportunities for post event effective advocacy meetings with Parliament to ensure enactment of the Child Act.

**Photo and Art Exhibition**

In November 2017, Save the Children conducted a Photo and Art Exhibition on the Street Working Children under Every Last Child Campaign in Kabul, Afghanistan. The children who participated represented the situation of street working children through photos and arts that were exhibited in this event. The event envisioned to enable children to speak out for their rights, and for the government to support child rights in Afghanistan. The event brought commitment from both, the parliament to enact the Child Act and to provide support to child rights, and the MoLSAMD to put further efforts by establishing and implementing a new strategy on child protection in close coordination and collaboration with child rights actors in Afghanistan. Besides, the speeches from officials, and the exhibition, the event also brought smiles on the faces of children through a puppet session which conveyed a case of how children working on the streets are affected, especially in their education. Among the over 100 children who participated in the event, 14 of them were supported under Save the Children’s Street Working Children Centres. A 13 year old girl “Sahra” was one of them and this is what she said “I am passionate to learn photography... and believe I can be a good photographer in future to earn money. This is a good opportunity for us to reflect on the sad realities of our living conditions through taking pictures and showing to the people and government entities to provide us our basic rights”.

**Notes**

H.E. Sarwar Danish- Second Vice President of Afghanistan making speech during the Universal Children’s Day 2017 in Kabul Afghanistan.

Mrs. Fawzia Koofi, Head of Women Affairs, Civil Society and Human Rights Commission of parliament (Wolse Jirga) making speech during the Photo & Art Exhibition-Street Working Children event in September 2017 in Kabul, Afghanistan.
PARTNERSHIPS

Save the Children has a partnership unit that deals directly with partners. Its main role is to identify new partners through screening, conducting organization assessments, identifying gaps, developing capacity building plans and building capacity of partners based on their needs. In 2017, Save the Children implemented the following projects through the following seven partners:

• Agency for Assistance and Development of Afghanistan (AADA) working in the education, Health and Nutrition sector in Takar, Nangarhar, Faryab, Kabul and Samangan province.
• Care for Afghan Family (CAF) operates in a number of provinces including Badakhshan, Logar and Kunduz. They implemented programs in Health and Nutrition.
• Youth Health and Development Organization (YHDO) works in Education, Child Protection, Health and Gender and HIV, in most of the provinces of Afghanistan including: Bamiyan, Badakhshan, Nanggarhar, Khost, Paktia, Logar, Kandahar, Nimroz, Samangan Badghis, among others.
• Empowerment Centre for Women (ECW) works in Women Empowerment, Education, Child Protection, and Advocacy.
• Help the Afghan Children (HTAC) works in several provinces including: Jawzjan and Sar-I-Pul, Kabul, Nangarhar, Parwan, Samangan, Laghman, among others focusing on Child Protection, Education and Women Empowerment Vocational Training and Advocacy.
• Humanitarian Assistance and development Association for Afghanistan (HADAAF), working in Child Protection, Education, Agriculture and Health in Nangarhar, Kabul, Nooristan, Kunar and Zabul provinces.

The projects implemented with/through partners included:

• Holistic Community Based Child Protection System Strengthening project funded by SIDA.
• Building Capacity of Child Rights Governance actors in Faryab and Kabul province funded by EU.
• Let’s Write for the Afghan Children (LWFAC) funded by Nederlandse Postcode Loterij.
• System Enhancement for Health Action in Transition (SEHAT) funded by World Bank through Ministry of Public Health of Afghanistan.

Implemented Projects by Partners
Over USD 0.5 Million

• Life-Saving Trauma Care Services to Conflict Affected Populations, funded by CHF—UNOCHA.

Save the Children also signed a strategic Memorandum of Understanding with each of 11 national NGOs to provide support during emergency situations in different provinces of Afghanistan were Save the Children had no access or office due to the volatile security situation. Save the Children also provided support to three national NGOs (CHA, HADAAF and RSSAO) through capacity building trainings, reviewing and providing technical inputs/feedback on their policies and strategies, on the job trainings, and conducting joint field visits. This was under the twinning program funded by DFID through Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief & Development (ACBAR).

Save the Children developed a Partnership Framework to guide its work with partners to improve program implementation through the partnership approach. The lessons learned from Save the Children’s work with partners overtime, has demonstrated increased engagement with community leaders outside the direct beneficiary groups, and encouraged broader community acceptance of the program initiatives. The strong coordination with national and provincial government on a regular basis allowed sharing of resources and greater sustainability. Partnership with local NGOs that have a daily presence in the field and providing similar services, enabled faster commencement of implementation and easier handover at the end of the program.
**MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING (MEAL)**

**Embedding MEAL in Programs**

The Culture of MEAL in Save the Children encompasses the values, behaviors, expectations and interactions that are required to make MEAL functional.

**Using Quality Benchmarks (QBs) for monitoring**

To systematize project monitoring and facilitate corrective actions, all Save the Children projects developed quality benchmarks for key project activities/interventions. For Save the Children, Quality Benchmarks are activity level process standards used to improve key program activities. They go beyond Minimum Standards, moving from the ‘minimum’ to a higher level of relevant and appropriate quality we should strive to achieve. All projects developed quality benchmarks for key project activities/interventions, and developed a mapping of all Quality Benchmarks (QBs) used by the different projects. 12 out of 15 projects developed quality benchmarks for key project activities/interventions. Over 1000 quality monitoring actions were generated, tracked and acted upon.

**Accountability to beneficiaries**

Save the Children projects activated and maintained functional accountability systems (Complaint and Feedback Mechanism (CFM)) at the project level. Two major CFM systems used were: 1- Hotline system, and 2- face to face meetings. The hotline system consisted of a mobile telephone (+93 (0) 72 832 222) centralized in the Country Office. The face to face mechanism, involved the project MEAL staff operating a complaint/information desk during activities implementation. During 2017, Accountability to beneficiaries improved across the country office from 35% to 100% of the projects having established at least one form of a complaint feedback mechanism to effectively collect and respond to feedback and complaints.

**Summary of Research and Evaluations**

Save the Children commissioned three end of project Evaluations. The evaluations were completed on time and with the report meeting the “the agreed evaluation quality threshold for Save the Children. The evaluated projects were:

- Improving Nutrition for Mothers, Newborns and Children in Afghanistan
- Support to Afghan returnees for reintegration
- Building a Culture of Resilience in Afghanistan’s Provinces

**Utilizing information to review progress**

Having MEAL systems in place and operational is not an end in itself. As part of MEAL systems review and reflection based on monitoring results, the MEAL unit facilitated an annual workshop for staff to enable learning for continual improvement.
Save the Children has a robust human resource unit both at the country office and provincial levels that continuously provides support to staff. Save the Children is committed to recruiting professionals, providing staff development opportunities and retaining talent.

In 2017, Save the Children had a total of 910 regular staff (671 male and 239 female) representing 26% female which is an achievement in the Afghanistan context, were the cultural norms encourage women to work more at home for security reasons, among others. Nonetheless, there are prospects of achieving more than 26% for female empowerment in Save the Children programs, if the limitations around these challenges are addressed. Of the 910 staff, 293 are in Kabul, 104 in Kunduz, 94 in Nangarhar, 111 in Faryab, 62 Jawzjan, 67 in Balkh, 81 in Kandahar and 98 in Sari Pul provinces.

Save the Children successfully promoted/recruited a number of staff within strategic positions in the Senior Management Team (SMT). The average representation of national staff in the SMT has significantly increased due to this deliberate initiative. Save the Children has recently finalized its 2017 staff performance appraisals with some exceeding expectations.

As a child focused organization, Save the Children takes a pro-active approach to child safeguarding. All new staff are required to sign and adhere to a child safeguarding policy within the organization. All cases reported relating to child safeguarding where properly handled based on clear policies and procedures. Save the Children staff have shown dedication and commitment in contributing to the learning, survival and protection of all children in Afghanistan, and have taken up roles and responsibilities in some of the most challenging locations with honor and pride.
In 2017, Save the Children successfully implemented all the projects documented in this report with the generous and continuous support of the following Donors.

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<td>UNOCHA - United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</td>
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<td>ECHO - European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (European Commission)</td>
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<td>EC DEVCO - International Cooperation and Development (European Commission)</td>
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<td>DIBP - Department of Immigration &amp; Border Protection</td>
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Save the Children works for children’s rights.

We deliver immediate and lasting improvement to children lives worldwide.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT
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