ADVANCING PROTECTION AND CARE FOR
CHILDREN IN ADVERSITY

Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity:

A U.S. GOVERNMENT STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN TO THRIVE 2024–2029

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U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY STATEMENT

The U.S. government envisions a world in which all children thrive within protective, loving families, free from deprivation and danger. *Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity: A U.S. Government Strategy for Children to Thrive (2024–2029)* outlines the U.S. government's whole-of-government commitment and approach to investing in the development, care, and safety of the world's most-vulnerable children and their families.

Child development is a cornerstone for all development, and it is central to U.S. development and diplomatic efforts. This U.S. Government Strategy for Children to Thrive is grounded in evidence showing a promising future belongs to those nations that invest wisely in their children—and that failure to do so undermines social and economic progress. The U.S. government seeks to integrate internationally recognized, evidence-based practices into its international assistance in support of the best interests of the child.

The Thrive Strategy is a multisectoral and interagency commitment to the dignity and well-being of children in adversity and their families. With three objectives and five guiding principles for implementation, it aims for U.S. government investments for the most-vulnerable children, their families, and communities around the world to be comprehensive, coordinated, and effective. These investments should help partner countries sustainably finance, manage, and deliver services that lead to stable, resilient, and prosperous families and communities.

The Thrive Strategy is meant to guide actions both within U.S. government departments and agencies, and between the United States and its partners and local communities worldwide. It is also broadly relevant to promote the development, care, and protection of children everywhere and provides a basis for intergovernmental and interorganizational collaboration.

Children in adversity include children who experience conditions of serious deprivation and danger, which can lead to lifelong negative consequences. Such marginalized children include those who are living outside of family care; are experiencing human trafficking; experience violence; are subjected to labor exploitation; are affected by, or are emerging from, armed conflict, humanitarian crises, or natural hazards; have disabilities; have lost a parent or primary caregiver; are migrants; face discrimination or stigma due to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sex characteristics, nationality, language, or other reasons; are living in extreme poverty; or are otherwise vulnerable, including because of HIV/AIDS, acute illness, or having been born small or sick. These children often experience multiple adversities simultaneously and over an extended period of time, which significantly increases the risk of negative developmental and life outcomes. Children include newborns, young children, adolescents, and youth under age 18. In this Thrive Strategy, references to children in adversity include those experiencing any of the above or other significant challenges.

The Thrive Strategy starts from the premise that sustainable development depends on children surviving, thriving, and reaching their full potential. The capacity of parents and primary caregivers to provide their children with nurturing care and protection is essential for their children's development and well-being. Parents and primary caregivers, with support from other family members, communities, civil society, faith-based organizations, and governments, have the primary responsibility to promote the safety and well-being of children, even in the face of formidable threats and challenges. The Thrive Strategy recognizes that when children's safety or well-being is at risk, governments have a responsibility to strengthen families' capacities to mitigate these risks; and when children and adolescents are outside of family care, governments must take steps to provide for their adequate protection and care. It also recognizes that young people are allies and actors in promoting their own safety and well-being.

This revised strategy for advancing the protection and care of children in adversity is particularly calibrated in response to the nature of multiple interrelated and mutually reinforcing crises, or global polycrisis, affecting children and families around the world. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to reverberate. The number of armed conflicts remains consistently high. The climate crisis is surging with unprecedented hurricanes, heat waves, droughts, flooding, and other natural hazards impacting the health, food security, education, and emotional well-being of children, families, and communities.[1] Mental health challenges among children and adolescents, and their caregivers, are increasing.[2] The number of displaced children, separated children, or those who lost a caregiver has also increased.[3] Coordinated, systemic, and sustainable approaches are required to support children and their families to respond to this set of crises; strengthen their resilience; and address systemic structures that may reinforce exclusion of children and families in adversity.

POLICY MANDATE

The Thrive Strategy continues the U.S. government's commitment to the most vulnerable children globally. In 2005, the U.S. Congress recognized the importance of a comprehensive, coordinated, and effective U.S. government response to the world's most-vulnerable children when it passed Public Law 109-95: The Assistance for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children in Developing Countries Act. This act required an interagency strategy and mandated the appointment of a U.S. Government Special Advisor on Children in Adversity to coordinate interagency foreign assistance to vulnerable children and their families. To move Public Law 109-95 into action and outline the U.S. government's response, *The United States Government Action Plan on Children in Adversity (2012–2017)* was developed. Building on the action plan, in 2019, *Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity: A U.S. Government Strategy for International Assistance*, known as the APCCA Strategy, was approved for the 2019 to 2023 period.

Despite the enormous challenges for programs presented by the global polycrisis, over the last decade U.S. government foreign assistance promoted healthy development for children within safe and protective families in more than 100 countries; provided tens of millions of children with services such as family tracing and reunification and other child development, protection, safety, and well-being services; equipped millions of parents or caregivers with services such as psychosocial support and training in positive parenting practices; trained hundreds of thousands of service providers to deliver high-quality services to vulnerable children and their families; and strengthened the capacity of governmental and nongovernmental organizations to provide services and support to children and their families.

In 2021, the U.S. Congress passed the Global Child Thrive Act, which mandates that government agencies take integrated and inclusive approaches to improve early childhood development through foreign assistance. This Thrive Strategy serves as a mechanism to implement this mandate through a coordinated, interagency response across sectors.

Recognizing that the U.S. government has outlined commitments to health, safety, nutrition, food security, education, disability inclusion, gender equality, and climate resilience in other policy documents and strategies,[1] the additional value-add of the Thrive Strategy is twofold: first, in linking efforts across these sectors to better serve children and their families through a whole child approach; and second, in its particular attention to strengthening families and the social services that are needed to do so. This Thrive Strategy recognizes that health, nutrition, education, and protection of children are inextricably linked to their caregiving environments, and that nurturing and loving family care is essential for children's optimal development.

U.S. foreign assistance for vulnerable children and families in low- and middle-income countries (LICs/MICs) depends on multiple legislative mandates and flows through many U.S. government departments and agencies, according to their capacities and expertise. The decentralized mechanisms of U.S. foreign assistance make integration and coordination a complex challenge, but one that is achievable. Through implementation of the Thrive Strategy, the U.S. government will leverage and coordinate its foreign assistance investments in strengthening systems for protecting and caring for children.

1 See Annex B for details on aligned policies and strategies.

U.S. GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES CONTRIBUTING TO *ADVANCING PROTECTION AND CARE FOR CHILDREN IN ADVERSITY: A U.S. GOVERNMENT STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN TO THRIVE (2024–2029)*

Understanding the importance of an intersectoral and collaborative approach to adequately support and strengthen resilience of the most vulnerable children, families, and communities, 11 U.S. government departments and agencies are committed to fulfilling the objectives of the Thrive Strategy and the mandate from the Global Child Thrive Act.[2] These agencies include the following.

United States Agency for International Development

Department of State

Department of Health and Human Services
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- National Institutes of Health

Department of Labor
- Bureau of International Labor Affairs

Peace Corps

Millennium Challenge Corporation

Department of Justice

Department of Agriculture

Department of Education

Department of Defense

Department of the Treasury

PEPFAR

2 Other U.S. government Departments and agencies not listed in the Global Child Thrive Act may also contribute to fulfilling Thrive Strategy objectives. In addition, the Department of State leads, manages, and oversees implementation of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

THE WORLD'S MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN FACE A MULTITUDE OF THREATS

The challenge of protecting and strengthening the resilience of children in adversity is enormous. This Thrive Strategy considers the current crises taking place and potential future crises.

- More than 8 million children globally lost a parent or primary caregiver due to the COVID-19 pandemic.[4]
- Learning poverty, defined as the percentage of children unable to read a simple sentence by age 10, is expected to increase from 57 percent to more than 70 percent in LICs/MICs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.[5]
- Child marriage rates also increased to its highest level in 25 years, primarily affecting girls,[6] and 30 million more girls and women underwent female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) between 2016 and 2024.[7]
- The pandemic further exacerbated mental health challenges among children and adolescents, which were already on the rise during the years preceding the pandemic.[8]
- Extreme weather events have immediate and long-term impacts on child health and well-being.[9]
- Due to conflict, crises, and climate-related disasters, displacement reached 110 million people worldwide in mid-2023, with children making up 40 percent of the total. This is an increase of more than 20 million displaced persons since 2021.[10]

THE WORLD'S MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN FACE A MULTITUDE OF THREATS (CONT.)

An added complexity is that children often experience multiple adversities at the same time. Evidence shows that facing chronic, unaddressed adversities, particularly in early childhood, can lead to toxic stress.[11] This can have life-long, debilitating mental, emotional, and physical effects.[12] Toxic stress occurs when children are exposed routinely to adverse experiences without the loving, protective intervention from caregivers to buffer the body's stress response on the child's developing brain; the well-being (or lack thereof) of caregivers also affects a child's protection and development. This constellation of adversities has deleterious impacts across generations of families as well as the communities and countries where they live.

The polycrisis also stresses the systems and services for children and families in adversity. Increased displacement, conflict, and disasters reduce access to health, education, nutrition, and child protection and care services and systems, which can lead to family loss or separation and contribute to long-term physical or mental health challenges in children and their caregivers.[13]

INVESTING IN CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

Strategic investments in children, parents, and families can mitigate the effects of these adversities. Recognizing and addressing these threats by engaging children and their caregivers, teachers, and community leaders to increase protective factors can help prevent adverse childhood experiences and build resilience so children can thrive even under difficult conditions. Such investments also produce gains to communities and nations.

Children can experience the same threats differently because of gender, religious, and cultural norms and expectations at the household and community levels. For example, girls are disproportionately affected by unpaid care and domestic work, which often limits their access to education. Cumulative risks and adversities can directly affect their social, emotional, cognitive, or physical development. Therefore, it is critical to identify such problems, understand children's experiences, and adapt interventions to a child's age, gender, development stage, (dis)ability, culture, and context so that all children are able to thrive. Inclusive programming and sound laws that provide legal protection can promote dignity and equity, protect children, and help them reach their full potential.

In addition to alleviating suffering, investments that support children and their families can be cost-effective. When children are not able to reach their potential, they can be trapped in cycles of poverty and violence, perpetuated generationally, which can create greater burdens on social service workforce, health, and justice systems when these children become adults. Investments in young children and structures that support them are particularly cost-effective and lead to long-term benefits, including increased productivity and better physical and mental health outcomes.[14]

To respond to the needs of children in adversity more effectively and efficiently, this Thrive Strategy guides the U.S. government response to be more synchronized and harmonized in its foreign assistance investments. International assistance for children tends to be organized by sector, but the problems children face are not. Children and families confront poverty, inadequate access to basic needs (including water and sanitation), disease, conflict, disasters, displacement and migration, violence, and family instability not as separate threats, but as interrelated problems in their daily lives. To support the capacity of parents and families to nurture, love, and protect their children, and improve relevant systems' capacities to respond to the polycrisis and its effects, U.S. government departments and agencies across sectors will strengthen their coordination and develop multifaceted, inclusive responses.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Thrive Strategy builds on three evidence-based objectives and five guiding principles that inform the U.S. government's policies and programs to benefit the world's most-vulnerable children. The objectives are interrelated, interdependent, and mutually reinforcing. Success with each objective creates a multiplier effect by contributing to a solid foundation to protect children and adolescents from the polycrisis they face and supporting their development and resilience.

THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES ARE:

BUILD STRONG BEGINNINGS

The U.S. government will promote nurturing care by funding and supporting comprehensive and integrated programming, starting before birth through age 8, to improve early childhood development.

SUPPORT FAMILIES TO THRIVE

The U.S. government will support children who are separated—or at risk of separation—from their families by promoting, funding, and supporting nurturing, loving, protective, and permanent family care.

PROTECT CHILDREN FROM VIOLENCE

The U.S. government will protect children from violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect by investing in preventive and responsive programming.

THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES ARE:

ADAPT APPROACHES

The U.S. government will adapt programs and policies to a child's age, development stage, gender, (dis)ability, culture, and context to increase the effectiveness of the interventions the government funds.

STRENGTHEN SYSTEMS

The U.S. government will assist governments and local stakeholders to build and strengthen their capacities to manage and finance essential systems that support children and families and integrate services across sectors to promote optimal development, care, and protection for children.

GENERATE AND USE EVIDENCE-BASED INFORMATION

The U.S. government will use the best-available data for decision making and employ research, implementation science, and programmatic learning to design evidence-based and evidence-informed policies, programs, and practices and adapt them according to the findings.

CREATE SYNERGIES

The U.S. government will work across departments and agencies to promote the best possible outcomes for children and families around the world by fostering synergies across sectors and breaking down silos where they exist.

PROMOTE PARTNERSHIPS

The U.S. government will engage and mobilize a broad range of resources and stakeholders, prioritizing local engagement, and also including governments, civil society, faith-based organizations, and donors to increase the scale and effectiveness of the U.S. government's international efforts.

The U.S. government is committed to achieving these strategic objectives by adhering to this set of guiding principles that underscores each objective and is critical to their success. The Thrive Strategy promotes efficiencies in the U.S. government's approach to development by reducing fragmentation; fostering collaboration, coordination, and accountability; and maximizing results across departments and agencies. Achieving all three objectives is critically important to the success of any U.S. government program that aims to benefit the world's most-vulnerable children and secure the greatest return on the resources invested. These objectives engage closely with the child protection and care, social protection, justice, education, and health systems. In addition, these objectives promote and interlink with many other priorities expressed in other U.S. government policies and initiatives, including on gender equality, Indigenous Peoples, LGBTQI+ inclusion and rights, climate change, disability inclusion and rights, juvenile justice, food security, digital development, and positive youth development.[3] As a result, the Thrive Strategy offers an opportunity to measure the overall collective effectiveness for children and families of otherwise separate policies, programs, and funding mechanisms.

The following section covers the approach to achieving these objectives. Annex A outlines the Thrive Strategy guiding principles and U.S. government commitments to coordination in more detail.

3 See Annex B for details on aligned policies and strategies.

OBJECTIVE

1

Build Strong Beginnings

The U.S. government will promote nurturing care by funding and supporting comprehensive and integrated programming, starting before birth through age 8, to improve early childhood development.

Early childhood is a critical stage of human development, when nurturing and loving care by parents and families lays the foundation for lifelong well-being. Investments in the ability of parents and other family caregivers to facilitate the physical, cognitive, linguistic, and socio-emotional development of young children, from before birth until they transition to primary school, are critical to put them and their countries on the path to greater stability, resilience, and prosperity.[15] Evidence points to a high rate of return on human-capital investments made during the prenatal and early childhood years.[16,17] While all children require stable, loving families and access to high-quality health, education, and other social services, children and families facing adversities or chronic crises require additional and more targeted support to strengthen their protection, care, and resilience.

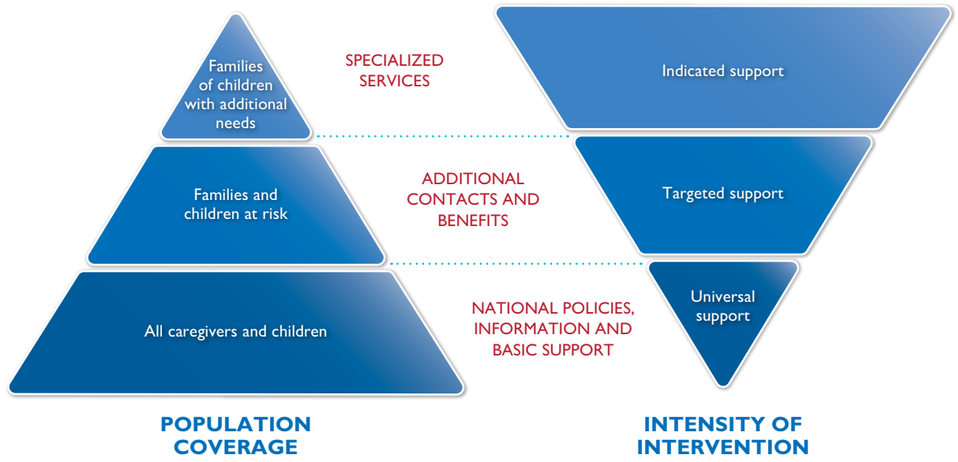
The brain grows faster from conception to age 3 compared to any other time,[18] forming billions of integrated neural circuits through the interaction of genetics, environment, nutrition, and experience. A child learns and adapts through sensory input and social interaction, creating a neural blueprint that life experiences and caregiving will continue to shape. In safe and stable environments, child development takes place in a series of predictable and common stages, as children reach milestones and advanced capacities in how they play, learn, communicate, act, move, and grow.

Conditions in the home and surrounding community play a key role in determining a child's chances for survival and healthy development. Children grow best in a loving environment with nurturing care, which includes safety and security, responsive care, good health, adequate nutrition, and opportunities for early learning.[19] From conception to birth, children are vulnerable to a variety of individual and environmental risk factors to which their mothers are exposed. These risk factors persist after birth and into childhood. High-quality health services, including nutrition during pregnancy and early childhood, are essential for brain development. These services should also promote responsive caregiving and early learning practices for optimal development. An average country's per capita GDP is reduced up to 10 percent as a result of current workers' stunted growth in childhood,[20] but reaching such children with early learning and responsive caregiving interventions in their first years can boost lifetime incomes by 25 percent.[21]

Exposure to environmental pollution and consequences of climate change is a major cause of poor health and development of children globally. In their first 1,000 days of life, children face greater developmental risks from pollution, whether from air particulate, water contamination, chemicals,[22] heat stress,[23] or other hazards, than at any other point in their lives. One of the greatest environmental hazards for children's development is lead exposure. An estimated one in three children globally has elevated blood lead levels associated with impaired cognitive development, learning difficulties, conduct problems, and societal consequences in economic losses.[24] Preventing exposure to lead, and other harmful toxins, is a key action for the environment and health sectors.

Early childbearing places significant risks on adolescent girls, young mothers, and their infants. Globally, 14 percent of adolescent girls give birth before turning 18 years old, which can lead to negative social, educational, and emotional effects for the mother and child.[25] Adolescent mothers are themselves transitioning from childhood to adulthood and require additional support for their own mental health and well-being, along with tailored parenting support as they transition to raising a child.[26] They also face greater risks during pregnancy and of giving birth to small or sick newborns[27] and have less contact with the health system than older mothers.[28]

THE NURTURING CARE FRAMEWORK'S MODEL FOR MEETING FAMILIES' AND CHILDREN'S NEEDS[4]



4 Adapted from: World Health Organization, United Nations Children's Fund, World Bank Group. "Nurturing care for early childhood development: a framework for helping children survive and thrive to transform health and human potential." Geneva: World Health Organization; 2018, page 22.

Stigma, discrimination, and a dearth of adequate and inclusive services leads to tremendous inequities for children with disabilities. Considerations for young children with disabilities, or who have a higher than average chance of developing disabilities, are required to ensure timely, ongoing, and appropriate support, including access to essential interventions for disabilities that may otherwise be preventable. More opportunities for play, which is limited compared to those available to non-disabled peers,[29] is also critical for their learning and development. As many as 236 million children, or 1 in 10 between 0 and 17 years of age, have a disability of some kind.[30] Each year, over 30 million small and sick newborns are at risk of neurodevelopmental impairment and require specific, high-quality care to monitor and support their development.[31]

Poor caregiver mental health can harm children's development and contribute to cycles of intergenerational trauma and poverty. Risk factors that increase the likelihood of mental health problems of caregivers include adolescent pregnancy,[32] experiencing abuse as a child, intimate-partner abuse, limited social support, trauma, experience in humanitarian settings, or a history of mental illness. In addition, a lack of paid family leave, supportive workplace policies and environments, and accessible high-quality childcare can limit the ability of parents and other family caregivers to care well for their children, leading to social, emotional, and behavior problems in children and weakening caregiver-infant attachment. Addressing mental health and well-being challenges that caregivers face can lead to positive results in infant and child development and behavior outcomes.[33]

Effects of the adversities children experience in the early years have implications for later in life. Later in childhood, children acquire skills that build on the foundation established during their early years. Nearly one-third of all children around the world enter primary school without the cognitive, social, and emotional skills needed to fulfill their potential.[34] Without intervention, children who experience poor development are likely to forgo about one-quarter of average adult income per year.[35] Adverse environments can create deficits in skills and abilities that drive down productivity and increase social costs, which add to financial deficits borne by society as a whole.[36] These economic losses can cost countries as much as twice their current GDP expenditures on health and education.[37]

Interventions that provide safe, supportive care to children and build social and emotional skills can mitigate, and even reverse, the effects of toxic stress. Evidence-based programming shows how to affect the life trajectories of infants, young children, and their families in a positive way.[38] These interventions include a range of services[39] to promote responsive caregiving and positive parenting, create opportunities for early learning, and monitor for and respond to developmental delays and disabilities.[40] Early childhood interventions are among the most cost-effective investments, and integration into large-scale health and nutrition delivery programs may cost as little as $0.50 per child per year.[41]

The benefits of building strong beginnings include increased readiness for, enrollment in, and completion of school, maximized through systems that promote access to high-quality education. Further, investing in young children has long-term societal benefits, including mitigating negative effects of poverty, lowering costs in health care, improving criminal and justice outcomes, and increasing productivity.[42] Longitudinal data show that children who receive early stimulation achieve more years of schooling[43] and demonstrate lower rates of violent behaviors than those who do not.[44]

MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH FOR IMPROVING EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH

Advocacy and Awareness Raising

- Recognize the family and home environment as the critical place to enhance the quality of care and development of infants and young children, starting from before birth and intensifying support in the earliest years.
- Support to the home environment must be accompanied by policies and services that advance an enabling environment of care within and outside the home, including adequate family leave, workplace policies, and access to high-quality childcare.
- Support policies and programs that protect children from hazards to brain development in their communities and home environments, such as protection from environmental pollutants, lead exposure, and consequences of climate change. For children and families exposed to lead or other hazards, the response should include early identification of developmental delays and holistic early intervention services.

Prevention and Response

- Fund and scale up evidence-based and gender-responsive parenting programs that promote loving, nurturing care grounded in local culture; support the mental health and well-being of parents and other family caregivers; and address issues such as conflict in relationships, intimate-partner violence, and substance use.
- Support livelihood interventions, economic-strengthening efforts, and social-protection programs to increase the income and resilience of vulnerable households, especially young or adolescent mothers.
- Promote access to secure, caring, and safe places for young children and strengthen their learning, development, and protection, as a core component of humanitarian assistance.
- Promote health and well-being, nutrition, and access to safe, caring, clean environments, particularly for pregnant women, newborns, and children under age 5, and incorporate interventions that contribute to optimal child development, such as responsive care and early learning through existing health, nutrition, and other services reaching young children and their families.

Systems Strengthening and Coordination

- Strengthen systems to provide an enabling environment for raising children, including the availability of high-quality childcare, and family-oriented workplace conditions, policies, and programs that help parents, especially young mothers, fathers, and parents of children with disabilities, develop their skills and create strong families.
- Promote developmentally supportive, family-centered care for small and sick newborns in health facilities and in the home, including developmental follow-up.
- Leverage traditional culture and mother language as critical family and community resources to improve early childhood development, healing, and thriving.
- Develop and support systems and professionals to monitor children's development over time, especially through primary health care, to identify as early as possible any potential developmental delays or disabilities in young children, refer children and their families to appropriate services as needed, and strengthen early intervention services.
- Improve the accessibility, safety, inclusiveness, and quality of local early childhood care and education, including pre-primary programs.[5]
- Support governments to coordinate across sectors to ensure an enabling environment of policies, programs, and services to support children and their families to thrive.
- Track progress in advancing early childhood development outcomes through routine monitoring, information systems, and population-level surveys.

5 Programs for early childhood education are typically designed with a holistic approach to support children's early cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development and to introduce young children to organized instruction outside of the family context.

OBJECTIVE

2

Support Families to Thrive

The U.S. government will support children who are separated—or at risk of separation—from family care by promoting, funding, and supporting nurturing, loving, protective, and permanent family care.

A child thrives when surrounded by consistent, nurturing, loving, and protective care from parents and other family caregivers. This provides the necessary foundation for a child to develop healthy emotional attachments and essential, lifelong intellectual, social, and physical capacities. Having a positive relationship with a parent or other caring adult family member is a consistent protective factor for children against adversities and potential negative health and social outcomes. A family provides critically important connections for cultural learning, social integration, and economic opportunities, as well as support in difficult times. All children have the right to live in a family.

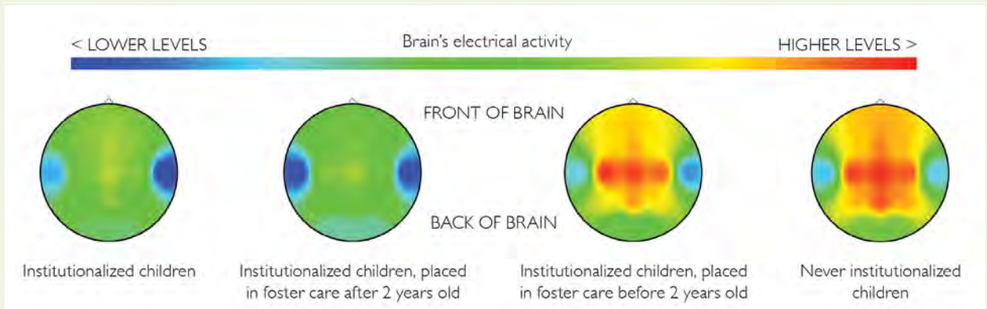
The ability of a family to provide safe and nurturing care is threatened by many adversities, such as extreme poverty; inadequate access to education, health, and basic social services; armed conflict and humanitarian emergencies; migration and displacement, including the migration of parents and children separately; violence in the home; sexual, physical, or psychological exploitation and abuse; alcohol and substance use; family death or illness; gender inequality; discrimination, social exclusion, and stigma; and lack of accessible and inclusive services for children with disabilities and their families.

The above challenges can cause family separations. Children could end up in residential care,[6] living on the street, associated with armed groups, and/or be vulnerable to exploitation, including child forced labor and sex trafficking.

6 Residential care settings can include institutions, children's homes, orphanages, or group homes.

THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF FAMILY CARE ON BRAIN FUNCTION COMPARED TO CHILDREN WITHOUT FAMILY CARE

The images below illustrate how brain development was impaired in children in residential care in Romania, and how children who were transferred from residential to quality family care at a young age were able to recover and improve brain development. The study included 136 children in Romanian institutions, half of whom were placed in high-quality foster care, some before they reached age 2 and others after that age. A cohort of children who had never been institutionalized served as a comparison group. Using scalp electroencephalography (EEG) readings, the figure illustrates at 8 years of age their respective levels of brain activity, with red, orange, and yellow indicating higher levels of activity. By age 8, those who went into foster care before they turned 2 or who were never institutionalized, showed markedly higher levels of brain activity. Findings are from the Bucharest Early Intervention Project.[45]



When children, particularly young children, live outside of safe and nurturing family care, they are at increased risk of developmental impairments and lasting psychological harm. Children living outside of family care, including those placed in poorly managed residential care settings with limited social interaction and educational opportunities, can experience socio-emotional and cognitive delays, as well as negative effects on their physical growth, neurological development, and mental health well beyond childhood.

HARMS OF INSTITUTIONALIZING CHILDREN

A meta-analysis of 23 studies found poorer behavioral and psychosocial outcomes for children placed in residential care settings compared to those in family foster care.[46] In addition to delayed development,[47] institutionalization places children at risk of physical and/or emotional abuse and can have long-term negative physical and mental health effects, including higher risks of heart disease[48] and suicide.[49] These risks are more prominent in those children who enter residential care at an early age or who stay for an extended period of time.[50]

Children with disabilities are over-represented in residential care settings. They are also more vulnerable to abuse than other children in these settings. Despite having the same rights to participation, inclusion, and family life that all children do,[51] children with disabilities are often segregated, have fewer interactions with caregivers and others, and have limited to no access to education.[52]

In addition, many residential care settings are unregistered and operate with limited to no oversight. Children in poorly managed residential care or who are living on the streets are at increased risk of experiencing sexual exploitation, forced labor, forced criminality, orphan tourism, or illegal adoption.[53]

Despite the higher cost of residential care compared to supporting children in family care (in South Africa, residential care was up to eight times more expensive than family support, and, globally, two to seven times more expensive than foster care[54]), residential care receives considerable funding from well-meaning but misguided private and individual donors, often due to a lack of awareness of the risks and negative impact on children's safety and well-being. For example, approximately 34 million Americans give an estimated $2.5 billion each year to residential care.[55]

Limited data on children outside of family care, or children living with families other than their own, heightens their vulnerability and risk of exploitation or adverse effects. Many countries do not routinely collect data on children who are in residential care settings, on the street, living in workplace settings, or living in other non-family-based living arrangements. Without these data, these children are too often left off local, national, and global agendas.

The physical, developmental, and psychological effects of living outside of family care, and in particular in residential care centers, combined with a lack of government oversight, can place children in situations of heightened vulnerability to human trafficking.[56]

The process of transitioning from a child protection and care system that relies on residential care to one that ensures family-based care requires careful planning, skilled social-services personnel, training and support to families and caregivers, monitoring, and sufficient resources.

Recognizing and providing adequate support, including mental health and psychosocial support, to the particular needs of different family structures is critical to strengthening their capacities to nurture and protect children. Such family structures include female- or child-headed households, single fathers, parents or children with disabilities, and grandparents who care for grandchildren following the death or absence of the parents.

THE CONTINUUM OF CARE FOR CHILDREN AT COUNTRY LEVEL

THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH

Advocacy and Awareness Raising

- Implement evidence-based behavior change approaches to promote nurturing family care and reduce residential care. Strengthen local stakeholder participation, including children and families, especially those with experience living in a care setting and those with disabilities and their representative organizations (e.g., disabled-persons organizations/organizations for persons with disabilities [DPOs/OPDs]), communities, religious leaders, local authorities, and policymakers, across decision-making in care reform and advocacy efforts.
- Support in-country and overseas donor outreach and engagement to promote funding community-based services for family care, including kinship care and alternative family-based care options, and to discourage funding residential care or engaging with orphanages as volunteers or in tourism.

Prevention and Response

- Ensure access to social protection programs; high-quality, inclusive education;[7] health care (including mental health and psychosocial support); nutrition and social services; services to reduce or prevent alcohol and substance misuse; and the provision of rehabilitation services and assistive technology.
- Support income and economic strengthening to improve families' financial security and stability; and promote parenting skills that enhance child development, reduce harsh parenting practices, and create positive parent-child relationships.
- Strengthen the capacities of parents, other family caregivers, and outreach support services to enable children with disabilities to live in family care with access to inclusive childcare, education, and other essential or specialized services.

7 Inclusive education focuses on the full and effective participation, accessibility, attendance, and achievement of all students, especially those who, for different reasons, are excluded or at risk of being marginalized, including children with disabilities.

- Prevent family separation during emergencies and humanitarian crises through community-level, subnational, and national-level prevention and preparedness activities, including the identification of unaccompanied and separated children and the use of family tracing and reunification mechanisms, with special considerations for children in detention in situations of armed conflict. Intercountry adoption should not be considered during emergency contexts.
- Provide protection and the safe, planned, supported, and stable reunification and reintegration of children living outside of family care into nurturing and loving families. Target children in residential care settings, on the street, in armed groups, in detention, those with disabilities, those who have experienced human trafficking, or those affected by humanitarian crisis, migration, or displacement, including separated or unaccompanied children.
- Where family reunification cannot support the safety and well-being of a child, support other safe and stable family-based care options, such as kinship, foster care, legal guardianship, *Kafalah*,[8] and domestic and intercountry adoption in line with the subsidiarity principle and the Hague Convention, keeping siblings together whenever possible.
- Support young people leaving care with services for life skills, education, independent living, mental health and psychosocial well-being, and livelihoods.

Systems Strengthening and Coordination

- Assist countries to transition from relying on residential care settings for children by strengthening policies and practices to prevent family separation, supporting family-based care, and increasing domestic oversight, regulation, and monitoring of all formal alternative care settings, including national and external funding sources.
- Plan, develop, and support qualified social service workforces[9] to strengthen inclusive child protection and care systems.

8 "*Kafalah*" in the Islamic tradition is the commitment to voluntarily take care of the maintenance, education, and protection of a minor. The Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (welcomed by the UN in 2009) recognise *Kafalah* as an "appropriate and permanent solution for children who cannot be kept in, or returned to, their families of origin." *Kafalah* is also included in Article 20 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

9 Global Social Service Workforce Alliance defines the social service workforce as: paid and unpaid, governmental and nongovernmental, professionals and paraprofessionals, working to ensure the healthy development and well-being of children and families. The social service workforce focuses on preventative, responsive, and promotive programs that support families and children in communities by alleviating poverty, reducing discrimination, facilitating access to services, promoting social justice, and preventing and responding to violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect, and family separation.

OBJECTIVE

3

Protect Children from Violence

The U.S. Government will protect children from violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect by investing in preventive and responsive programming.

Violence,[10] exploitation, abuse, neglect, and violations of children's rights occur in all communities around the globe, although the risk of violence is increased by crises, displacement, and disaster. Nearly 1 billion children—roughly half of all children in the world—are victims of physical, sexual, or emotional violence each year.[57] Witnessing violence in their families, schools, and communities can also be extremely harmful to children. Evidence confirms associations between childhood violence and major causes of mortality in adulthood, requiring prevention and response to move beyond existing siloed approaches.[58] The direct and indirect economic costs of children's exposure to violence worldwide are substantial and undermine the development of human and social capital, which can stunt a country's economic growth.[59]

Moreover, 160 million children and adolescents are engaged in child labor globally, accounting for almost one in ten of all children worldwide.[60] Of these children, 79 million are engaged in hazardous labor, which may expose them to physical, psychological, and/or sexual abuse and exploitation during work in agriculture, domestic service, construction, mining, or other sectors.[61] In addition, more than 3.3 million children are in forced labor.[62]

During conflict and humanitarian crises, armed groups and security forces recruit an alarming number of children in various roles, subjecting them to direct physical violence, sexual assault, and emotional harm. Child recruitment in armed groups has been increasing and takes place in 39 countries.[63] An estimated 450 million children, or one in six, live in conflict zones, which is an increase of 5 percent since 2019.[64] In addition, one-third of children and adolescents are out of school in countries affected by war or natural hazards; 40 percent of youth between the ages of 15 and 17 in these nations have never completed primary school; and nearly 20 percent have never attended school at all.[65]

Girls face multiple and unique forms of violence, exploitation, and abuse, which can lead to long-term physical and mental health impacts. Major forms include child early forced marriage and unions (CEFMU) and FGM/C. In some contexts, there is a co-occurrence of both forms of harmful practices, as FGM/C is often performed as a precursor to child marriage. Early child marriage is driven primarily by poverty, gender inequality, and poor access to social services, health care, and education services, and will cost low- and middle-income countries trillions of dollars by 2030.[66] Humanitarian crises can increase these inequalities and put girls at greater risk of CEFMU.[67] There are 12 million child brides under the age of 18 annually worldwide.[68] These girls are more likely to experience domestic violence and adolescent pregnancy and are less likely to have access to health, education, or employment opportunities than their unmarried peers.[69] More than 230 million girls in 31 countries experienced FGM/C—an increase of 30 million more girls and women over the last eight years, due primarily to population growth in the countries with the highest prevalence of this harmful practice.[70] In more than half of the countries where FGM/C occurs, girls undergo the practice before they turn 5.[71] More than 4 million girls continue to be at risk of undergoing the practice each year.[72] This harmful practice hurts girls' and women's physical and mental health and may be fatal. Two-thirds of the population in practicing countries would like to see the practice end, but it persists due to discriminatory social norms.[73]

In addition to child marriage and FGM/C, girls disproportionately experience domestic and interpersonal violence. Globally, one in four young women experiences physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner.[74] This sexual violence increases a girl's risk of contracting HIV, with 10- to 19-year-old girls accounting for 80 percent of new HIV infections in 2022.[75] Boys are also at risk for sexual violence and are at higher risk than girls for physical violence, including fights and peer bullying.[76] When children witness or experience violence, they are more likely to repeat it, which reinforces the harmful cycle of gender-based violence. Engaging men and boys is critical to achieving transformational change in addressing violence against women and contributing to gender equity and gender equality.[77]

While the rise of digital access and capabilities offers children, young people, and their parents and caregivers unparalleled opportunities to advance their health, education, and potential employment—and enables children to communicate within their communities, peers, and leaders—it has also led to a substantial increase in online violence and exploitation of children. A 2022 study conducted in 13 countries in Eastern and Southern Africa and Southeast Asia found that up to 20 percent of children in some countries were sexually abused online in the past year,[78] revealing the scale of the crisis. Children face multiple threats online, such as cyberbullying, harassment, sexual solicitation, privacy violations, violent or disturbing content, and grooming for child trafficking, with online child sexual exploitation and abuse a pronounced and growing threat. However, digital technologies also play an increasingly important protective role through strengthening peer networks, increasing access to helpful information, facilitating birth registration, enabling rapid family-tracing, and managing large amounts of data and cases.

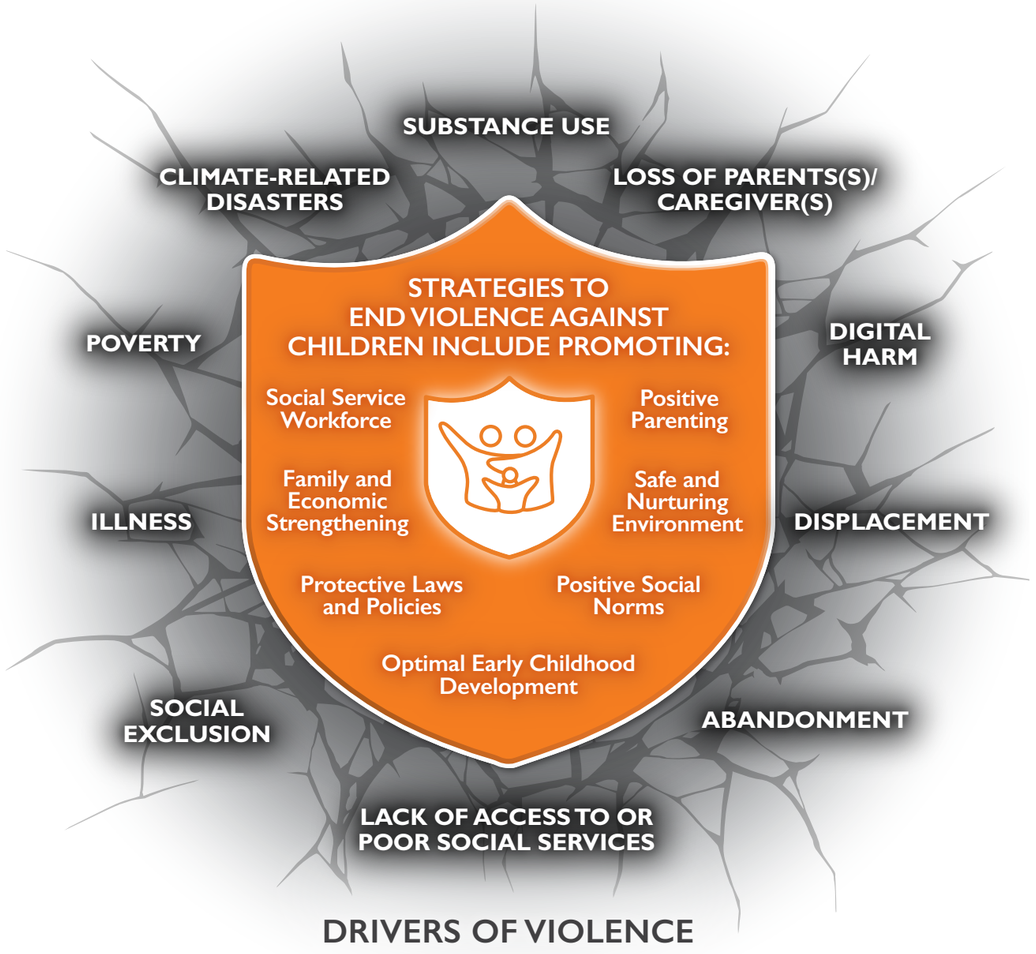
Violence, whether physical, emotional, or sexual, in and around schools is widespread globally and leads to an estimated lifetime earnings loss of $17 trillion.[79] School-related gender-based violence toward children can be associated with the loss of one primary grade of schooling, which translates to a total yearly cost of around $17 billion in LICs/MICs.[80] Ensuring access to safe educational opportunities during a crisis can protect children and adolescents from increased risks of violence, commercial and noncommercial sexual abuse and exploitation, and recruitment into armed groups and other life-threatening or criminal activities.[81]

All children should feel safe and secure in their communities, schools, and homes. Inclusion and equity should be critical elements of any response, as violence and exploitation disproportionately affect the world's most marginalized and underrepresented members of society, including children with disabilities,[82] children outside of family care, girls, LGBTQI+ children and youth, Indigenous Peoples, and displaced children and families. Marginalization can occur when these groups are excluded from social, political, economic, or cultural participation; face structural and social barriers to inclusion; and have limited access to resources and opportunities. While the impact of violence against children has a more devastating effect in the early years, such stigma and prejudice are not solely experienced at a young age and can lead to lifelong inequities.

Children can experience many forms of violence, exploitation, and abuse, all of which compromise their physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and mental health. These forms of violence take place online and offline. Fortunately, targeted interventions for the world's most-vulnerable children that include their families and communities can help reduce the negative impacts of violence and improve their mental health and well-being.

10 Violence is defined as forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment, or exploitation, including sexual abuse.

DRIVERS OF AND SOLUTIONS TO ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN



Governments play a key role in strengthening the relevant systems and structures required to facilitate appropriate protection and care of children, their families, and their communities. This includes investments in child-protection systems and case-management services; capacity-strengthening for the social service workforce; enforcing laws that protect children and families from all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect; social protection schemes to improve livelihoods, which can strengthen gender equity and prevent early marriage; and costing exercises to understand required funding and support to key government ministries to lead integrated responses to violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect that ensure equity and inclusion of the most vulnerable. These efforts also benefit from and link to other systems offering high-quality support, such as health, education, juvenile justice, and youth development.

The U.S. government has been a leader in developing a set of evidence-based interventions, including supporting the INSPIRE package,[11] new research, tools, and approaches to build evidence on how best to prevent and mitigate the negative effects of violence.[83] Having reliable evidence about the violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect children experience is critical for governments to make informed decisions for appropriate responses. Since 2007, the U.S. government has supported the Violence Against Children and Youth Surveys (VACS),[84] which are representative household surveys that gather data from children and youth ages 13–24 on experiences of physical, sexual, and emotional violence. VACS also collects information on service-seeking behavior and service availability as well as the risk and protective factors children and youth face. Implemented in 25 countries, the VACS has resulted in the largest database on experiences of violence among children and youth. However, data collection is only part of the solution. Recent focus shifted from data collection to using findings to drive policy, implement new programming, and build evidence on what works. The prevention and response to violence against children requires an intersectoral approach across ministries and departments. While the VACS will remain a powerful tool, working directly with governments to use VACS and related data and build national action plans to prevent and respond to violence against children is the next step in addressing the high rates of physical, emotional, and sexual violence children experience globally. Globally recognized definitions of violence against children have been established,[85] allowing countries to integrate these definitions into existing measurement instruments for use in surveys and administrative data systems.

11 The INSPIRE package outlines seven strategies for ending violence against children. They are: implementation and enforcement of laws; norms and values; safe environments; parent and caregiver support; income and economic strengthening; response and support services; and education and life skills.

THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH

Advocacy and Awareness Raising

- Increase awareness of both the opportunities and risks of the digital ecosystem for children and youth.
- Strengthen engagement of children and young people in advocacy efforts for protection and promotion of children's rights and a violence-free future, including survivor participation mechanisms.
- Recognize the gendered nature of violence and raise awareness about the effects of violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect on the development, mental health, and well-being of all children and address harmful norms and practices to reduce the prevalence of gender-based violence and abuse in all settings.

Prevention and Response

- Identify children and adolescents who are especially vulnerable to violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect and provide effective, equitable, inclusive, and sustainable care; psychosocial support; and protection interventions to build resilience, avoid re-victimization, and counter the harmful effects of violence in both the physical and digital worlds.
- Use a positive youth development approach to engage young people directly in action to promote their own safety.[86] This is especially important for marginalized youth who can face discrimination, stigmatization, and exclusion in their families and communities.
- Support coordination across sectors during an emergency response to strengthen child protection interventions, prevent unnecessary family separation, and provide a safe, violence-free, inclusive, and gender-equitable environment for all crisis-impacted children and young people.
- Equip parents and other family caregivers, teachers, social workers, and faith and community leaders to identify and respond to children who have been exposed to violence and, when appropriate, refer them to relevant care.
- Increase the awareness and capacity of key civil servants, community actors, and professionals in all disciplines who are in contact with children to respond to incidents of violence against children, promote inclusion and equity, strengthen safeguarding parameters, and improve coordination across ministries and sectors.
- Safeguard the data and personal information of children, including through digital tools and strong policy.
- Increase access to justice for children and families to address legal needs in the prevention and response to violence.

Systems Strengthening and Coordination

- Strengthen child-welfare and child-protection systems and support the strengthening, implementation, and enforcement of laws and policies to prevent, identify, respond to, and protect children from all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect.
- Foster coordination, mobilize resources, and strengthen interventions across sectors to identify and respond to violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect, including through community child protection mechanisms, social work, formal and nonformal education, maternal and child health, rehabilitation services, justice, nutrition, and water, sanitation, and hygiene, ensuring such services are trauma-informed and gender-sensitive.
- Invest in national surveys and country-led data collection, including during humanitarian crises, to document the magnitude, nature, and effect of physical, emotional, and sexual violence and exploitation against children and adolescents and inform and promote evidence-based responses from national governments and partners.

CLOSING STATEMENT

Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity: A U.S. Government Strategy for Children to Thrive (2024–2029) **outlines the U.S. government's approach to investing in the world's most vulnerable children, their families, and their communities.**

As described in the Thrive Strategy, the economic case for investing in children around the world is compelling; the cost of not doing so is devastating, not only to individuals and families but also to communities and nations.

The U.S. government's commitment to the dignity and well-being of children and their families around the world has three objectives and five guiding principles for implementation. The Thrive Strategy is meant to guide actions both within U.S. government departments and agencies and between the United States and its partners and local communities worldwide. It is also a broadly relevant call to action to promote the development, care, and protection of children everywhere and provides a basis for intergovernmental and interorganizational collaboration.

ANNEX A: U.S. GOVERNMENT GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND COORDINATION COMMITMENTS

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The U.S. government will apply the following guiding principles when funding and supporting programs internationally to strengthen systems and family support structures for children and adolescents in adversity.

Adapt Approaches

Programming for children must adapt to and consider a child's age, gender identity, and developmental stage, as well as how exposure to adversities may affect a child's growth and development. Intersectoral approaches should be grounded in local cultural strengths and inclusive practices. This approach encourages interventions that benefit the family unit, as well as the individual child and their community; recognizes the importance of human dignity; and acknowledges that human development changes across life stages, milestones, and experiences. The U.S. government will adapt programs and policies to the ages and life stages of children, with attention to disability (including but not limited to physical, sensory, intellectual, and psychosocial disabilities) and local contextual and cultural factors to increase the effectiveness of the interventions it funds. The primary focus of the Thrive Strategy is on children between the prenatal period and age 18.[12] There is substantial overlap between older children (puberty to age 18), adolescents, and youth. The Thrive Strategy reinforces the importance of funding and supporting interagency and intersectoral interventions at various stages of the development of children and youth in adversity.

The U.S. government will fund and support age-appropriate, localized, and culturally relevant interventions that ensure children in adversity have meaningful opportunities to participate in decisions regarding their care, in keeping with their current and developing capacities. This will include leveraging traditional culture and mother language as critical family and community resources. Young people themselves are key actors regarding their own safety and well-being.

The U.S. government will promote the principles and practices of equity, inclusion, dignity, and equality among children by addressing their different vulnerabilities, protection needs, and opportunities and fostering their agency. Throughout its support for policy change and programming, the U.S. government will give careful attention to race, ethnicity, disability, gender identity, and language, among other things.

12 Public Law 109-95 defines children as persons below the age of 18.

ADAPT APPROACHES TO THE INDIVIDUAL CHILD

Strengthen Systems

Effective, resourced social service, child protection, and related systems benefit vulnerable families, newborns, children, and adolescents by improving their access to a broad range of support structures. Such services—delivered by public, civil-society, and private institutions—include health care, nutrition, education, legal support, economic strengthening, skills building, youth development, and mental health and psychosocial support. The U.S. government will assist governments and civil society in partner countries to build and strengthen their capacities to support, manage, and finance their social service and child protection systems fully and strengthen linkages with other critical systems that foster children's development and inclusion, such as the social protection, education, health, and justice systems.

National child care and child protection systems have multiple, interlinked parts, including policies, legislation, regulations, monitoring, and enforcement, as well as services that help prevent violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect, displacement, and family separation; and identify and respond to children who are experiencing, or are at risk of experiencing, hardships. Social service systems often include formal, traditional, and informal components and involve civil society, faith-based, disability, Indigenous and community groups, and family and community actors, as well as local and national governments.

The social service workforce—comprising paid and unpaid governmental and nongovernmental professionals and paraprofessionals who work to ensure the safety, healthy development, and well-being of children and families—is essential to an effective social services system. The workforce focuses on preventive, responsive, and promotive programs that support children and families in communities by alleviating poverty, reducing discrimination, facilitating access to services, promoting justice and social welfare, and preventing and responding to violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect, and family separation. This workforce must be well trained and supported to address the unique needs of children and the complexities that arise.

The U.S. government will promote planning for, developing, funding, and supervising such a workforce by collaborating with local universities and relevant governmental and professional bodies.

To operate effectively, these components require commitment and collaboration among key stakeholders and leaders; human and financial resources; knowledge, skills, and capacities; and clear standards and procedures and the authority to enforce them. Strong social service systems promote the best outcomes for children, adolescents, families, and their communities by preventing and responding to adversity through efforts designed and maintained to withstand economic shocks and humanitarian crises. All programming, and any other action for or that involves children, must incorporate the principles and practices for safeguarding children.

Generate and Use Evidence-Based Information

A strong evidence base is required to plan and implement effective policies and programming for children. The U.S. government will use the best available data for decision-making and employ research, implementation science, and programmatic learning to design evidence-based and evidence-informed policies, programs, and practices and adapt them according to the findings. When data are not available, the U.S. government will consider the most promising and available data and learning to inform innovative practices that fill gaps in the sector and contribute to new learning opportunities for how to strengthen family care and child protection of the most vulnerable.

Rigorous evaluations will measure the effectiveness of programs and highlight lessons learned, which will inform the design of new interventions and practices. To allow for greater program and government responsiveness to changing contexts and to adapt to local circumstances, the U.S. government will also invest in cost-efficient, rapid learning that informs ongoing initiatives.

The U.S. government will also invest in measurement activities to capture data about the world's most-vulnerable populations; make efforts to identify and assess the characteristics of at-risk children, youth, and families; and compile data to help identify trends and the root causes of vulnerability. As children in adversity are often difficult to reach and remain uncounted, the U.S. government will employ innovative methodologies to capture hard-to-measure data.

Scientific communities in low-resource settings often lack the funding and infrastructure needed to conduct high-quality research. The U.S. government and its partners will strengthen locally generated evidence by increasing the capacity for research and data collection in low- and middle-income countries to inform policies, programs, responses, and solutions. When possible, the U.S. government will identify and align its supported research with existing and emerging global and in-country data collection efforts to avoid duplication, facilitate comparisons, and strengthen sustainable local capacity. The U.S. government recognizes the importance of collecting data disaggregated by sex, gender identity, age, and disability, committing to complementing the work of other organizations, institutions, and networks.

The U.S. government will draw on both global evidence and the information gathered through its programming to measure the impact of its foreign assistance investments and will share and disseminate evidence across stakeholders.

The U.S. government will fund nationally representative research on children's development, care, and experiences of violence and other adversities; and support governments and implementing partners to translate data into improved policies and programs.

Create Synergies

The needs and risks of children, adolescents, and families are multidimensional. Addressing a single issue in isolation leads to a fragmented approach and limits the potential impact on children.

U.S. government departments and agencies will promote the best possible outcomes for children and families by fostering synergies, collaborating across sectors, and breaking down silos where they exist.

The U.S. government will focus and coordinate its investments, funding streams, and delivery platforms to close gaps and maximize efficiencies across intervention areas. This approach includes leveraging existing programs to advance the Thrive Strategy's objectives, such as the U.S. government's programs in child protection, maternal and child health, nutrition, basic education, HIV/AIDS, household economic strengthening, juvenile justice, youth development, disability inclusion, and humanitarian assistance.

U.S. government departments and agencies commit to making a concerted effort to coordinate the design and implementation of their programs and the measurement of results at the global and national levels, in particular within country-level investments.

Promote Strategic Partnerships

The U.S. government will engage and mobilize a broad range of resources and stakeholders to support partner countries as they build, manage, and fund their own solutions to protect and promote care for children in adversity as part of their national approach to achieve greater development outcomes. The Thrive Strategy will be most effective when implemented through innovative partnerships that emphasize local engagement, including with Indigenous, faith-based, and community organizations and the private sector, to increase the scale and effectiveness of the U.S. government's efforts.

The U.S. government will involve local stakeholders and those with lived experience in policy and programming decision-making processes, including marginalized groups of children and youth, their families and communities, and women-led groups, inclusive of families of children with disabilities, persons with disabilities, and their representative organizations (DPOs/OPDs).

When providing international assistance to service-delivery programs for children, the U.S. government will prioritize partners that adhere to best practices and use family-based approaches. Clear child-safeguarding policies and procedures for prevention and response, including screening, training, and monitoring personnel, as well as immediate reporting and action in response to any violations of law or program policies, must also be in place in any activity because of their positive aims and potential for improving children's lives.

Early and continuous engagement with partners will generate strong and substantive alliances and lead to better collaboration, programming, and decision-making. The U.S. government will engage with partners to share information, conduct analysis and research, convene them to network and identify opportunities, promote thought leadership, align priorities, catalyze and unlock private-sector investments, co-finance programs, and seek out and incentivize market-based solutions.

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

The Thrive Strategy provides a basis for interagency coordination, both within the U.S. government and with external partners, with the goal of maximizing efficiencies and achieving positive child well-being outcomes. Delivering an effective whole-of-government response requires sound mechanisms for coordination, implementation, oversight, and accountability; joint learning and strong data on results for decision making; and adequate funding.

To achieve the greatest positive impact and minimize the potential negative effects of the polycrisis children and families are facing, strengthening internal and external partnerships that allow for leveraging funding and expertise is crucial to moving forward. The Thrive Strategy will guide USAID Vulnerable Children funding and other U.S. government funding streams to catalyze coordination and action across the government and with external partners. These funds will promote the mobilization of domestic resources with partner governments so they are better equipped to raise and invest their own funds for children in adversity.

The U.S. agencies listed in the Global Child Thrive Act play an important role in addressing the needs of children in adversity. Greater cross-sectoral engagement and interagency collaboration can help mitigate challenges related to limited human and financial resources and time; and facilitate consolidating the evidence and research for children in adversity to use in advocacy efforts, interventions, or policy dialogue and engagement.

A key starting point for interagency collaboration is focusing on the commitment of U.S. government departments and agencies for joint action in common, critical areas, which include:

- Increasing knowledge, capacity, and policies on child safeguarding and child protection;
- Supporting and growing the social service workforce; and
- Promoting positive parenting and family-strengthening policies and programming.

The above areas are critical for achieving the Thrive Strategy objectives and offer collaboration opportunities to contribute to greater collective impact by identifying gaps; developing and aligning programming and resources; and providing technical guidance, shared knowledge, and best practices among U.S. government partners.

The Special Advisor for Children in Adversity housed at USAID is uniquely positioned to report to Congress on how targeted funding can catalyze action to address the Strategy's three objectives and support interagency consultation and collaboration. U.S. government Departments and agencies will use their funding and technical resources in accordance with applicable law to address the objectives to the extent they are consistent with their own legislative mandates. The Special Advisor, with active input from U.S. government partners, will prepare annual reports to Congress to highlight whole-of-government coordination efforts as required under Public Law 109-95 and the Global Child Thrive Act. These reports will draw on the measurement and accountability system agreed to by the U.S. government partners to track progress in implementing the Thrive Strategy.

Annex B contains descriptions of each U.S. government partner's current and future contributions to the Thrive Strategy, which reinforce interagency coordination processes and align with other, complementary U.S. government strategies and investments.

ANNEX B: COMMITMENTS TO IMPLEMENTING THE THRIVE STRATEGY BY U.S. GOVERNMENT PARTNER AGENCIES AND DEPARTMENTS

ALIGNED POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

The U.S. government has outlined commitments to health, safety, nutrition, food security, education, disability inclusion, gender equality, digital technology and climate resilience in a number of other policy documents and strategies.

Such aligned policies and strategies include the USAID Vision for Health System Strengthening 2030 and the U.S. Global Health Worker Initiative, which emphasize strengthening health systems and applying a whole-of-society approach and locally rooted solutions. The U.S. Department of Justice published its 2023 National Strategy for Child Exploitation Prevention & Interdiction, which highlights efforts, goals, and proposed solutions to prevent and stop child sexual exploitation, hold offenders accountable, and protect victims. The U.S. Government Global Nutrition Coordination Plan recognizes the important linkages between appropriate nutrition and the holistic growth, health, and development of young children. The U.S. Government Global Food-Security Strategy recognizes the importance of well-nourished populations where everyone, especially women and children, have the chance to live healthy and productive lives. The USAID Education Policy and the U.S. Government Basic Education Strategy includes early childhood education and pre-primary programs within its approach; the U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security, the USAID 2023 Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy, and the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally align with the Thrive Strategy; the USAID Climate Strategy 2022–2030 commits to ensuring child-centered adaptation measures are in place to protect children from their unique vulnerability to climate change; and the USAID Digital Strategy commits to protecting children and youth from digital harm. The ID Hub also leads and supports the implementation of several USAID policies (Disability Policy, Policy on Promoting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, LGBTQI+ Inclusive Development Policy, Youth in Development Policy).

In addition, the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief's (PEPFAR) Guidance for Orphans and Vulnerable Children Programming includes a focus on preventing and responding to violence for children, building the capacity of social welfare systems, economic strengthening and social protection, along with other evidence-based interventions, including investments in early childhood development for children and their families affected by HIV and AIDS.

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Contribution to the Thrive Strategy

As the U.S. government's lead development actor, USAID provides assistance to help save lives and build communities in partner countries. USAID prioritizes addressing the needs of vulnerable children in cross-sectoral programming throughout all of its Bureaus, Missions, and Independent Offices. USAID also works across offices to implement the Global Child Thrive Act.

As the interagency Secretariat for Thrive, USAID's Children in Adversity team, within the Inclusive Development (ID) Hub in the Bureau for Inclusive Growth, Partnerships, and Innovation (IPI), coordinates the implementation of the Thrive Strategy under the guidance of the U.S. Government Special Advisor on Children in Adversity and ID Hub Director. The Secretariat is the body responsible for the oversight and coordination of the Whole-of-Government response to P.L. 109-95, The Assistance for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children in Developing Countries Act and the *Global Child Thrive Act*. In addition, the Secretariat supports interagency activities to advance the protection and care of children in adversity by: 1) increasing knowledge, capacity, and policies on child safeguarding and child protection;[13] 2) investing in strategies to support the social service workforce; and 3) promoting positive parenting and family-strengthening interventions. The Secretariat provides stewardship of the goals and objectives of the Thrive Strategy; coordinates USG interagency activities; convenes meetings of USG partners at both the technical and leadership levels; manages the congressionally mandated Vulnerable Children account at USAID, previously known as the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF), which finances catalytic, cross-sectoral programming for vulnerable children worldwide, focused specifically on the objectives of the Thrive Strategy; and leads communications and engagement efforts, including the coordination of internal and external reporting requirements, such as the whole-of-government system for monitoring and evaluating the Thrive Strategy and the Annual Report to Congress.

The Center for Education (EDU) in IPI advances high-quality education, from pre-primary through higher education, and works with partner countries to strengthen their capacities to deliver high-quality learning opportunities for children and youth. IPI/EDU supports implementation of the Global Child Thrive Act and advances Thrive's strategic objective to Build Strong Beginnings, in coordination with the U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education, by providing Missions with technical support to design and implement pre-primary programming for children ages 3 to 6. Programs work to ensure children in pre-primary education programs have the skills needed to succeed in primary school, including emergent literacy and numeracy, social and emotional, and physical skills. In addition, IPI/EDU provides technical support and guidance on activities aligned with Thrive to strengthen inclusive education and activities with a focus on ensuring the physical and emotional safety of learners across the education continuum.

13 USAID strengthened overall safeguarding requirements, policies, and procedures to do no harm to beneficiaries, including specific safeguarding provisions to prevent and respond to exploitation, abuse, neglect, and violence against children. Revised policies mandate reporting and action if abuse is suspected. These requirements, policies, and procedures are applicable to external partners (grantees) and USAID staff. Revised regulations guidelines that apply to contracts are forthcoming. Currently, see Automated Directives Systems (ADS) Section 303maa (Mandatory safeguarding provisions for U.S. Non-Governmental Organizations); ADS Section 303mab (Mandatory safeguarding provisions for Non-U.S. Non-Governmental Organizations); ADS 303mat (Mandatory safeguarding provisions for Fixed Amount Awards), and AIDAR 48 CFR 752.7037. USAID also has a child safeguarding policy for implementation of activities to prevent and respond to child abuse, exploitation, or neglect.

The Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) coordinates the U.S. government response to disasters overseas and works to protect and support conflict- and disaster-affected children, families, and communities and minimize and respond to specific risks faced by children and other vulnerable groups.

The ID Hub envisions a world without barriers, where all people—no matter their background, identity, age, or status—have access to rights and resources in their countries and societies. The ID Hub supports a systematic and collaborative approach to promoting equity and inclusion in USAID's work. This includes promoting rights and inclusion for historically traditionally marginalized populations and underrepresented groups; strengthening protections for children and families in vulnerable situations; supporting youth development; and expanding access to physical rehabilitation and assistive technology as well as mental health and psychosocial support. The ID Hub's Youth Team oversees youth engagement and youth-development issues across the Agency. The team advances Thrive through the updated Youth in Development Policy overarching goal to increase the meaningful participation of youth within their communities, schools, organizations, economies, peer groups, and families by enhancing their skills, providing opportunities, and fostering healthy relationships so they may build on their collective leadership. USAID takes an "ages and stages" approach, prioritizing the importance of supporting interventions at various stages in the development of children and youth. USAID and its interagency partners define youth as individuals between the ages of 10 and 29 across the following stages: Early adolescence (10–14), Adolescence (15–19), Emerging adulthood (20–24), and Transition to adulthood (25–29).

Finally, the Bureau for Global Health (GH) supports children in adversity with programs that promote nurturing care through its nutrition; maternal and child health efforts; the prevention and treatment of HIV under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR); and mental health and psychosocial support (with ID Hub) and other indirect services, including strengthening health systems that benefit children and families. The Office of Maternal, Child Health and Nutrition (MCHN) in the GH Bureau works to prevent maternal and child deaths through numerous investments. Child and maternal deaths are prevented as a country increases the equitable coverage of high-quality, evidence-based interventions and sustains these gains. The goals of GH/MCHN investments are to save lives, decrease morbidity and disability, and increase the potential of women, newborns, children, families, and communities to thrive. GH/MCHN achieves this by supporting communities and country governments to uptake evidence-based interventions, scale them up, and sustain equitable coverage of high-quality, high-impact programs and care for mothers, newborns, and children in the areas of health and nutrition, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); and to catalyze resource mobilization, including that of domestic resources—not just from government but also from private sources. The Office of HIV/AIDS (OHA) serves as an implementer of PEPFAR. OHA's overall goal is to help achieve and sustain HIV epidemic control in order to end HIV as a public health threat by 2030, in partnership with

host-country governments and civil society organizations. OHA provides global leadership in the delivery of vital HIV prevention, care, treatment, and mitigation services for children, adolescents, and their families that maximize impact and advance country-led efforts in more than 50 countries.

In addition to the program areas aligned with the Thrive Strategy list above, numerous USAID Bureaus and Independent Offices have directives, policies, and initiatives that advance the provision of services to support and assist highly vulnerable children and their families.

The Bureau for Resilience, Environment, and Food Security (REFS) leads coordination of the U.S. government's Feed the Future initiative to achieve the goals of the U.S. Government Global Food-Security Strategy to reduce hunger, poverty, and malnutrition and help children and their families meet their needs for nutritious and safe food year-round. REFS also leads implementation of the U.S. Government Global Water Strategy to reach more families and communities with clean water and safe sanitation. Additionally, the Bureau oversees contributions across the Agency to the USAID Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy and efforts to strengthen resilience in areas of recurrent humanitarian crisis.

USAID's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub (GenDev) is committed to investing in and strengthening global care infrastructure, including increasing access to and quality of care for children. Access to high-quality and inclusive care infrastructure and ensuring decent work for care workers is fundamental to women's economic security. GenDev also programs a dedicated earmark to prevent, mitigate, and respond to child, early, forced marriages and unions (CEFMU), reflecting Congress's prioritization of this critical issue. Given that in many contexts girls are at risk of child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), as both are forms of gender-based violence that tend to share certain characteristics, GenDev prioritizes addressing the relationship between CEFMU and FGM/C. Recent USAID CEFMU incentive funds have addressed the needs of married children, including adolescent girls—with a focus on increasing access to survivor-centered health and psychosocial services; legal services; secondary education; and income-generating and other services—while also strengthening support systems for vulnerable families.

USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG), through the Justice, Rights and Security (JRS) office, is committed to advancing the Thrive Strategy through rule of law, human rights, and security sector reform. It leads the Agency's counter-trafficking in persons (C-TIP) efforts. The USAID Counter-Trafficking in Persons Policy outlines five programming priorities to advance C-TIP. This includes increased integration of C-TIP into USAID's initiatives and programs; improved opportunities for survivor engagement; improved application of learning, evaluation, and research of C-TIP; strengthened relationships with host governments, civil society, and the private sector; and strategic C-TIP investments in targeted countries. At the project level, USAID's CTIP efforts seek to protect children and prevent child labor, the recruitment and deployment of child soldiers, and stop child sex trafficking. USAID efforts also include the prevention of online sexual exploitation of children and addressing the coercion of child victims into forced labor via online scams. Additionally, USAID's DRG Bureau works to enhance people-centered justice, including access to justice, for children and families to be better served by the justice sector and legal actors, as well as working to support efforts to enhance and protect childrens' rights.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Contribution to the Thrive Strategy

The U.S. Department of State has been a pivotal interagency partner in USG foreign assistance to advance protection and care of the world's most vulnerable children. Through numerous Bureaus and Offices, the Department of State has contributed to the well-being of children in adversity in alignment with all three of Thrive's strategic objectives.

The Global Health Security and Diplomacy (GHSD) Bureau at the Department of State leads, manages, and oversees implementation of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the largest commitment ever by any nation for an international health initiative dedicated to a single disease. GHSD provides funding and strategic direction for all PEPFAR programming that is implemented in partnership with other USG Agencies. Through PEPFAR, the United States has invested over $100 billion in the global HIV/AIDS response, saving millions of lives, preventing millions of HIV infections, and accelerating progress toward controlling the global HIV/AIDS pandemic in more than 50 countries.

The Office of Children's Issues within the Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA/OCS/CI) serves as the U.S. central authority for the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption. CA addresses the needs of children living outside of family care through liaison with many countries seeking to improve the transparency or administration of their intercountry adoption programs. The Office of Children's Issues (CI) works to ensure intercountry adoptions are ethical and transparent by strengthening practices and procedures through a combination of regulation oversight, informed policy-making, proactive engagement with foreign authorities, and targeted outreach to U.S. stakeholders. These activities are crucial tools in carrying out CI's mandate to ensure that intercountry adoption remains a viable option for children needing permanency after domestic solutions have been given due consideration. CI's mandate aligns with objectives two and three of the Thrive strategy in that efforts to maintain intercountry adoption serve to prevent abuses and illicit practices in the intercountry adoption process.

The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) addresses the unique needs of displaced and stateless children through global humanitarian assistance programs and humanitarian diplomacy to advocate for the world's most vulnerable children. The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) worked closely across the U.S. government as well as with international organizations and NGOs to lead and participate in child protection-oriented initiatives. PRM supported a range of international organizations, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and UNICEF to integrate child protection and assistance programming into its humanitarian response. Additionally, PRM leveraged NGO programs to address gaps and enhance access to critical services such as case management, psychosocial support, short- and long-term alternative care arrangements, and legal support for documentation, including birth registration. PRM programs strive to ensure that children thrive in protective environments by supporting caregivers, strengthening child-friendly spaces, and supporting community and national systems to address children's long-term needs.

The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) leads the implementation of the Child Soldier Prevention Act (CSPA), which requires the Secretary of State to identify and include in the department's annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report a list of foreign governments having governmental armed forces, police, or other security forces, or government-supported armed groups, including paramilitaries, militias, or civil defense forces, that recruit or use child soldiers as the term is defined in the CSPA. The Bureau also collaborates with the U.S. Department of Labor on gathering information for the report on the *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor.*

The Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (TIP Office) leads the department's global efforts to combat human trafficking through the prosecution of traffickers, the protection of victims, and the prevention of human trafficking. TIP Office programs include support for the removal of children who are victims from trafficking situations; provision of housing through shelter services; assistance with reintegration and family reunification; comprehensive services and training for child protection officers; legal support and training to advance justice for child victims; and awareness raising and community mobilization efforts to combat this crime. The TIP Office's Child Protection Compact are multi-year partnerships developed jointly by the United States and another government that documents shared objectives to strengthen capacity to effectively prosecute and convict child traffickers, provide comprehensive trauma-informed care for child victims of these crimes, and prevent child trafficking in all its forms The Department of State also continues to support activities developed under Child Protection Compact (CPC) Partnerships in Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Peru, and Mongolia.

The Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI) works to promote the rights of women and girls globally, with a vision of a world in which they are able to live free from gender-based violence (GBV); fully, meaningfully, and equally participate in political and civic life; and contribute to, and benefit from, economic growth and global prosperity. S/GWI supports policies and programs that aim to address gender-based violence and change harmful social norms, including by preventing and responding to female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C), child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM), and technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV). S/GWI works to meaningfully include girls' perspectives and highlight these voices especially in crisis and conflict situations. S/GWI coordinates the department's implementation of the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally, the U.S. Global Strategy on Women's Economic Security, the U.S. Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls, and the U.S. Strategy and National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, which align with Thrive objectives. S/GWI is the representative to the Joint Programme on FGM/C's Steering Committee.

The Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy (CDP) promotes U.S. national and economic security by leading, coordinating, and elevating foreign policy on cyberspace and digital technologies. CDP advances an affirmative, rights-based approach to the design, use, and governance of digital technology that supports democracy, counters digital authoritarianism, and strengthens American leadership abroad. As part of this work, CDP advances digital inclusion and safety by design, ensuring the benefits of technology are available to all while mitigating risks, including for children and youth.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Contribution to the Thrive Strategy

The U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of International Labor Affairs (DOL/ILAB) strengthens global labor standards; enforces labor commitments among trading partners; promotes racial and gender equity; and addresses international child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking. ILAB contributes to the USG's foreign assistance on children in adversity by supporting programs to address child labor; expanding global knowledge on child labor issues, including in supply chains; and empowering adult workers. For more than 25 years, ILAB's Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking has been a world leader in the fight to eradicate labor exploitation across the globe.

ILAB projects adopt a holistic approach to promote sustainable efforts that address child labor's underlying causes, including poverty and lack of access to education. Project strategies include linking vulnerable groups to existing government social programs; providing children with high-quality education or after-school services; helping families improve their livelihoods to meet basic needs without relying on child labor; and raising awareness about the risks of child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking.

ILAB also carries out research and reporting under congressional mandates and presidential directives, including its flagship report *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor*, the *List of Products Produced by Forced or Indentured Child Labor*, and the *List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor*. This reporting, which can be accessed through ILAB's mobile application, Sweat & Toil, provides specific, actionable information to stakeholders about how to address labor abuses globally. This research is used by other U.S. agencies, including DHS and the Coast Guard, to inform government efforts to directly target goods made with exploitative labor and prevent their importation into the U.S. market. Moreover, ILAB's reporting has an increased focus on priority sectors in complex global supply chains, such as mining and fishing, and on children at higher risk of child labor. ILAB will publicly release pertinent findings in new editions of the *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor*, the *List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor*, and the *List of Products Produced by Forced or Indentured Child Labor*. In addition, ILAB's Comply Chain tool provides a practical, step-by-step guide on critical elements of an integrated worker-driven social compliance system for businesses to adapt into their own policies, training materials, and presentations.

Results from ILAB's evaluations and funded research broaden the global knowledge base regarding effective strategies for combating abusive labor practices and allow governments and policymakers to make the best, evidence-informed decisions about programs that affect child laborers and their families. ILAB maintains a Knowledge Portal, a searchable online library of resources that promotes knowledge sharing, data use, and learning related to ILAB's technical assistance programming. The portal includes project profiles, evaluation reports, evaluation report learnings, and technical assistance resources.

ILAB will continue to support technical assistance projects that make a difference in the lives of children and their families, including by increasing the capacity of governments and stakeholders to address child labor and forced labor, as well as providing education and livelihood support. ILAB will broaden its outreach to businesses and trade associations to promote the use of social compliance tools in order to mitigate risks of abusive labor practices and highlight remediation strategies to address child labor and forced labor in global supply chains. ILAB will support supply-

chain-tracing research on a global scale and continue to conduct in-depth research on child labor and forced labor, including as a means to support the enforcement of labor provisions in trade agreements and preference programs, targeting priority sectors such as fishing, mining, agriculture, and electronics. In addition, ILAB's flagship report and research will have an increased focus on children at higher risk of child labor due to socioeconomic factors, conflict, and climate change. In all of these efforts, ILAB will partner with governments, the private sector, unions, and civil society organizations to strengthen laws, enforcement, policies, and social programs to end child and forced labor.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Contribution to the Thrive Strategy

Within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) fund research that has provided the foundation for evidence-based interventions and programs that are relevant to improving long-term outcomes of at-risk children globally in line with the goals of the Global Child Thrive Act. This research evidence and approach is often the basis for, or is incorporated within, other USG partners' programs aimed at benefiting vulnerable children around the globe.

CDC serves as the nation's health protection agency and supports work that saves lives and protects the public from health, safety, and security threats. CDC provides technical assistance to host governments in conducting national population-level Violence Against Children and Youth Surveys (VACS), critical tools for informing policy and monitoring progress toward the elimination of violence and its root causes. The main objective of these surveys is to collect data on the magnitude of violence against children and youth and identify risk and protective factors, health outcomes, and violence service knowledge and uptake. Identifying factors that increase children's vulnerability is a key first step toward developing and implementing preventative interventions. The VACS not only focus on generating evidence that is scarce globally, but also more importantly contribute to translating children's life experiences into the basis for policies and evidence-based interventions that improve the experiences of children. The VACS "data to action" process strengthens countries' capacity to link prioritized data to evidence-based strategies using the INSPIRE technical package. The VACS provide data on lifetime and past-year prevalence of violence against children; this information is critical for guiding partner-country governments to develop effective and scalable prevention responses.

CDC is committed to generating data to contribute to the overall understanding of conditions that increase vulnerability among children and youth in high-conflict areas and to provide useful insights into similar conditions in the United States and globally. Through PEPFAR, the CDC Division of Global HIV and TB, the DREAMS program, and the Orphans and Vulnerable Children programs, CDC will continue to increase supportive family home environments to reduce violence against girls and boys and increase resilience among children and youth. Through innovative strategies, CDC equips adolescents with the knowledge and skills to prevent and respond to instances of sexual violence via interactive training sessions focused on assertiveness, boundary-setting, and bystander intervention. CDC operationalizes policy and intervention strategies through evidence-based interventions aimed at improving the resilience of home environments, increasing positive parenting, and changing norms about discipline. Identifying barriers at the individual, family, and institutional levels, CDC develops appropriate interventions and policies to improve access to services, quality of protective services, and linkages between institutions that provide protective services such as health, education, and justice institutions. CDC also provides comprehensive training to frontline responders on handling disclosures of violence, ensuring a sensitive and effective response that prioritizes the safety and well-being of survivors. CDC will continue to provide technical assistance to CDC-funded programs to strengthen psychosocial, mental health, and economic support to families impacted by HIV and scale up caregivers' capacity to improve early childhood development for infants and children under the age of 6, ensuring that children receive the support they need to thrive in safe and nurturing environments.

The mission of NIH's 27 institutes is to support research aimed at enhancing health, lengthening life, and reducing illness and disability within the United States and globally. Specific to the Thrive Strategy goals and objectives, the NIH provides leadership and direction to programs designed to improve health, human growth, and development. NIH does not provide foreign assistance to countries and does not collect data on Thrive indicators. However, several institutes, centers, and offices within the NIH support mission relevant research to build knowledge and support learning in areas related to Thrive priorities and objectives, including the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), Fogarty International Center (FIC), the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), and the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). NIH-supported research of relevance to the Global Child Thrive Act includes studies on child health and development, family functioning, mental health, child trauma, violence, refugee populations, environmental health, among others. In addition, the Sexual & Gender Minority Research Office (SGMRO) in the NIH Office of the Director coordinates and encourages sexual and gender minority (SGM) research across NIH. The *NIH FY 2021-2025 Strategic Plan to Advance Research on the Health and Well-being of Sexual and Gender Minorities* highlights the need for additional trauma-informed research across the life course, including research focused on LGBTQI+ youth.

There are several institutes and centers at NIH that have research priorities that are relevant to the Child Thrive Act. Within the NICHD Strategic Plan, there is a focus on improving child and adolescent health outcomes and the transition to adulthood. This includes research on child development, family and social relationships, genetic and environmental influences, pediatric trauma, social and behavioral sciences, emerging societal trends (e.g., digital media), and public health emergencies (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic), among other research areas. NIMH's strategic plan includes a strong focus on better understanding mental illness trajectories across the lifespan and the development of better ways to prevent and treat mental illnesses. NIDA supports longitudinal research in infants, children, and adolescents to identify cognitive, environmental, social, genetic, and other factors that affect brain development and health outcomes including risk for future substance misuse, mental disorders, and other behavioral and developmental problems. Lastly, the NINDS's health equity strategic plan is focused on decreasing the disproportionate burden of neurological disease born by underserved communities across the lifespan. Furthermore, NINDS's global health efforts are focused on building sustainable neurological research capacity, particularly in low- and middle- income countries. These goals pertain to research focused on children and adolescents in the United States as well as around the world.

PEACE CORPS

The mission of the Peace Corps is to promote world peace and friendship by helping countries to meet their need for trained men and women, to promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served, and to promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans. The Peace Corps strategically partners with countries to provide social and economic development abroad through technical assistance, while promoting mutual understanding between Americans and the community served. The Peace Corps plays a unique role on several key USG interagency programs, given its focus on building relationships with communities, families, and vulnerable children through its volunteers. The Peace Corps prioritizes partnerships to promote active engagement and enabling environments that strengthen the capacity of individuals, organizations, and communities in the countries where Peace Corps volunteers serve.

Peace Corps volunteers work in six sectors: agriculture, environment, community economic development, health, education, and youth in development. Additionally, Peace Corps volunteers implement activities related to gender equity, mental well-being, pandemic preparedness, and volunteerism, which cut across program sectors.

Contribution to the Thrive Strategy

The Peace Corps collaborates with USG interagency partners to provide a wide array of community-based services to the most vulnerable families and children. Those services include antenatal, newborn, and child health programming; HIV prevention, care, and treatment; and support services for children, youth and their families that ensure better health outcomes. The Peace Corps supports all three Thrive objectives. These partnerships enhance the education, health, and well-being of youth, their families, and their communities across the Peace Corps' six program areas. Working in more than 30 health-focused countries, the Peace Corps' integrated approach to community development, technical assistance, and training ensures that services reach the most vulnerable and that messages are disseminated and understood at the local level.

In addition to its engagement with Thrive, the Peace Corps' Office of Global Health and HIV advances its efforts to assist children and their families through partnerships with USAID (Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Deaths, Feed the Future, and the President's Malaria Initiative); and with the Department of State and the Bureau of Global Health Security & Diplomacy/PEPFAR.

Peace Corps volunteers who serve in the health sector identify, build relationships, and provide critical links to comprehensive social services and primary health care in their clinics and community health networks that support Thrive objectives and outcomes. Volunteers coordinate the provision of services and co-develop/co-implement health education strategies to change behaviors and improve service systems for HIV/ AIDS; youth health and well-being; maternal, child, and adolescent health; nutrition; hygiene; water and sanitation; and reproductive health. This is achieved through partnership with youth leaders, social and clinical service providers, community-based organizations, and community, government, and traditional authorities.

Through projects grounded in the needs of host countries and communities, the Peace Corps has committed to contributing to the well-being of young people across all three of the strategic objectives of the U.S. Government Strategy for Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity.

Aligned with the first Thrive objective, to build strong beginning, the Peace Corps works at the community level to implement projects that support pregnant and/or lactating women and promote healthy development for children under 5. Together with local counterparts, Peace Corps volunteers promote awareness and improve skills of pregnant and/or lactating women and mothers regarding practices that contribute to healthy pregnancy, delivery, postpartum care, and a healthy newborn, promoting improved physical and mental health. Additionally, volunteers work with counterparts to improve caregivers' skills for care-seeking, childhood vaccinations, breastfeeding, and general child health literacy, creating a supportive environment for children. Such interventions are vital to physical and emotional development. Alongside their counterparts, volunteers conduct home visits and facilitate community groups (e.g., New Mothers' clubs) to achieve positive outcomes.

By supporting orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) and their caregivers, the Peace Corps contributes to the second objective: supporting families to thrive. Peace Corps volunteers and their local counterparts facilitate support groups for OVC and their caregivers that include sessions aimed to improve household nutritional status and access to health services, increase safe, gender-equitable environments for OVC, reduce educational barriers, and increase knowledge of HIV status and ART adherence. Volunteers engage OVC and their caregivers in economic-strengthening activities, including village saving-and-loan associations, financial literacy sessions, and income-generating activities to improve financial stability and meet the basic needs of OVC and their families. Peace Corps volunteers engage with parents and caregivers to develop positive parenting practices and positive/appropriate communication skills to support healthy relationships between children and their caregivers. These efforts directly impact the physical and mental well-being of OVC and their families, ensuring their basic health and safety needs are met.

The Peace Corps promotes violence prevention through a positive-youth-development approach. Through youth camps, clubs, and classroom lessons, volunteers and their counterparts train young people on sexual and reproductive health, hygiene, gender and gender equity, substance use and misuse, physical activity and nutrition, and life skills. Within these clubs, camps, and other platforms, youth are viewed as resources and engaged as leaders, promoting self-efficacy, confidence, and peer support. In addition, Peace Corps volunteers and their counterparts create environments that support emotional well-being and resilience, as well as an avenue to provide referrals to necessary health and social services. They also work with teachers, health care workers, and other community members to refer youth to support services when needed.

The Peace Corps will increase the knowledge and skills of women to adopt practices that contribute to a healthy pregnancy, safe delivery, good postpartum health, and newborn health; increase knowledge, skills, and access to gender-equitable care, life skills, and health care for vulnerable children and their families; and promote gender-based violence prevention at the individual and community level.

MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION

MCC partners with the world's poorest countries that are committed to just and democratic governance, economic freedom and investing in their populations.

Investing in well-governed countries is the most effective use of development dollars and incentivizes reform even before a country is selected to partner with MCC. MCC provides time-limited bilateral grants promoting economic growth, reducing poverty, and strengthening institutions. MCC invests in education systems to improve the lives and economic outcomes for students and their families. When human capital is identified as the binding constraint to growth, MCC invests in projects that expand access to learning and build capacity for educators to improve learning in schools and thus expand opportunities for those students in the future.

Contribution to the Thrive Strategy

Because of its singular mission of poverty reduction through economic growth, MCC invests primarily in general public education, particularly at the secondary level. These investments are complementary to the Thrive strategy and to the work of other agencies in strengthening families, communities, and providing learners opportunities and access to school in particular for structurally disadvantaged student populations. Across MCC's education portfolio, MCC has reached a total of 483,291 learners and provided professional development to 13,402 educators. MCC has also maintained a focus on strengthening education systems and the communities around the schools in which we work.

In addition to stimulating economic growth, MCC strives to support equitable outcomes for women and girls, minority, and other historically marginalized populations in our countries. In Guatemala, as an example, a goal of the project was to provide quality education to all communities, regardless of size, native language, or geographic location. In Georgia, MCC's teacher professional development program provided the first-ever training in minority languages. In Côte d'Ivoire, MCC is working with the ministry of education to address barriers to returning to school for adolescent mothers. MCC will also focus on expanding access to learning and training educators in its upcoming compact in Belize, the Gambia, and Timor-Leste.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

The Department of Justice's Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training (OPDAT) promotes the rule of law and regard for human rights by reforming foreign justice systems and supporting professional and accountable institutions consistent with international norms and standards. At the same time, OPDAT builds the capacity of our foreign partners to combat transnational criminal activity at the source.

OPDAT's programs are integral to the Department of Justice's mission to uphold the rule of law, to keep our country safe, and to protect human rights. In this way, OPDAT is a vital link to justice systems overseas in furtherance of the department's strategic priorities. To accomplish this, with funding from the State Department and other agencies, OPDAT deploys experienced prosecutors to U.S. embassies around the world to serve as long-term Resident Legal Advisors (RLAs), short-term Intermittent Legal Advisors (ILAs), and International Computer Hacking and Intellectual Property Advisors (ICHIPs) to enhance cooperation in transnational cases and to help partners fight crime and protect the world's most vulnerable children, and their families, and communities.

The Department of Justice's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), within the Department's Criminal Division, serves as the nation's leading expert on identifying and prosecuting child sexual predators, particularly those who prey on children in online environments. Leveraging its collective expertise—developed in close partnership and consultation with the 94 U.S. Attorney's Offices (USAOs) and investigative agencies around the country—and the expertise of its High Technology Investigative Unit, CEOS develops and implements innovative enforcement strategies to prevent the victimization of children; identifies and addresses critical policy and legislative concerns; and improves the law enforcement response to crimes against children through training and outreach. Through Project Safe Childhood, CEOS partners with USAOs to strategically target particularly dangerous, prolific, and sophisticated offenders.

Contribution to the Thrive Strategy

In Indonesia, OPDAT has conducted programs to combat human trafficking, child exploitation, and internet crimes against children by building the capacity of prosecutors, investigators, and judges to investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate transnational crimes that involve child victims. OPDAT RLAs have also improved coordination between civil society and law enforcement in supporting trafficking victims and have helped develop a task force to investigate and prosecute online child exploitation.

In Sri Lanka, the OPDAT RLA has provided the Attorney General's Department with an overview paper and proposed draft legislation to encourage adoption of a Safe-Haven law to reduce newborn mortality due to abandonment.

In the Philippines, OPDAT has assisted prosecutors in complying with legal frameworks on Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL). In this setting CICL refers to children recruited into or raised by parents in terrorist groups. The Philippines has laws and programs designed to rehabilitate children in these settings. OPDAT RLAs have raised awareness of the needs of children and have helped prosecutors protect their rights under the law.

In Burkina Faso, the OPDAT RLA has worked closely with the Ministry of Justice regarding the detention and trial of minor defendants charged with terrorism offenses. The OPDAT RLA has supported the Counterterrorism Chief Judge's approach of trying minor defendants in the Counterterrorism Court while following juvenile justice procedures. Specifically, two of the three judges on panels hearing juvenile terrorism cases are from the juvenile justice system. The Counterterrorism Court follows juvenile justice procedural protocols to protect the identity of the children (all hearings are behind closed doors, not open to the public) and all children are represented by counsel. In so doing, the proceedings comply with counterterrorism laws and protect the rights of juvenile offenders.

Crimes of child sexual exploitation are often international in nature. As a result, in addition to investigating and prosecuting cases involving U.S.-based offenders and victims, CEOS frequently coordinates significant investigations of international networks of individuals dedicated to the sexual abuse of children and the production and trade of child sexual abuse material. CEOS also prosecutes cases involving extraterritorial child sexual abuse, which involves U.S. citizens or lawful permanent resident aliens sexually abusing children in a foreign country. CEOS serves on the governing board of the WeProtect Global Alliance to End Online Child Sexual Exploitation, a global initiative comprised of representatives from countries, industry, international organizations, and civil society who work together to combat online child sexual exploitation. CEOS also participates in the G7 Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (CSEA) working

group, as well as a CSEA working group within the Five Country Ministerial (FCM). Through this work, CEOS has and continues to support the shared objections to drive forward action to tackle CSEA across industry, domestic regimes, law enforcement, and protections for children around the world. Finally, CEOS engages in extensive training efforts to build international capacity to address child sexual exploitation, including through the Department of State's International Law Enforcement Academy, as well as with international non governmental organizations, OPDAT, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, and the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), within the Department's Office of Justice Programs, is providing approximately $105 million in FY2024 to safeguard children through various initiatives. The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) National Resource Center and Clearinghouse aids in preventing child abduction and sexual exploitation, locating missing children, and offering training and assistance to victims and their families, along with professionals serving them. NCMEC operates a national 24-hour hotline for reporting missing children and obtaining reunification procedures, coordinating it with the national communications system. In addition, NCMEC operates the official national resource center and information clearinghouse for missing and exploited children.

OJJDP's Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force Program combines law enforcement efforts with training and technical assistance (TTA) to counter technology-driven child sexual exploitation. This comprehensive program includes forensic investigations, victim support, and community education. Strengthening ICAC Investigative Capacity focuses on bolstering law enforcements' technological prowess to combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse, including trafficking cases. Funding is also directed toward evidence-based interventions and supervision for youth engaged in problematic or illegal sexual behavior, as well as support for their victims and families. The AMBER Alert Training & Technical Assistance Program provides vital support to strengthen the national AMBER Alert network, enhance law enforcement responses to missing and endangered children, and improve child abduction recovery rates.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Contribution to the Thrive Strategy

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) awards food assistance programming overseas on an annual basis. These contributions help provide school meals and support capacity-building initiatives in developing nations. USDA's international food assistance programs align with the Feed the Future food security initiative, providing donated U.S. and locally or regionally procured commodities for direct school feeding in participating countries.

The McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (McGovern-Dole) (7 USC 1736o-1) funds school meals, education, and nutrition programs that are implemented by private-voluntary organizations (PVOs) and other international organizations for women, infants, and children in countries with high food insecurity. The program's statutory objectives are to reduce hunger, increase literacy, and improve the health and dietary practices of school-age children, with an emphasis on girls. First authorized by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, McGovern-Dole provides U.S. donated commodities for direct feeding projects and funds complementary activities to help communities in developing countries create sustainable school meals programs. McGovern-Dole is directed by statute to provide "financial and technical assistance to carry out (1) preschool and school food for education programs in foreign countries to improve food security, reduce the incidence of hunger, and improve literacy and primary education, particularly with respect to girls; and (2) maternal, infant, and child nutrition programs for nursing mothers, infants, and children who are 5 years of age or younger."

McGovern-Dole integrates improved education, health, and dietary practices into school meals projects and works to ensure that U.S. donated food is safely stored and properly prepared. Projects also work to develop local infrastructure intended to allow children access to clean water and improved sanitation facilities at school to prevent illness. The McGovern-Dole program seeks to achieve sustainability by promoting school feeding programs, working with local partners and host governments on capacity building to establish school feeding laws and policies. In addition, technical assistance to host governments and communities is provided to support the eventual handover of school feeding activities to the host country. USDA prioritizes programming in countries committed to providing school meals, especially where host governments have already established school feeding laws and financial contributions to school feeding. In addition, prioritizing girls' education is a significant component of McGovern-Dole. The program is intended to promote gender equity in education in response to the reality in many countries that fewer girls attend school compared to their male peers. McGovern-Dole includes various strategies aimed at encouraging families to send their girls to school, such as providing take-home rations to families whose girls regularly attend school.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Contribution to the Thrive Strategy

The U.S. Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access. The department's international strategy (Succeeding Globally Through International Education and Engagement) articulates the rationales, goals, and objectives of the agency's international programs, activities, and engagement. Since the strategy was first established in 2012, it has been used to guide the department's international activities and engagement based on the following three objectives:

- Increase global and cultural competencies
- Learn from and with other countries
- Engage in education diplomacy

The international strategy affirms the department's commitment to preparing today's youth, and our country more broadly, for a globalized world, and to engaging with the international community to improve education. It reflects ongoing work in implementing international education programs, participating in international benchmarking activities, and working closely with other countries and multilateral organizations to engage in strategic dialogue.

While the department's mandate is domestic, its rich experience supporting state and local efforts to improve educational and social emotional outcomes for young children, to foster a culture of disability inclusion, and to facilitate family engagement makes it well-positioned to provide insights on topics related to identifying, generating, and disseminating best practices, research, and knowledge to support the work of the U.S. Government Strategy to Advance the Protection and Care of Children in Adversity (Thrive Strategy).

The department is committed to supporting parents, families, educators, state and local leaders, and organizations that work with families to strengthen parent partnership for student success. Research shows the positive impact of family engagement for students, educators, schools and communities.

To improve the educational and social emotional outcomes for young children from birth through third grade, the department administers programs and promotes initiatives that increase access to high-quality early learning programs, improve the early learning workforce, and build state capacity to support high-quality programs and ensure program effectiveness. The Office of Innovation and Early Learning (IELP) and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) have primary responsibility for the department's key early learning investments.

The department is also committed to providing children and youth with disabilities the support they need to access self-advocacy training, career pathways, and independent living. The Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs affirms the department's commitment that people of all abilities are included in all facets of society throughout their lives, as it benefits not only individuals with disabilities but also all individuals in our communities. Building a culture of inclusion for individuals with disabilities begins at birth in early childhood programs and continues into schools, communities, and places of employment. Inclusion in early childhood programs can set a trajectory for inclusion across a lifespan. Consequently, there is a critical need to improve policies and programs to support early childhood inclusion from birth and as children move into elementary school.

Because the department focuses on promoting student achievement and ensuring equal access, it is well positioned to provide technical assistance on topics related to identifying, generating, and disseminating best practices, research, and knowledge to support the work of the Thrive Strategy. In addition to the identification and generation of best practices, research, and knowledge, the department has long worked to disseminate such information. Through various department-funded technical assistance centers, it has shared information internally to build staff capacity and externally to grantees to support their reform efforts.

Overall, the department can call upon lessons learned and its history of using best practices, research, and knowledge to inform the work of the Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity Strategy. The department's engagement in this important work will be mutually beneficial as it continues to serve the students in America most in need of support to be successful in school and their future careers.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Contribution to the Thrive Strategy

The Department of Defense (DoD) conducts Humanitarian Assistance (HA) projects in support of the whole-of-U.S.-Government approach to HA and in support of national security objectives. DoD HA activities are categorized into one of five focus areas: disaster preparedness and risk reduction, health, education, basic infrastructure, and humanitarian mine action. DoD HA provides a valuable resource for Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs) to support Theater Campaign Plan strategic objectives, particularly in regions where humanitarian needs are most acute and where there may be a lack of respect for universal human rights.

Closely coordinated with U.S. Embassy Country Teams, USAID, and other U.S. government interagency partners, DoD HA activities improve DoD's visibility, access, and influence and foster collaborative relationships with partner nation governments. DoD HA activities help generate long-term positive perceptions of DoD and the U.S. government within partner nation communities and build the capacity of partner nation civilian and military institutions.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Contribution to the Thrive Strategy

The Department of the Treasury leads the Administration's engagement in the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), which include the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the World Bank. Treasury promotes U.S. policy priorities through our positions at the resident executive boards of the MDBs. These boards provide strategic direction to each institution and approve all key institutional and policy decisions and projects through voting on strategies and individual projects. The United States is represented at each of the MDBs by a presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed Executive Director who is supported by advisors that staff the Office of the U.S. Executive Director (OUSED). The OUSEDs are influential in the board processes, consistent with the United States' position as the largest or one of the largest shareholders at each institution.

Treasury aims to leverage a few key comparative advantages of the MDBs as a critical partner to achieving the following objectives of the Strategy: improving in-country coordination among donors; amplifying the impact of U.S. financial resources; assisting youth in low- and middle-income countries and in fragile and conflict-affected situations; and strengthening evidence-driven decision-making. Treasury will continue to utilize its leadership role at the MDBs to advance these objectives.

Treasury economists review all individual MDB project proposals. These reviews consider a range of issues including, but not limited to, development impact, sustainability, safeguards compliance, cost-benefit analyses, alignment with U.S. and institutional priorities, and consistency with legislative provisions. Treasury also leads an interagency project review process aimed at harnessing the expertise and experience of all relevant parts of the U.S. government. Treasury and the OUSEDs work together to try to improve proposed projects and determine U.S. voting positions on the projects that are ultimately considered for board approval. Treasury economists consider over 1,400 projects per year. Treasury also seeks to monitor a select number of priority (e.g., innovative or high-risk) MDB projects across their life cycle and review project completion reports.

The MDBs collectively finance programs to advance children's development, care, and protection across a wide range of countries. The countries and types of programming vary by MDB, in line with each institution's relative strengths, overall financial management priorities, allocation policies, and organizational and country strategies.

ACRONYM LIST

BHA	Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
B/IOs	USAID Bureaus/Independent Offices
CA/OCS/CI	Office of Children's Issues within the Bureau of Consular Affairs of the Department of State
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDP	Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy of the Department of State
CEFMU	Child, Early, and Forced Marriage and Unions
CSPA	Child Soldier Prevention Act
C-TIP	Counter-Trafficking in Persons
CPC	Child Protection Compact
DCOF	Displaced Children and Orphans Fund
DHHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
DOL/ILAB	U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of International Labor Affairs
DPOs/OPDs	Disabled Persons' Organizations/Organizations of Persons with Disabilities
DRL	Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor of the Department of State
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EDU	Center for Education
DRG	USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Governance
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
FIC	Fogarty International Center
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GenDev	USAID's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub
GH	USAID Bureau for Global Health
GH/MCHN	Global Health/Office of Maternal, Child Health and Nutrition
GHSD	Global Health Security and Diplomacy Bureau at the Department of State
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ID	Inclusive Development Hub in the USAID Bureau for Inclusive Growth, Partnerships, and Innovation
IPI	USAID Bureau for Inclusive Growth, Partnerships, and Innovation
IPI/EDU	USAID Bureau for Inclusive Growth, Partnerships, and Innovation/Center for Education
JRS	Justice, Rights, and Security office

ACRONYM LIST (CONT.)

LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex. The "+" represents additional sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) that do not fit within the "LGBTQI" identity labels.
LICs/MICs	low- and middle-income countries
MCC	Millenium Challenge Corporation
McGovern-Dole	McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program
MCHN	USAID Office of Maternal, Child Health and Nutrition
NICHD	*Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
NIEHS	National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
NIH	National Institutes of Health
NIMH	National Institute of Mental Health
NINDS	National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke
OHA	Office of HIV/AIDS
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PEPFAR	U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PRM	Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration of the Department of State
PVO	Private-Voluntary Organization
REFS	Bureau for Resilience, Environment, and Food Security
S/GWI	Office of Global Women's Issues of the Department of State
SGMRO	Sexual & Gender Minority Research Office
TFGBV	Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence
TIP Office	Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons of the Department of State
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
U.S.	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USG	United States Government
VACS	Violence Against Children Surveys
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

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