

# CREATING POSITIVE CHANGE

STRATEGY  
2025-2027



Save the Children



# CREATING POSITIVE CHANGE

## INTRODUCTION

**Save the Children New Zealand is embarking on a journey with an ambitious strategy for 2025–27, designed to tackle the most pressing challenges facing children. Our vision is bold: to create positive change for and with children. Our strategy sets out our ambitious goals to improve children’s lives and how we will achieve them.**

At the heart of our 2025-2027 Strategy is a move towards creating transformative change, not only in the lives of the children and communities we work with, but at an organisation level – working in partnership to shift power to communities, children and young people.

Through our life-changing international programming, the core of our work, we will grow positive and lasting impact for children by shifting power to local agendas and priorities.



We will strengthen partnerships to maximise impact, invest in flexible and innovative approaches to meet immediate and lasting needs, and increase our evidence base to ensure we are effecting change in our four global thematic areas: a healthy start in life, safe in school and learning, living free from violence and safety nets and resilient families.

At home in Aotearoa, we will continue to grow our advocacy, schools and child participation work in order to drive societal change to address the inequities facing too many children in New Zealand.

Amplifying children's voices and ensuring they are heard by decision-makers on issues impacting them will inform and influence our strategic direction for the organisation as we work alongside children to ensure their rights are met now – and in the future.

**We have set five key priorities – or pillars for success – for the organisation that we believe will create the greatest impact for children in the next three years. We have also set five enablers that will help us get there.**

The strategy is grounded in our core values of accountability, ambition, collaboration, creativity and integrity, and sets a clear roadmap for achieving impact. It represents our unwavering commitment to excellence, as we harness our collective strength and creativity to build a brighter, more equitable future for all.



# Welcome to COP29 Azerbaijan



## OUR OPERATING CONTEXT

At home and around the world, children's rights are being eroded and neglected at a swift rate. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted two decades of progress towards fighting infectious diseases, ending violence against children, empowering women and girls, building education and economic prosperity.

Now, inequality is growing. War is escalating. **One in five children are living in conflict zones.** Half of the world's children are facing abuse. In every country and every culture across the world, children are experiencing violence, and the consequences can be passed down from generation to generation.

Children are suffering the devastating effects of the climate crisis despite being least responsible for the damage. For our Pacific neighbours, entire communities are at risk of disappearing beneath the rising seas. Around 181 million children worldwide under 5 – or one in four children – are experiencing severe child food poverty.

Cascading and overlapping crises are impacting children at once. **Across it all, the climate crisis threatens livelihoods, homes, and children's lives and futures.**

This is our operating context, and the challenges Save the Children seeks to address.

# OUR RESPONSE: A BOLD STRATEGY OF CHANGE

Save the Children's vision is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation. Our mission commits us to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.

In 2016 Save the Children agreed a 15-year global ambition to deliver on three breakthrough areas for children:

1. No child dies of preventable causes before their fifth birthday (Survive)
2. All children learn from a quality basic education (Learn)
3. Violence against children is no longer tolerated (Protected).

The 2025-27 global strategy builds on the previous three years to advance the 2030 ambition, with a focus on achieving impact for and with children in four priority areas:

- A healthy start in life
- Safe in schools and learning
- Live free from violence
- Safety nets and resilient families.

**In 2025-2027, Save the Children New Zealand will support these four strategic goals and build towards our 10-year vision where more children have their rights met because of child centred programmes and impactful advocacy that champions positive change.**



## In our international programming

### DEVELOPMENT

We will drive a growth agenda that bravely seeks to shift power to local actors. Programming will be led by local agendas and local priorities. We will strengthen partnerships to maximise impact, and invest in flexible and innovative approaches to fill gaps, build on existing work and increase evidence for real sustainable change in our ambitious pursuit to shift the dial in our four global thematic areas to bring about positive change for and with children.

We will continue to work with existing partners across Asia and the Pacific to shift the dial in the four main areas of Save the Children's work globally through, while supporting partners to drive their own priorities for change.

This includes:

- Ensuring a locally-led approach to change
- Freeing up resources to allow for innovation, research and flexible funding to strive for greater impact
- Strengthening inclusion in all our programmes to ensure no one is left behind – with special focus on disability and gender.

### HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RESPONSE

We will respond to humanitarian need when needed, based on scale, location, funding availability and capacity.

We will prioritise **humanitarian intervention in countries through Asia Pacific** where we already have established partnerships in order to maximise impact.

Where possible, we will respond in the **rest of world for large-scale, Category 1 emergencies.**

Our response will focus on upholding the four strategic response goals of the movement:

#### **Healthy start:**

Ensure access to high-quality essential primary health and nutrition services as well as safe water and adequate sanitation facilities for children and their families in emergency settings.

#### **Safe in schools and learning:**

Ensure every humanitarian response includes holistic learning, protection, mental health and psychosocial support and provide alternative learning opportunities to minimise disruption to education during crisis.

#### **Live free from violence:**

Ensure the prevention, mitigation and response to sexual and gender-based violence is an integral part of any humanitarian response.

#### **Safety nets and resilient families:**

Ensure life-saving relief and early livelihood recovery is embedded in longer term multi-sector interventions to build economic resilience.



## In Aotearoa New Zealand

We will work to embed a culture of children's rights into New Zealand society – so that children's rights are better understood, respected and upheld for all children in Aotearoa. We will adopt a child rights governance approach to achieve sustainable positive change for children in New Zealand at a macro level through policy, legislation and Government budgeting. We will support and resource children and young people to learn about and advocate for their rights and the rights of other children.

Across all of the four global strategic goals, we will advocate for change that will positively impact New Zealand children. This includes:

### **Healthy start:**

Advocate for investment in the early years of children and the reduction of disparities that seriously disadvantage groups of children.

### **Safe in schools and learning:**

Advocate for a quality education for all children – from ECE through to Secondary School and support and resource children to participate and share their views on Education Policy development and implementation.





**Live free from violence:**

Conduct positive parenting research and promote and provide resources to improve child wellbeing and social and emotional development and reduce violence against children. Join forces with like-minded individuals and organisations to advocate for the development and implementation of a National Strategy for the Prevention of Child Abuse in New Zealand.

**Safety nets and resilient families:**

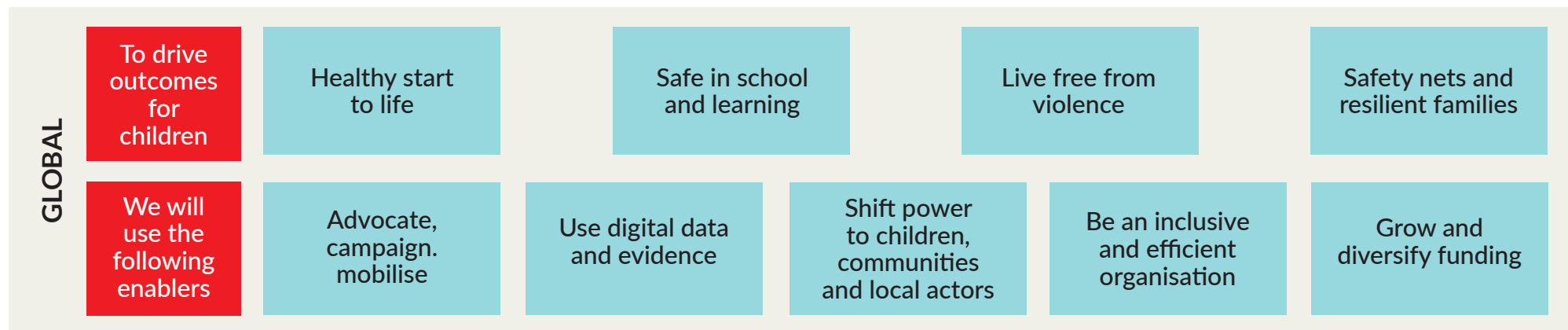
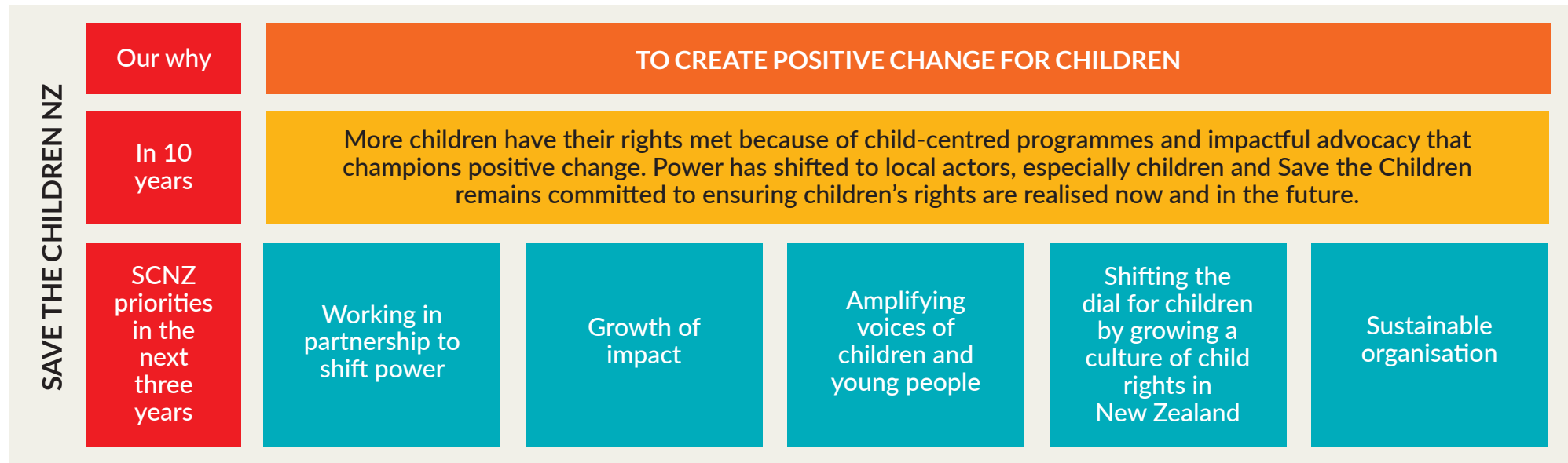
Advocate for a decent standard of living for all children; liveable incomes, food security, a healthy and affordable home and quality health care when needed. We will raise awareness and the call for action to support diverse groups of children to attain a decent standard of living, including disabled children, Tamariki Māori, Pasifika and children reliant on welfare.

At the heart of our New Zealand work will be advocating for children's voices to be heard. We will work with children to ensure they have a say on issues that impact them.





# STRATEGY AT A GLANCE



OUR VALUES: ACCOUNTABILITY AMBITION COLLABORATION CREATIVITY INTEGRITY

# OUR PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

Our three-year strategy will focus on **five key priorities** to bring about wide-reaching and lasting change for children.

## PRIORITY ONE

Working in partnership to shift power

### Goal:

Power dynamics are transformed and partnerships are equitable, ensuring power is shifted to partners, communities, children and young people.

### Three-year deliverables:

- A framework guides practical steps to shift power to local partners.
- A process and framework guides inclusion of children and youth voices in the strategic decision-making of Save the Children New Zealand.
- A connected network of child and youth led advocacy groups across the Pacific speaks out and takes action on regional issues impacting children.

## PRIORITY TWO

Growth of Impact

### Goal:

Our International Programmes portfolio is expanded and focuses on quality, inclusion and programmatic diversity to address the dynamic needs of the communities we serve.

### Three-year deliverables:

- Increase funding going towards international programmes.
- Prioritisation of how we use our available funding.
- Impact, research, and testing new innovations, based on the priorities of our existing partners seen in portfolio.
- Increase quality in project delivery in the area of disability and inclusion.

## PRIORITY THREE

Amplifying voices of children and young people

### Goal:

Children are empowered and their voices amplified in Aotearoa New Zealand and the world.

### Three-year deliverables:

- Our story-telling amplifies the voices of children and communities, and provides opportunities for them to tell their own stories.
- Children participate in inclusive and child-friendly opportunities through Save the Children New Zealand's advocacy and campaigns, and have more opportunities to speak direct to decision makers and influencers.
- Children and young people have advocacy upskilling opportunities to independently speak out and take action on the issues they care about.
- Children and young people's voices direct the design and implementation of projects, and are integrated into research norms.

# OUR PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

Our three-year strategy will focus on five key priorities to bring about wide-reaching and lasting change for children.

## PRIORITY FOUR

Shifting the dial for children by growing a culture of child rights in Aotearoa New Zealand

### Goal:

Children's rights are promoted by Save the Children and child rights advocates, and supported by decision-makers.

### Three-year deliverables:

- The network of child rights advocates is strengthened to promote greater inclusion of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, which is visible and embedded into New Zealand laws and policies.
- Public support for, and Government investment on, key priority areas for children is increased.
- More children and adults are informed and empowered through our child rights education programme to protect and uphold the rights of all children in Aotearoa.

## PRIORITY FIVE

Sustainable organisation

### Goal:

Save the Children's operational effectiveness, financial stability, and staff culture support us to create positive change for and with children.

- Data driven decision-making is embedded across the organisation to improve efficiencies and outcomes and ensure Save the Children is a "smart" organisation.
- The organisation is more cost-efficient.
- Staff engagement and retention is increased.
- A bicultural framework allows for deeper connections with New Zealand communities.
- Income is increased and diversified.



# Working in partnership to shift power

**GOAL:** Power dynamics are transformed, and partnerships are equitable, ensuring power is shifted to partners, communities, children and young people.

DELIVERABLES	INDICATORS	TARGETS
A localisation agenda guides direction and practice of international programming	Localisation agenda developed and embedded into project selection and practices	2025
	Localisation measures identified in framework are implemented	2026 and 2027
A process and framework guides inclusion of children and youth voices in the strategic decision-making of Save the Children New Zealand	Framework developed to include children and youth voices in the strategic decision making of SCNZ	2025
	Regular structured consultation with children and youth to inform SCNZ strategic decisions	SLT in 2026, Board in 2027
A connected network of child and youth led advocacy groups across the Pacific speaks out and takes action on regional issues impacting children	Number of opportunities for child or youth-led advocacy groups from different countries to connect with each other, with support from SCNZ	At least 1 per year

## **ENABLER:** SHIFT POWER TO CHILDREN, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL ACTORS

DELIVERABLES	TARGETS
Secure funding for locally led, child-driven initiatives, empowering communities to lead change and shape programmes	Funding secured in 2026
Create donor opportunities to fund child-led and community-driven projects	Opportunities established in 2026
Develop partnerships with local organisations to co-create fundraising initiatives	Annual increase
Highlight success stories of locally led projects to attract targeted funding	Annually

# Growth of impact

**GOAL:** Our international programme portfolio is expanded and focuses on quality, inclusion and programmatic diversity to address the dynamic needs of the communities we serve.

DELIVERABLES	INDICATORS	TARGETS
Increased funding for international programmes	Growth of programme portfolio	Increase on 2024 size of portfolio by 2026
Funding for international programmes initiatives that will: increase impact, build research, and test new innovations, based on the priorities of our existing partners	Project selection methodology created in keeping with ToC principles	2025
	Funding allocated to innovation or research	At least 1 initiative by 2025, further targets TBD
	Balance of portfolio reflects key areas (funding allocations provided to partners for research, innovation and pilot projects)	% of portfolio TBD
Increased quality in project delivery in disability and inclusion	Action plan and measures developed	2025
	Best practice standards are evident in project cycle systems	2026
	Inclusion measures and principles are incorporated into all new projects	2026

# Amplifying voices of children and young people

**GOAL:** Children are empowered and their voices amplified in Aotearoa New Zealand and the world.

DELIVERABLES	INDICATORS	TARGETS
Our storytelling amplifies the voices of children and communities, and provides opportunities for them to tell their own stories	Number of stories shared by children and communities with supporters	Annual increase
	Number of stories published in media that highlight children and community voices	Annual increase
Children participate in inclusive and child-friendly opportunities through Save the Children New Zealand's advocacy and campaigns, and have more opportunities to speak direct to decision makers and influencers	Number of child-friendly advocacy events	2 per year
	Number of child-friendly and inclusive advocacy campaigns	2 per year
	Number of submissions that incorporate children and youth's direct participation	4 per year
	Number of children participating in children's voices polls on current issues	3,850 in 2025, 10% growth per year
	Generation Hope Ambassador Roopu established	1 Roopu per year
Children and young people have advocacy upskilling opportunities to independently speak out and take action on the issues they care about	Promote and resource the Take Action Group network among secondary students in New Zealand	5 groups in 2025, increase of 2 groups per year
	Number of child or youth led campaigns or events supported by SCNZ	At least 2 per year
Children and young people's voices are central in research and evaluation	Proportion of research and evaluations that have children and young people's voices central	75% by 2027

# Shifting the dial for children by growing a culture of child rights in Aotearoa NZ

**GOAL:** Children’s rights are promoted by Save the Children and child rights advocates, and supported by decision-makers.

DELIVERABLES	INDICATORS	TARGETS
The network of child rights advocates is strengthened to promote greater inclusion of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, which is visible and embedded into New Zealand laws and policies	Number of collaborative child rights informed submissions to government on policy and laws that impact children	2 per year
	Online child rights training module for educators is designed and implemented	Module established in 2025, 10% growth in educators per year
	Number of participants that attend events that promote child rights in New Zealand online or in person (adult audience)	Baseline established in 2025, 10% growth in participants per year
Public support for, and Government investment on, key priority areas for children is increased	Increased media coverage and share of voice on significant child rights issues	Annual increase
	Number of supporters who take action for children through public facing campaigns	Annual increase
	Number of written and oral submissions using a child rights approach to Government on legislation and policies (SSP)	20 per year
	Number of submissions and related policy asks communicated to the NZ public and to SCNZ supporters	4 per year
More children and adults are informed and empowered through our child rights education programme to protect and uphold the rights of all children in Aotearoa	New child rights learning resources grow the content of Education Hub	20 new resources per year
	Children participate in child-friendly child rights trainings	2 trainings per year
	Early childhood centres are trained in emergency preparedness through the Whānau Emergency Toolkit (funding dependent)	1 training module in 2025 and delivered to 30 ECE by 2026

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# Shifting the dial for children by growing a culture of child rights in Aotearoa NZ continued

**ENABLER:** ADVOCATE, CAMPAIGN AND MOBILISE

**DELIVERABLES**

**TARGETS**

Targeted campaigns educate and inspire donors about advocacy and mobilisation efforts

At least 1 annually

Storytelling initiatives demonstrate the tangible impact of donor involvement

Annual increase in initiatives



# Sustainable organisation

**GOAL:** Save the Children’s operational effectiveness, financial stability, and staff culture support us to create positive change for and with children.

DELIVERABLES	INDICATORS	TARGETS
Data driven decision-making is embedded across the organisation to improve efficiencies and outcomes and ensure Save the Children is a “smart” organisation	Systems review conducted across teams	2025
	AI use policy established	2025
	Organisational reporting tool established and utilised	2025
A more cost-efficient organisation that prioritises impact for children	Review organisational cost structure	2025
	Rationalised operating cost ratio	2027
	Overall Fundraising Return on Investment	At least 2.5
Increase our staff engagement and retention	Increase engagement score from staff survey	2024 baseline
	Increase annual staff retention rate	2024 baseline
Develop and implement a bicultural framework that allows for deeper connections with New Zealand communities	A bicultural framework is developed in partnership with iwi	2025
Income is increased and diversified	International programme portfolio has a diversified funding base	No funder makes up 50% of portfolio by 2027
	Increase in income associated with regular givers	At least 3.5% increase annually
	Increase the number of major donors	10% increase annually
	Number of corporate partners	At least 5 annually
	Proportion of supporters who agree they are a committed Save the Children donor (SSP)	Maintain at least 65%
	Tailored stewardship programmes established for donors	2025
	Research, identify and test emerging funding sources	Annually
	New funding models piloted for major donors, corporate partnerships and digital donors	From 2025

# OUR ENABLERS

	ADVOCATE, CAMPAIGN AND MOBILISE	USE DIGITAL, DATA AND EVIDENCE	SHIFT POWER TO CHILDREN, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL ACTORS	BE AN INCLUSIVE AND EFFICIENT ORGANISATION	GROW AND DIVERSIFY FUNDING
OBJECTIVE	Grow a movement of engaged informed and active supporters who help us achieve positive change for children	Informed decision-making, that drives greater impact, thought leadership and innovation	Increase local and child-led direction to all activities through strong partnerships	Empower our people with a sense of belonging, and the support, systems and processes they need to innovate, collaborate and deliver on our promises for children	Increase funding by building on a stabilised base of traditional fundraising and identifying, testing and securing new sources of funding
KEY ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver integrated campaigns that leverage the expertise, tools and resources across the organisation to demand positive change for children</li> <li>• Create opportunities for children, young people and adults to take action to support realising the rights of children</li> <li>• Define and leverage advocacy as mechanism to support programming</li> </ul>	<p>Become a data driven, evidence-based organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased use of existing platforms for data management to ensure they are being utilised as effectively as possible</li> <li>• Development of data capture and management, interrogation and insights processes</li> <li>• Development of data-driven decision-making processes</li> <li>• Identification of efficiency gains through the use of data and digital platform</li> <li>• Generating and leveraging global and local empirical research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define a pathway and implement a strategy that promotes a shift in power towards localised approaches across SCNZ</li> <li>• Create opportunities for local actors, children and the communities we work with to inform our decision-making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a culture workplan that defines and embeds inclusion, equity and diversity to enable a high-performance growth environment</li> <li>• Develop and implement a bi-cultural work-programme</li> <li>• Invest in organisational structures and tools that will drive greater efficiencies across the business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and grow a well-balanced and diverse funding portfolio by enhancing efforts to retain existing donors, attract new supporters, and implement innovative funding strategies.</li> <li>• Build a corporate partnership and philanthropic giving programme</li> <li>• Invest in exploring, developing and procuring other institutional donors and grant funds</li> </ul>

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# OUR ENABLERS continued

	ADVOCATE, CAMPAIGN AND MOBILISE	USE DIGITAL, DATA AND EVIDENCE	SHIFT POWER TO CHILDREN, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL ACTORS	BE AN INCLUSIVE AND EFFICIENT ORGANISATION	GROW AND DIVERSIFY FUNDING
KEY OUTCOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth in actively engaged supporters and stakeholders</li> <li>• Children are advocates, mobilisers and campaigners for the change they want to see</li> <li>• Outcomes of programmes strengthened by advocacy activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informed and responsive decision making</li> <li>• Position Save the Children as thought leaders</li> <li>• Increased impact across the organisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respectful/empowered story telling</li> <li>• Children and Communities are active agents of change</li> <li>• The way we operate is shifting to reflect the goals defined in our localisation strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture, processes and procedures that enable effective collaboration, clarity on responsibilities and efficiency</li> <li>• Te Ao Māori is incorporated across the organisational culture</li> <li>• Improved staff satisfaction and engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A more resilient, innovative and integrated fundraising portfolio that incorporates a wide range of funding sources</li> <li>• Meaningful partnerships that provide connection, new opportunities and growth</li> <li>• An increase in funding</li> </ul>