

## TITLE III

# Vulnerable Children

Minimum Requirement F.Y. 2022

**\$30 million**

F.Y. 2021 Enacted

**\$25 million**

Globally, **1 billion children** aged 2–17 years experienced some form of physical, sexual, or emotional violence or neglect within the past year.

## DESCRIPTION

Investments in the Vulnerable Children account support the protection and care of children facing extreme adversity around the world. Funding focuses on children who are separated from their families or at risk of separation from their families, whether they live or work on the street, live outside family care, are affected by war and violence, have some form of disability, are on the move, or are part of a marginalized group.

## WHAT DOES IT BUY?

Vulnerable Children funding primarily funds the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF) at the U.S. Agency for International Development in addition to supporting programs that reduce the risks to vulnerable children, girls, adolescents, and their families. These programs also support communities and implementers to deliver essential and life-saving services. Funds from the DCOF aid in implementing the [Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity](#) strategy (2019-2023) across multiple U.S. agencies.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- Globally, **1 billion children** aged 2–17 years experienced some form of physical, sexual, or emotional violence or neglect within the past year.
- Nearly one in five children, **420 million in total**, were estimated to be living in conflict-affected areas in 2017, an increase of 30 million from the previous year. Escalations of violence in Yemen, the Sahel, the Tigray region of Ethiopia, and Syria, among others, are likely to increase this trend.
- In 2016, an estimated **153 million children** lived outside of family care globally. Those living on the streets, working away from home, or living in residential care are particularly vulnerable to violence and abuse.

- The global economic impact of physical, psychological, and sexual violence against children can be as high as **\$7 trillion**, or 8% of the world's GDP.
- Investments in children facing adversity have a high return. Current evidence suggests that each **additional dollar** invested in quality early childhood programs yields a return of between \$6 and \$17.

## WHY SHOULD AMERICANS CARE?

- At least **250 million children** are not reaching their full potential because of extreme poverty and undernutrition. Providing strong support for early child development can mitigate the impact of adversity on children's future health and productivity. Providing support for caregivers can prevent family separation.
- Providing safety and security for vulnerable children supports U.S. efforts to address violence and mitigate its impacts. Investments to improve children's development, care, and safety in adversity are essential to advancing sustainable national development and growth.

## COVID-19 IMPACTS

- According to some of the most severe projections, nearly **1.16 million additional child deaths** could occur due to disruptions in health-care services.

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## WHAT MORE COULD BE DONE?

- Increased funds could expand efforts to prevent and mitigate violence against children and amplify gains made by interventions in the health, education, and other sectors.
- Additional investments would allow USAID to work with host governments that are eager to improve outcomes for vulnerable children by supporting the implementation of national strategies, such as those developed as part of the Violence Against Children Surveys conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other partners.
- Supportive family care is more **cost-efficient** than institutional care and leads to better cognitive, physical, and social development outcomes. Additional funds could support efforts to strengthen health and social systems to promote health, safety, and family care for all children.

## FUNDING HISTORY

