



Strategic Plan 2018 – 2030

Strengthening families and communities to promote the protection and development of all children to their full potential



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Introduction

Give a Child a Family (GCF) is a child care and protection organisation that primarily works in the Ugu district in KZN, South Africa, and the Eastern and Southern African region to support the strengthening of families to provide the nurturing care vulnerable children need to secure equal enjoyment of their rights to survival, protection and to develop to their full potential.

Children and their families in the areas that GCF works experience multiple, and often intersecting adversities. These risks, including poverty, abuse, neglect, exploitation, lack of access to essential services such as clinics, water and sanitation, early childhood development services, quality education and recreational facilities, pose a risk to the right of all children to survive, be protected and to develop to their full potential. There is growing evidence that these rights, despite adversities, can be realised if vulnerable children receive nurturing care from caring families. Nurturing care encompasses:

1. Health care
2. Nutrition
3. Responsive caregiving
4. Security and safety (including positive discipline)
5. Learning and stimulation.

The ability of many families to provide nurturing care is compromised by their social and economic circumstances. However, it is equally evident from available evidence that their resilience or ability to provide nurturing care in the face of difficulties can be effectively strengthened through the provision of an appropriate and responsive package of community-based support that empowers, enables and capacitates them to address prevailing risks.

Ensuring that all vulnerable children live with caring families that provide the nurturing care they need, together with the early identification and provision of appropriate support to families caring for children at risk are the most cost-effective and efficient interventions for equalising and optimising the care, protection and development rights and opportunities of vulnerable children.

Strategy vision

Children in Secure Families – it's where they belong.

All children in KZN and beyond live in families and communities enabled and empowered to provide them with the age- and needs-appropriate nurturing care they need to survive, grow and develop to their full potential so that they may become active members of society – at a social, spiritual, economic, cultural and political level – and in so doing drive the sustainable development of their communities and countries.

Strategy mission

GCF is an effective advocate, a hub of support and a resource for children, families, communities and civil society in KZN, South Africa and the African continent so that they are enabled and empowered to provide nurturing care to children.

Strategy goal

By 2030 the provincial, national and regional child care and protection systems are strengthened at a policy, community and family level so that families and caregivers and their children have access to the services and support they need to provide the nurturing care they require to survive, be protected and develop to their full potential.

Strategy objectives

GCF will work towards achieving its goal by working to achieve the following objectives:

1. Governments know and fulfil, and are held accountable for their responsibilities to children, families and communities as well as civil society to secure the conditions necessary for the provision of nurturing care as required by the ACRWC, the CRC, the CRPD and the Sustainable Development Goals and national development plans.
2. The identification of gaps and challenges in the enabling environment, at a policy, community and family level as well as the identification of proven solution advanced through multi-faceted, evidence-based advocacy campaigns developed and implemented collectively with like-minded CSOs to ensure a strong public child care and protection system of policies, laws, budgets, human resources, infrastructure and information management systems.
3. GCF develops innovative, effective, quality and evidence-based family and community-based preventative and promotive programmes to create the conditions necessary for the provision of nurturing care to support and sustain the development of children, and in so doing, support the sustainable development of South Africa and beyond.
 - a. To ensure maximum returns on investment, GCF will integrate and advance essential early development services and support for vulnerable young children and their caregivers needed to equalise their opportunities and secure their rights to develop to their full potential in this particularly sensitive developmental period (1st 1000 days)
 - b. Be inclusive and strengthen the care and protection environment for children with disabilities.
4. GCF pilots, tests and rigorously monitors its programmes to assess their responsiveness to the needs of vulnerable children and families, their responsiveness to opportunities and challenges in the local communities and families, quality and their impact to continually improve our work and gather information that may be used to inform government planning and accountability for stronger developmental child care and protection systems.
5. GCF is a leading advocate nationally and on the continent for the advancement and adoption of an ethical and rights-based Deinstitutionalisation agenda in a context of strengthened families and communities.
6. GCF facilitates strong and effective CSO networks of partners who share the same vision and goals to maximise the use and impact of collective resources to strengthen child care and protection systems.
7. GCF shares knowledge and information to inform advocacy and accountability initiatives and promotes the adoption and scaling up of good practices tested by GCF to create environments supportive of nurturing care and development in select African countries.
8. GCF strengthens its visibility, credibility, legitimacy, inclusivity and voice as a critical and valuable partner and advocate for strengthening child care and protection systems in the district, province, country and region.

GCF's strategies

GCF focuses on the prevention of harm and promotion of children's survival, protection and development to their full potential by ensuring they are in the care of families that are supported to provide the nurturing care needed to overcome adversities and risks.

GCF's overarching strategy is to ensure that all children live with a family that is supported by a network of community-based care and services to build their resilience and ensure that children in their care survive, are protected and develop to their full potential.

To ensure that all children live in families that receive the sustained, responsive and quality care and support they need to provide nurturing care requires the provision of a network of support by informed and coordinated community-based role players. The latter role players must know the needs of their local children and families and must be adequately enabled and capacitated to provide services in appropriate combinations to build the required nurturing care platform for all families. This in turn depends on an enabling national, provincial and local public child care and protection policy framework that provides, funds, and monitors a comprehensive suite of prevention- and promotive-focussed services that respond to local risks and opportunities, that are proven to be effective, that reach all children and their families, and which are monitored for quality and impact, and subject to continuing quality improvement measures.

In sum, the realisation of GCF’s vision and goal requires an effective national child care and protection system made up of the 4 different levels as depicted in the following diagram.



Figure 1: The eco-systemic child care and protection system

There are significant gaps and challenges in the country’s child care and protection system that must be addressed.

The major gaps and challenges in the system include the following:

1. Inadequate and inequitable resource allocation to promotive, prevention and early intervention services because of:
 - a. Inappropriate funding models
 - b. Inequitable funding practices

- c. Emphasis on funding statutory services
2. Minimal, if any, community-based parenting support programmes at scale, especially for the youngest children and children with disabilities, in the way of home-based parenting programmes that include services necessary for nurturing care and development.
 3. High levels of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation and poor development outcomes for children in South Africa because of the failure to scale up, resource and implement quality promotive and prevention services to families caring for children.
 4. A large population of children who are in need of formal statutory care and protection services because of the failure of prevention services, and an over-reliance on centre- or institution-based alternative care for children at risk and/or in need of care and protection and a lack of family-based alternative care options.
 3. Poor and variable quality of alternative care and non-existent reintegration services (and post-reintegration support).
 4. Poorly developed care and protection system for children with disabilities, resulting in unavailability of alternative care settings for children with disabilities because of lack of infrastructure, equipment, qualified and adequate numbers of personnel; limited access to ECD for children with disabilities; failure to provide therapeutic programmes for children with disabilities in partial and residential care because of inability to develop programmes, poor referral mechanisms, and inadequate networks of support.

A recent World Bank report on poverty and inequality in South Africa notes that whilst progress has been made in reducing poverty, inequality remains high. South Africa remains one of the most unequal countries in the world driven in the main by very limited intergenerational mobility – which is identified as one of the main barriers to reducing inequality.

Despite progress, poverty remains high for an upper middle-income country with more than half the population (55%) at the national upper-bound poverty line of R 992 per person per month.

The report suggests, and this is confirmed by numerous studies, that South Africa’s inequality can only be remedied if there is a massive scale up of programmes for children that address the drivers of inequality and which keep children trapped in an inter-generational cycle of deprivation. The report stresses that inequality of opportunity – determined by parental race, education, occupation, place of birth and gender – perpetuates poverty and historical patterns of social exclusion.

This is the point of departure of the ECD Policy and the draft National Child Care and Protection Policy which both recognise that securing the development and well-being of children in South Africa through the provision of promotive, preventative and early home and community-based services proven to mitigate developmental risks is key to achieving and sustaining equality - as envisaged by the NDP. They both therefore commit to scaling up public provisioning of the preceding suite of services which GCF is already providing in many respects.

The services in question are not available at the scale or quality required for sustained development. Bringing about a change in this situation requires concerted and effective evidence-based advocacy. GCF is ideally placed to take a leading role in this advocacy arena, given the synergy in its approach and the collective assets in place already which can be strategically harnessed to advocate for the required scaling up of promotive and preventative family and community-based solutions.

GCF is well-placed to take on this leading role and drive an effective eco-systemic, multi-faceted and integrated evidence-based advocacy campaign for a stronger promotive developmental child care and protection system that secures the conditions for families to enable their provision of nurturing care.

GCF has sound foundations in place, but there are a few limitations and challenges which will have to be addressed for GCF to fulfil its strategic potential.

GCF will therefore, to achieve its objectives, goal and vision, pursue a holistic, eco-systemic and transformative approach to ensuring the sustained care and protection of vulnerable children and their caregiving families. It will work in an integrated manner to strengthen all 4 levels of the child care and protection system. It has developed a suite of transformative programmes, strategically designed to provide services at a child and family level and to inform evidence-based advocacy for a stronger enabling policy framework and overarching child care and protection system. Through its suite of integrated programmes GCF aims to affect change at all levels of the child care and protection system – at a policy, individual and family, and community level. The strategic combination seeks to provide services that drive transformation of communities to deal with challenges they face, and in so doing build the foundations for sustainable development.

In addition, it will simultaneously pursue a deliberate organisational strengthening programme of action to build its internal capacity to engage in transformative advocacy.

GCF's cross-cutting strategies

GCF has developed and employed several effective cross-cutting advocacy strategies to bring about the changes in attitudes, practices, beliefs and commitment to children's well-being by responsible role players upon which all its programmes depend for success. The strategies are particularly noteworthy for their successful transformation of attitudes, beliefs and practices in UGU and other African countries where religious and traditional cultural practices, attitudes and laws pose a potential risk and barrier to children's rights, parenting and care and protection of adults and children. The 3 strategies in question are:

1. Protective Behaviours – Personal Safety Life Skills Programme for all ages and walks of life.
2. Social Justice: A methodology for introducing and bringing understanding of children's rights (as based on the ACRWC-African Charter on the Rights of the Welfare of Children) in the context of the prevailing religious or customary practices and laws.
3. Parenting for Life – Preservation, Empowering and Strengthening the significant Adult in Child's Life.

Strategic activities

GCF will employ several cross-cutting strategic and foundational activities in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all its programmes. The activities, depicted in the following diagram, are interlinked to lay the foundations for driving CF's envisaged transformative cycle through which its knowledge and experience on the ground will be linked to upstream advocacy for strengthening the enabling child care and protection system.



Figure 2: GCF's cross-cutting strategic activities that drive a responsive and transformative advocacy cycle

GCF's focus areas, strategic programmes and outcomes for the period 2018 – 2030

GCF will focus its energies on the strategic programmes and outcomes described in the following table, which if achieved, will address critical gaps in current child care and protection systems to ensure effective prevention of harm and promotion of vulnerable children's survival, protection and development to their full potential in South Africa and in additional select Africa countries.

1. Integrated Child Care and Protection Programme	
Objective: Vulnerable children in the Ugu district live with families and receive the nurturing care they require to survive, be protected and to develop to their full potential.	
Intended outcomes	Planned activities and interventions
1. Vulnerable children and their families in the Ugu district, including foster families, have access to an age- and needs-appropriate integrated package of community-based care and protection parenting and peer support and services necessary to secure the provision of nurturing family care to equalise children's opportunities and ensure they develop to their full potential.	1. The current programme will be renamed as the Integrated Child Care and Protection System.
2. The package of services is child-centred, evidence-based and responsive to the specific needs and opportunities of vulnerable children in Ugu. (Currently CYCC phasing into community).	2. Review and augment the package of services provided to align with the current policy imperatives and evidence on effective parenting support including early development.
3. Early childhood development services are provided to the Primary caregivers of young vulnerable children to ensure the early mitigation of risks and maximisation of protective factors to give children in Ugu the best start in life.	3. The programme will be costed.
4. A community-based network of service providers in the Ugu district, drawn from both government and civil society is established and/or strengthened to know the needs of vulnerable children and work in partnership to offer and provide quality services in appropriate combinations to secure the environment necessary for the provision of family-based nurturing care.	4. Develop a MEAL plan aligned to the augmented programme to measure progress, challenges and successes.
	5. Record, analyse and use the costing and MEAL data generated to identify trends, systemic weaknesses and gaps and the viability and feasibility of the model to address these, and use this information for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Internal programme strengthening b. Policy and programme advocacy for addressing systemic gaps, particularly the scaling up of the programme to meet the parenting support for early and life-long development responsibility on government imposed by the NDP, the ECD and the National Child Care and Protection Policy.

2. Deinstitutionalization programme

Objective: An ethical and child-centred Deinstitutionalisation (DI) agenda is adopted and pursued by select African countries. The agenda advances two mutually dependent and supporting outcomes:

- 1. The placement of all children at risk who are in need of alternative care with families; and**
- 2. All families caring for children at risk are supported by a systemic, evidence- and community-based family strengthening programme of which creates the conditions necessary for the provision by families of nurturing care to the children in their households.**

Intended outcomes	Planned activities and interventions
1. A greater number of children at risk and in need of alternative care in the Ugu districts are identified and placed with families rather than in child and youth care centres or other centre-based alternative care facilities.	1. Pilot the Quality Alternative Care for Children and De-Institutionalisation programme in the Ugu district.
2. GCF progressively reduces the number of children in its child and youth care centre.	2. Train GCF staff, government staff and partners in Protective Behaviours and Social Justice.
3. In the medium to longer term, GCF closes its child and youth care centre and the current infrastructure and facilities will be used as a resource hub, site of learning and service provider of specialist services for family and community-based services in the Ugu district.	3. Cost the piloted project
4. A child-centred, responsive and effectively coordinated, comprehensive and accessible network of community-based alternative care services is provided to families caring for children at risk in the Ugu District.	4. Monitor, evaluate and document the pilot project process, outcomes and impact
5. Government staff in the Ugu district are capacitated to understand the desirability of, and how to implement family-based alternative care.	5. Use the information generated and documented during the pilot to advocate and lobby for the local, provincial and national SA government and development partners to implement, fund and scale up the programme of DI
6. An evidence-based, costed DI programme of action is developed and documented to inform national and regional advocacy for the adoption and active pursuit of a DI policy which integrates family care as the routine form of alternative care alongside a systematic programme of community-based family strengthening.	6. Use the information generated and documented to build and advocate the evidence-based case for select African countries to pursue a DI agenda.
7. Contribute to the development of a strengthened child care and protection system in South Africa which implements, and funds significantly strengthened community and family-based alternative care strategies and actively pursues a DI agenda.	7. Establish child-led participative committees in the Ugu district and include them in the design, monitoring and advocacy of the DI pilot.
8. Government role players are aware of the value, importance and legal imperative of pursuing a DI agenda and made aware of the challenges and viable, tested solutions to overcome the challenges.	
9. Contribute to the adoption and pursuit of an ethical, evidence-based DI agenda in select African countries.	
10. Children's voices influence policy and practice through genuine dialogue with relevant government departments.	

3. Unrelated foster parent recruitment and training programme

Objective: An adequate supply of community-based foster parents is recruited and trained to be ready for placement of children identified as needing alternative care in Ugu and provincially.

Intended outcomes	Planned activities and interventions
1. Foster parents are identified in the Ugu community, screened and supported through training and support groups to provide nurturing care to unrelated children in need of alternative care.	1. GCF reviews the content of its foster care training and support programme against current evidence on nurturing care
2. GCF's piloted foster parent recruitment, screening and training programme is adopted and scaled up by the Ugu district, Provincial and national DSD to increase the supply and quality of foster parents.	2. GCF revises training and support programme to integrate evidence-based early development and inclusive parenting support 3. GCF costs, monitors, evaluates and documents the programme 4. Use the information generated and documented to advocate and lobby for the local, provincial and national SA government and development partners to implement, fund and scale up the programme.

4. Kinship care

Objective: Children in the care of kin or biological caregivers in the Ugu district are identified and they and their caregivers receive the cash and care they need to support the provision of nurturing care so that these children may survive, be protected and develop to their full potential.

Intended outcomes	Planned activities and interventions
1. Improved knowledge and understanding of the care and protection risks and opportunities experienced by children in kinship care in the Ugu district and the suite of services and support they and their caregivers need to survive, be protected and develop to their full potential.	1. Conduct research on the situation, care and protection needs and opportunities of children in kinship care in the Ugu district.
2. The current national, provincial and district child care and protection system is reviewed, and evidence-based solutions are developed for strengthening responses for children in kinship care.	2. Review the current kinship care policy provisions and systems against their suitability and effectiveness to address the needs and opportunities in Ugu and develop recommendations for strengthening the care and protection system of identification and provision of family and community-based support.
3. The district, provincial and national child care and protection system for children in kinship care is strengthened through the adoption of recommended solutions by government.	3. Disseminate research, review results and recommendations across networks, at conferences, seminars and with government officials advocating and lobbying for the adoption of the recommendations.

5. Inclusive care and protection for children with disabilities/special needs

Objective: Children with disabilities in the Ugu district live in families that are supported to provide nurturing care that ensures their survival, protection and development to their full potential through their access to GCF's full suite of inclusive family and community-based support programmes.

Intended outcomes	Planned activities and interventions
1. All of GCF's programmes, tools and materials are inclusive and provide effective support to the families of children with disabilities.	<p>1. GCF has over the years developed itself as a "best practice" inclusive temporary safe care facility and has developed capacity - building resources and experiences that may be shared and replicated by others. The resources, networks of support and programmes developed at the centre of excellence will serve as a communal hub or resource centre from which outreach programmes will be run and supported to strengthen inclusive family and community resources including children with disabilities.</p> <p>2. GCF will reviews, revise and expand its inclusive foster parent recruitment, screening and support programme.</p> <p>3. GCF monitors, evaluates and costs the inclusive foster care programme.</p> <p>4. FCG advocates, using the documented results of its programme, for government's adoption, funding and scaling up of the programme.</p> <p>5. GCF already has a well-developed programme of parent support for kinship carers and for foster parents. These programmes will be reviewed and their content enhanced to provide specialised support for parents of children with disabilities.</p> <p>6. GCF has a substantial body of resources – capacity-building, training materials, and best practices in terms of programme and infrastructure development – that it has developed and tested over time in the development and provision of the inclusive services it provides. These resources will be utilized to support the development and capacitation of other partial and temporary safe care facilities in the district, province, nationally and regionally.</p> <p>7. Collect and analyse evidence collected through the service-oriented interventions and dedicated research to develop and implement an evidence-based advocacy plan for policy, programmatic and budgetary reform for children with disabilities. Specifically, GCF will lobby and advocate for:</p>
2. An increase in the number of foster parents, parents and other caregivers available, able and capacitated to provide nurturing care for children with disabilities in the Ugu district.	
3. A costed, specialist foster parent recruitment and pre and post-placement parental support programme is developed and implemented to build a pool of local foster parents willing and enabled to provide care for children with disabilities.	
4. The integrated programme under 1 considers and provides appropriate parenting support to caregivers of children with disabilities to enable the provision of nurturing care so that the children in question develop to their full potential.	
5. Parents and caregivers of children with disabilities, including foster parents, are empowered and enabled to provide nurturing care for children with disabilities.	
6. The child care and protection system for children with disabilities is strengthened through stronger policies, laws, programmes and increased budget allocations to scale up tested innovations.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provincial DSD to develop a resourced and targeted population-based strategy and plan for the establishment of enough foster homes for children with disabilities • The provincial DSD to develop a costed implementation prevention and early intervention strategy for children with disabilities including the provision of parental support and partial care services providing appropriate therapeutic programmes • The development of a costed population-based inclusive ECD strategy • The development of provincial funding norms and standards for funding NGOs to enable them to provide quality prevention and early intervention services, as well as partial and temporary safe care services for children with disabilities • The development of a complementary, costed and funded programme of parenting support and inclusive ECD programmes by the Ugu district municipality as part of its IDP and budget. <p>8. Draw on the evidence generated through programme monitoring and research to hold government to account for its responsibilities in terms of the ACRWC, CRC, the CRPD, the SDGS and the NDP through sharing of information with the SAHRC, Parliament, shadow reporting processes, SDG reporting processes, the NPC and the DPME processes of reviewing annual performance plans, IDPs and community-based monitoring initiatives.</p>
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6. Capacity-building to strengthen child care and protection

Objective: Role players responsible for planning, delivery, monitoring and reporting on child care and protection systems are capacitated to engage in effective system’s strengthening initiatives.

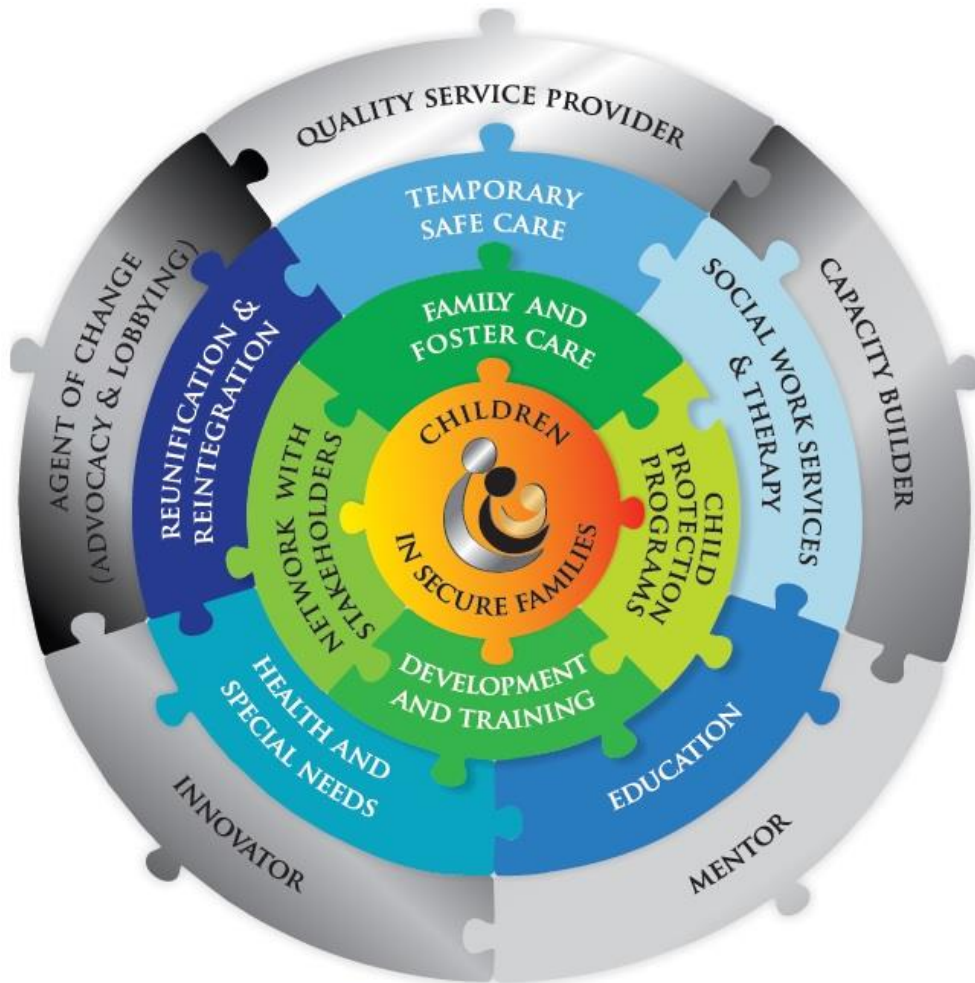
Intended outcomes	Planned activities and interventions
<p>1. An increase in the number of role players in the Ugu district, the province, nationally and regionally capacitated to engage in more effective child-centred promotive and preventative planning, policy development, programme development and monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p>GCF conducts organisational capacity building of local CSOs on good governance, basic project</p>	<p>1. GCF conducts organisational capacity building of local CSOs on good governance, basic project and financial management, resource mobilisation and conflict resolution.</p> <p>2. GCF conducts training on child care and protection of CSOs and government official at a national and regional level.</p>

and financial management, resource mobilisation and conflict resolution.	
2. GCF conducts training on child care and protection of CSOs and government official at a national and regional level.	
3. Participation and engagement.	
7. Organisational development of GCF	
Objective: GCF is, and is recognised as a credible, legitimate and valuable regional, national, provincial and district partner and advocate in strengthening the national child care and protection system and in driving national development.	
Intended outcomes	Planned activities and interventions
1. GCF's internal capacity for monitoring, research, analysis, advocacy and communications is enhanced.	1. Revision and profile GCF as a child care and protection implementation and advocacy organisation and a critical and legitimate partner in this nation-wide initiative through staff training and sensitization and implementation of a communications strategy aligned to this strategic plan and supporting advocacy plan.
2. GCF engages in evidence-based planning and advocacy for strengthening the child care and protection system.	2. Established working relationships with local, provincial, national and regional networks with government and civil society partners, with the DPME and the NPC.
3. GCF has observer status with the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and at the level of UN.	3. Publish research through journals, media and conferences and seminars sharing information collected, analysed and used in programme and advocacy development.
4. GCF's programmes, materials and resources are better aligned with international, regional and national developmental policy context and evidence.	4. Apply for observer status with the AU and UN and make submissions independently and through national and local coalitions.
5. Resourcing for cross-cutting functions – research, advocacy, and M & E is increased.	5. Expand the scope and geographical reach of GCF's work in Africa, with a focus on moving other African countries from pilots to systems.
6. Decision-making at GCF is inclusive of community-based partners and beneficiaries.	6. Conduct a review / evaluation of core programmes and publications against current evidence and within current policy and programming context, and against GCFs new strategic plan to identify and assess, inter alia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Progress b. Strengths c. Limitations d. Impact e. Areas / domains requiring refreshing and strengthening f. Current baseline Programmes and materials should specifically be assessed to determine the extent to which they embed or integrate and provide an appropriate evidence-based early development suite of services and

	<p>support and are inclusive of children with disabilities.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Develop a monitoring, evaluation and learning framework (MEAL) to accompany the strategic plan which not only collects data, but also disaggregates data by age and disability, and makes provision for the regular analysis of data and the use thereof to plan and strengthen internal programmes and inform advocacy for policy reform and government accountability. 8. Strengthen internal GCF research and policy analysis capacity and monitoring and evaluation capacity through training and staff recruitment. 9. Build advocacy capacity as a cross-cutting function within the whole organisation by, inter alia: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Building a defined advocacy role into all relevant job descriptions and KPIs aligned to the key advocacy objectives in the strategic plan b. Identifying an advocacy and communications lead or manager to oversee advocacy planning, fundraising, implementation and monitoring c. Holding an advocacy capacity development workshop / series of workshops with staff. 10. Diversify GCF's funding base for cross-cutting functions by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Building these functions as budget line items into every funding proposal b. Establish a presence in 3 provinces to comply with requirements for classification as a national organisation if the costs justify the possible returns c. To access funding from the national department you would have to be recognised as a national organisation 1. Consult community-based organisations and beneficiaries in strategic decisions to be made by the GCF board. 2. Increase the technical capacity of the board by recruiting additional board members with expertise required for overseeing this strategic plan.
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(Document prepared in collaboration with Patricia Martin-Wiesner from Advocacy Aid)

GCF Model



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