

Melbourne Children's Global Health

Strategic Plan 2023-2025



**Melbourne
Children's**

A world leader
in child and
adolescent health



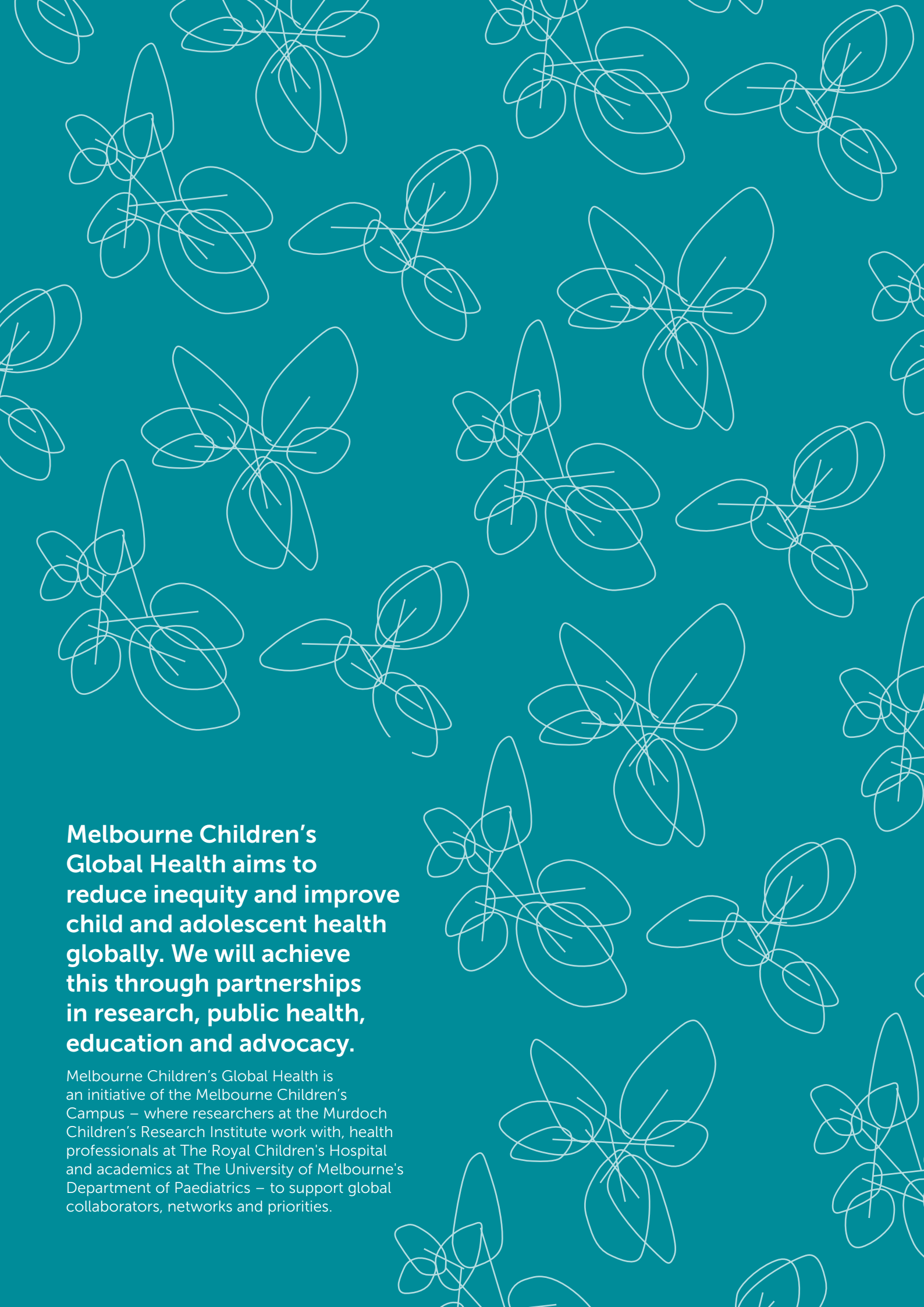
The Royal
Children's
Hospital
Melbourne

 murdoch
children's
research
institute



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Supported by The Royal Children's Hospital Foundation

The background is a solid teal color with a repeating pattern of white line-art flowers. Each flower is composed of several overlapping, rounded leaf-like shapes radiating from a central point, creating a stylized, abstract floral design.

**Melbourne Children's
Global Health aims to
reduce inequity and improve
child and adolescent health
globally. We will achieve
this through partnerships
in research, public health,
education and advocacy.**

Melbourne Children's Global Health is an initiative of the Melbourne Children's Campus – where researchers at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute work with, health professionals at The Royal Children's Hospital and academics at The University of Melbourne's Department of Paediatrics – to support global collaborators, networks and priorities.



Our reach is global, with implementation focused in the Indo-Pacific region. We collaborate with UN agencies, governments, research institutes, universities, health care services and non-government organisations to recognise and realise capacity and support a learning health systems approach, in line with national or institutional priorities.

Our strategic objectives 2023-2025 are:

- Sustain collaborative relationships with individuals, organisations, governments and communities through a learning health systems approach
- Increase understanding of child and adolescent health in the contexts where we work by generating improved data, consultation and collaboration
- Undertake innovative research in clinical care and education, vaccines and public health
- Implement and translate evidence to contribute to the global effort to place children and adolescents at the centre of sustainable development
- Ensure an effective operational framework for the Melbourne Children’s to facilitate mutually respectful and sustainable partnerships

Melbourne Children’s

Purpose

Murdoch Children’s Research Institute

We want all children to have the opportunity to live a healthy and fulfilled life.

University of Melbourne

Transform local, Indigenous and global health outcomes: Address the most important health and research priorities and engage in strategic global partnerships and public discourse to deliver positive health outcomes and reduce Indigenous health inequity.¹

Department of Paediatrics

Royal Children’s Hospital

Our vision is a world where all kids thrive. We believe all children and young people should have the same opportunity to realise their potential.

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Royal Children’s Hospital Foundation

Our vision is that the RCH, founded in philanthropy, supported now and in the future will have the capacity to transform health care for children and young people.



Child and adolescent health in the context of sustainable development

Children and adolescents must be at the centre of sustainable development.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a call to action to end poverty and ensure equitable development. SDG 3 targets good health and wellbeing, many of the other goals are relevant for health, and there are many targets and indicators specific to children and adolescents. The SDGs address the social determinants of health, including education, social and economic factors. These factors contribute to inequity in health outcomes across the life course.

Globally there has been substantial progress in child health over the past two decades with advances in clinical care and public health, including life-saving vaccines.

Melbourne Children's Global Health has significant research programs in vaccines to prevent pneumonia and diarrhoeal disease - the two largest causes of child deaths - including clinical trials for vaccine development and to inform vaccine policy.

We have led evidence-based guideline development and implementation research to improve quality of care. This includes improving the use of oxygen to treat childhood pneumonia, which reduced child deaths by up to 50%.

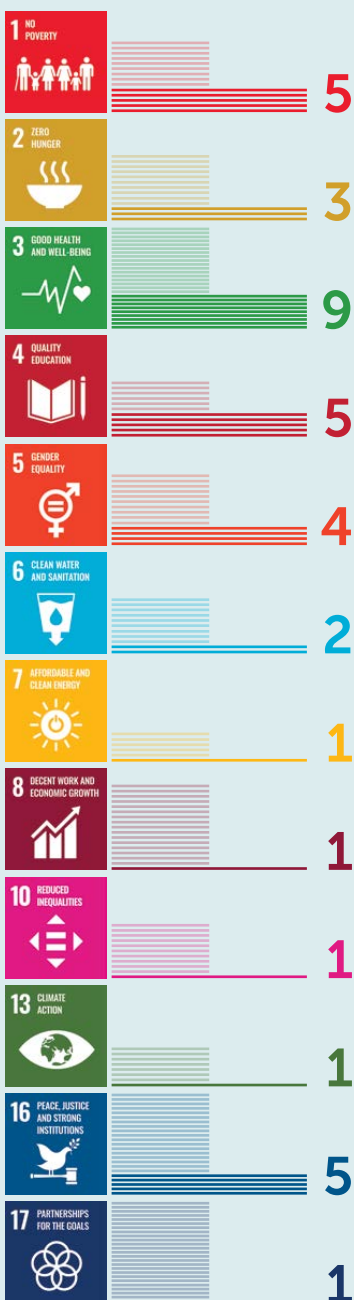
We have also led large-scale public health programs and operational research for neglected diseases in children and adolescents, including tuberculosis, scabies and rheumatic heart disease.

We have contributed to global progress that has seen six million more children survive beyond their fifth birthday each year. But progress towards the SDGs is threatened by persistent inequalities, highlighted and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict and climate change.

Melbourne Children's Global Health has led efforts to recognise the importance of investment in early child development, disability prevention and support services and adolescent health to ensure that all children reach their full potential. We have focused attention on early child development through the World Health Organization's Commission on the Social Determinants of Health and led two *the Lancet* Commissions to understand the challenges and opportunities for adolescent health and wellbeing.



Number of SDG indicators directly related to children and adolescents²:



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF have responded to these challenges and opportunities for children and adolescents through strategic shifts in approach:

- A shift from child survival to 'survive, thrive and transform.'³
- An expanded focus from children under five years to a life course approach.
- A child, adolescent and family-centred approach that considers the broader determinants of health.
- A multi-sectoral approach to improve health outcomes.
- Strengthening health workforce capacity development and health systems, including primary healthcare and public health functions.⁴

WHO, UNICEF, and the Lancet have convened a movement to place children and adolescents at the centre of sustainable development and the SDGs.⁵

The case for putting children and adolescents at the centre of sustainable development is underpinned by the rights of the child, the concept of intergenerational fairness and the evidence that early intervention in health and education can have substantial benefits throughout the life course, for sustainable economic and social development, and for future generations.⁶

The SDGs have human rights as their foundation. The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) sets out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religion or abilities.

Melbourne Children's Global Health contributes to this global effort to place children and adolescents at the centre of sustainable development and the SDGs through innovative research and translating evidence into global guidelines, policy and strategy in collaboration with the World Health Organization.



Our approach

Learning health systems and sustainable development^{7,8}

Our approach to sustainable development is enabled by the co-location of research, education and care at the Melbourne Children's, which promotes learning at all levels within health systems to improve child and adolescent health.

Health systems 'provide, protect and promote health ... delivering physical, mental and social health, quality of life and sustainability for all populations across the lifecourse.'⁹

*'People are central to the functioning of health systems – as policy-makers, implementers, managers, providers, community members and service users. Health systems operate through complex and interlinked webs of relationships among different actors – and their performance depends on the nature and quality of these relationships.'*¹⁰

We recognise that learning at individual, team and organisational levels and across the health system is critical to strengthen systems and the achieve the Global Goals.

A learning health system develops individual capacity and relationships within teams and organisations to learn and use what they learn to improve care, health programs and services, and policy.

Learning can encompass:

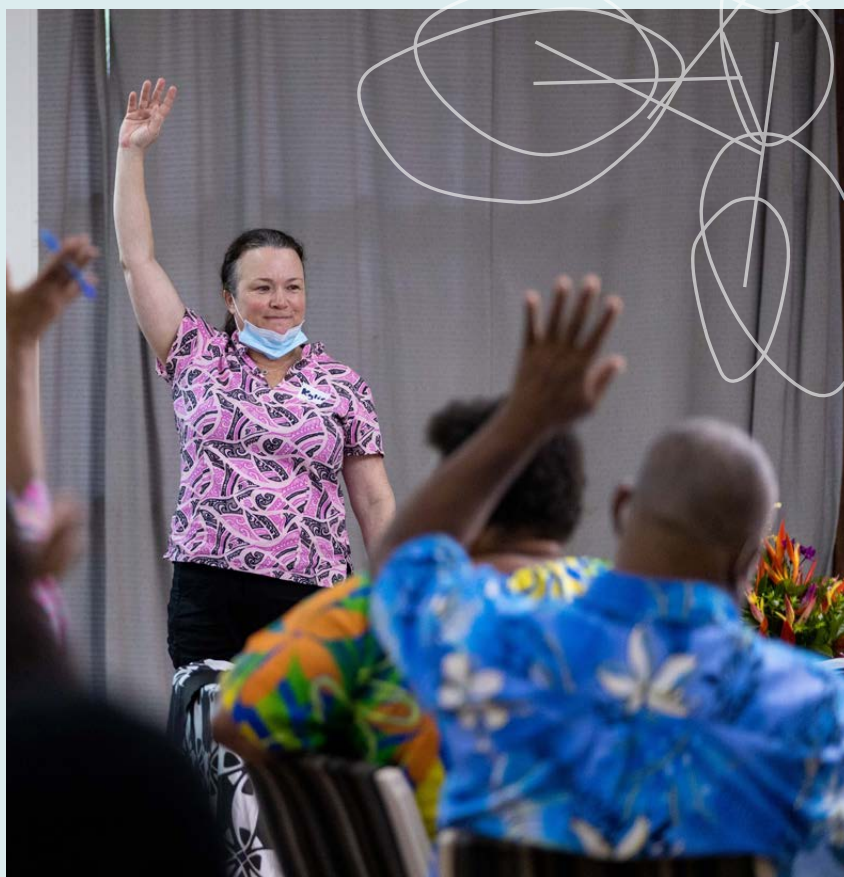
- routine data collection and analysis through health information systems, implementation research and quality improvement programs;
- epidemiology, data for decision-making, observational studies, clinical trials;
- team meetings, mentoring, placements, conferences or consultations; and
- formal training and qualifications, including research training and qualifications.

Local leadership is essential to develop a vision that incorporates learning, establish structures and processes that enable learning and champion a learning culture at all levels.

A learning health system also develops relationships and learns across organisations and networks.

Adopting a learning health systems approach enables Melbourne Children's Global Health to facilitate two-way learning and sustainable relationships between the Melbourne Children's and individuals, teams and organisations in the Indo-Pacific and globally.

A learning health systems approach can facilitate effective and sustainable development, in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008).

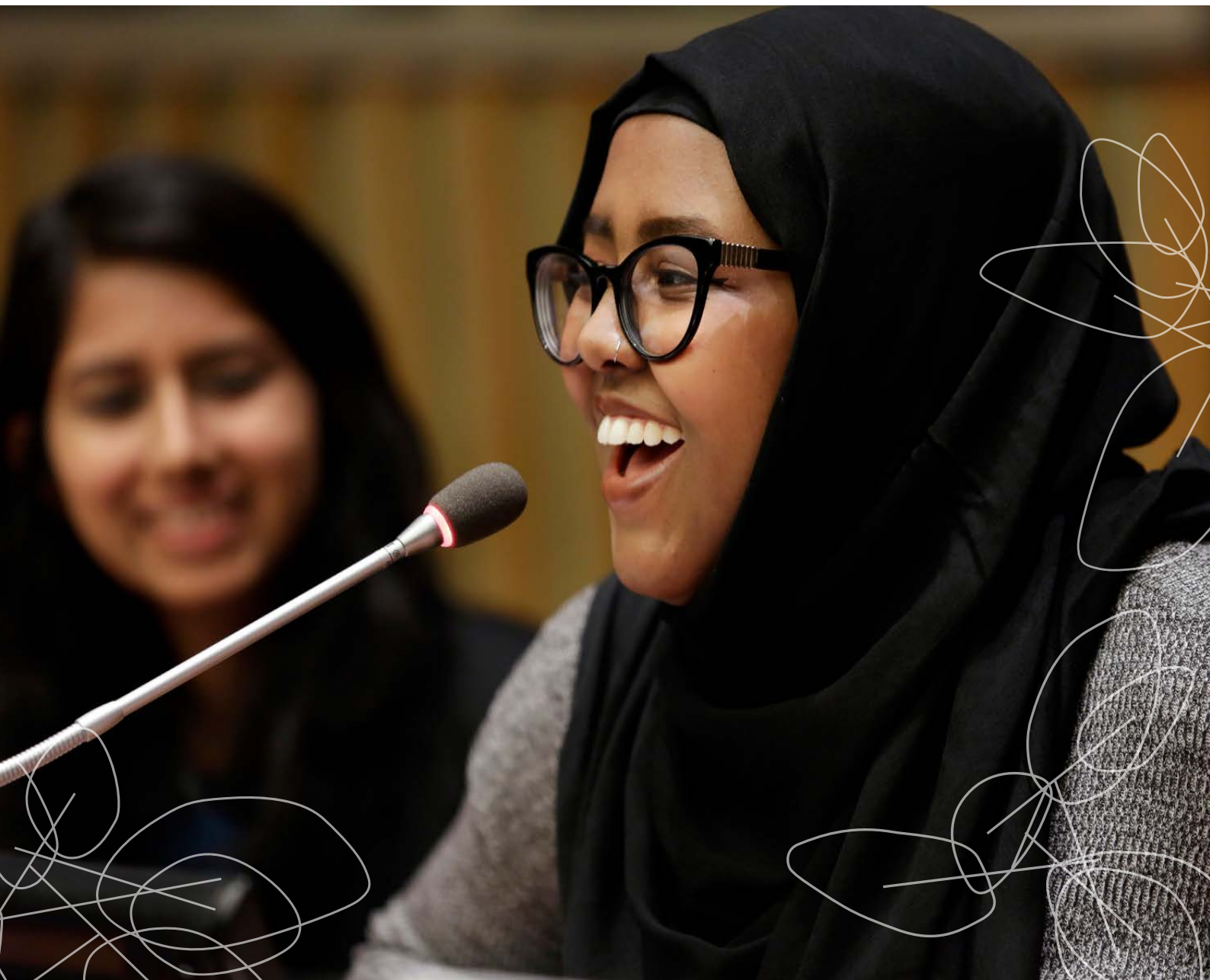


Our approach starts from an acknowledgement of the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which the Melbourne Children's Campus is located, the Wurundjeri. Our approach is informed by Indigenous concepts of sustainable development.¹¹ In addition to the goals and targets of the SDGs specific to Indigenous peoples, Indigenous concepts of sustainable development can include respect for identity, culture and non-discrimination; the security of rights as custodians of land and natural resources; and self-determination.¹² We learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

leadership at the Melbourne Children's and we contribute to The University of Melbourne's strategy to facilitate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership internationally to improve health and wellbeing for Indigenous children and adolescents.

Our reach is global, with implementation focused in the Indo-Pacific region. We collaborate with UN agencies, governments, research institutes, universities, health care services and non-government organisations to recognise and realise capacity and support a learning health systems approach, in line with national or institutional priorities.

Our approach is guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Children and adolescents have the right to share their perspectives and to participate in decisions that affect their health and wellbeing. We aim to be inclusive of all children and adolescents. We centre children and adolescent in sustainable development, through consultation and collaboration and by supporting youth-led initiatives. We also recognise the critical role that parents, families and communities play in decisions about young people's health and wellbeing.



What we aim to achieve

Melbourne Children's Global Health aims to reduce inequity and improve child and adolescent health globally. We will achieve this through partnerships in research, public health, education and advocacy.

Over the next three years our strategic objectives are:

Collaborate

Sustain collaborative relationships with individuals, organisations, governments and communities through a learning health systems approach.

Understand

Increase understanding of child and adolescent health in the contexts where we work by generating improved data, through consultation and collaboration.



Innovate

Undertake innovative research in clinical care and education, vaccines and public health.

Implement and translate

Implement and translate evidence to contribute to the global effort to place children and adolescents at the centre of sustainable development.

Facilitate

Support an effective operational framework for the Melbourne Children's to facilitate mutually respectful and sustainable partnerships.



As an initiative of the Melbourne Children's Campus we contribute to institutional objectives of the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, The University of Melbourne's Advancing Health 2030 and the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne.

Melbourne Children's

A world leader in child and adolescent health



Supported by The Royal Children's Hospital Foundation

What we aim to achieve

Aim

Melbourne Children's Global Health aims to reduce inequity and improve child and adolescent health in disadvantaged populations globally. We will achieve this through partnerships in research, public health, education and advocacy.

Collaborate

Sustain collaborative relationships with individuals, organisations, governments and communities through a learning health systems approach.

- Develop individual capacity
- Develop leadership capacity for learning health systems in the Indo-Pacific through co-design of leadership training
- Promote gender equality and diversity in leadership, including Indigenous leadership in health
- Support national health, education and research systems strengthening and/or institutional capacity development plans
- Co-design education programs and tools which promote learning health systems
- Facilitate an online community of practice to support learning health systems

Understand

Increase understanding of child and adolescent health in the contexts where we work by generating improved data, through consultation and collaboration.

- Conduct research to improve child and adolescent health data. For example, through Global Burden of Disease estimates, epidemiological studies, operational research and improved health information systems
- Consult and collaborate with local stakeholders and communities, including children and adolescents
- Collect and analyse data by age, sex and/or gender and other factors

Actions

Expected outcomes

- Recognise and realise individual capacity in research and quality improvement
- Increase diversity in health leadership
- Promote learning health systems

- Improve data for decision-making

Innovate

Undertake innovative research in clinical care and education, vaccines and public health.

Conduct research spanning discovery, basic science and clinical trials

Incorporate sex and/or gender analysis in research

Implement and translate

Implement and translate evidence to contribute to the global effort to place children and adolescents at the centre of sustainable development.

Conduct implementation research with collaborators in line with LMIC national or institutional priorities for child and adolescent health or health research

Consult and collaborate with local stakeholders and communities, including children and adolescents and support adolescent-led initiatives

Incorporate gender and intersectional analysis in implementation research

Contribute to evidence-based child and adolescent health policy through the World Health Organization, UNICEF, other UN agencies and multilaterals

Advocate to place children and adolescents at the centre of sustainable development

Facilitate

Support an effective operational framework for the Melbourne Children's to facilitate mutually respectful and sustainable partnerships.

Provide an operational platform at the Melbourne Children's to support partnerships with low- and middle-income country institutions

Continue to strengthen and adapt operational frameworks to promote effectiveness

Create knowledge that contributes to improve health outcomes for children and adolescents in low- and middle-income countries

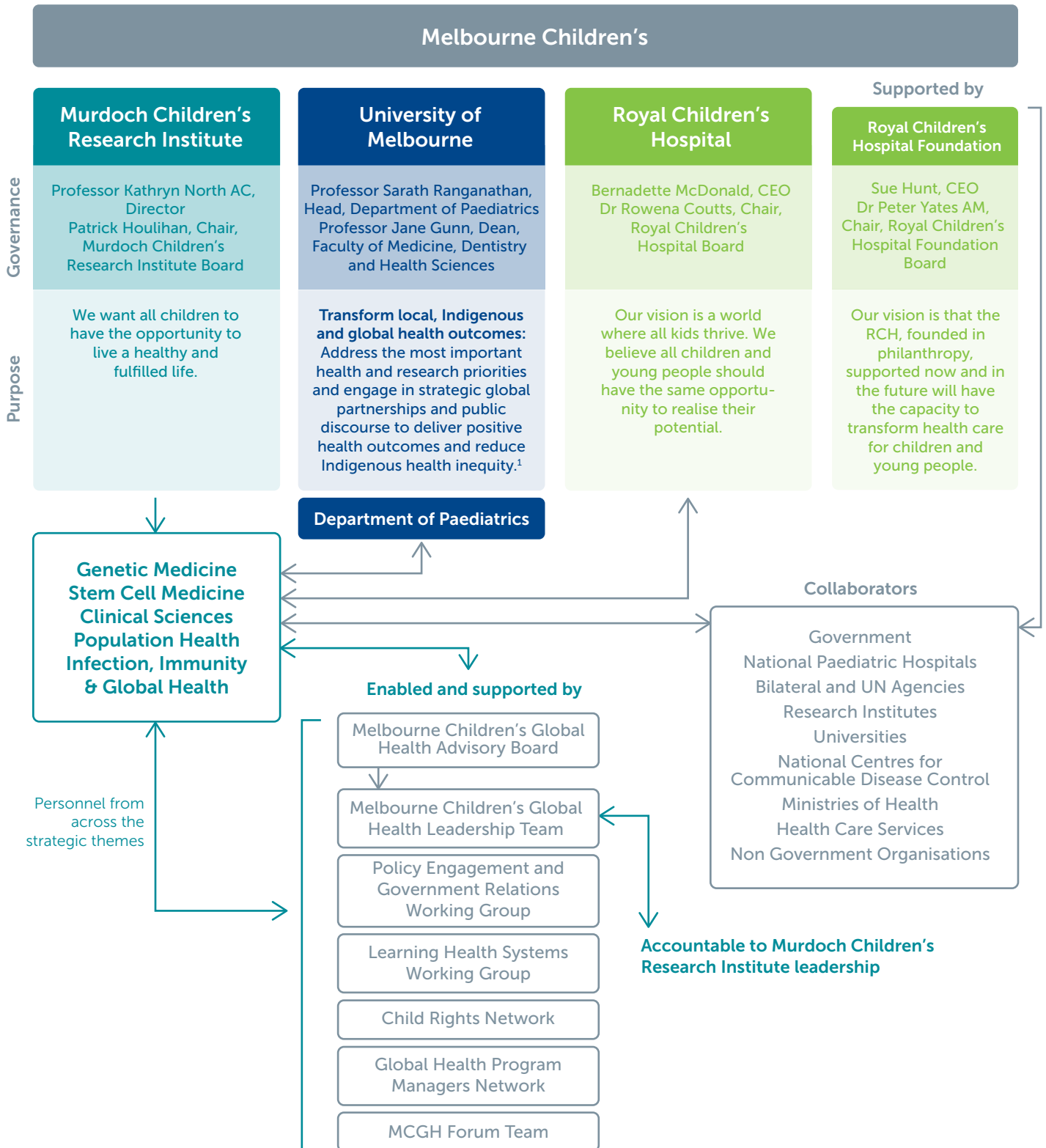
Translate research into health policy and public health prevention, early intervention, health service delivery and quality health education that improves child health outcomes

Increase the impact of research and education through diverse and inclusive participation

Build and maintain mutually respectful and sustainable collaborations

About us

Melbourne Children’s Global Health is an initiative of the Melbourne Children’s Campus – where researchers at the Murdoch Children’s Research Institute work with health professionals at The Royal Children’s Hospital and academics at The University of Melbourne’s Department of Paediatrics.





We provide governance, leadership and an operational framework at the Melbourne Children's to support collaborations between the Melbourne Children's and partners in low- and middle-income countries.

MCGH reports to the Melbourne Children's Campus Council through the Director, Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

A **Melbourne Children's Global Health Advisory Board** provides strategic guidance to a Global Health Leadership Team, which is comprised of representatives from across the Melbourne Children's.

The Leadership Team is supported by the following committees:

The **MCGH Policy Engagement and Government Relations Working Group** contributes to a global effort to place children and adolescents at the centre of sustainable development through evidence-based policy and advocacy.

The **MCGH Learning Health Systems Working Group** supports individual, organisational and national capacity for learning health systems in low- and middle-income countries through:

- Co-design of education programs and tools which promote learning health systems
- Facilitating an online community of practice to support learning health systems
- Developing leadership capacity for learning health systems in the Indo-Pacific through co-design of leadership training

The **MCGH Child Rights Network** facilitates seminars and training on equity and gender analysis, disability inclusion and approaches to support consultation, collaboration and youth-led initiatives in the Indo-Pacific.

The **MCGH Program Management Network** leads the development and implementation of effective frameworks and standards for project management in low- and middle-income countries.





Cover image: MCRI / Zahiyl Namu 2022.

Page 3: Newborn vaccination at health centre in Fiji. Credit: WHO / Jason Chute 2022. © WHO 2022

Page 4: Dr Hoang Tran providing care at Da Nang Hospital for Women and Children, Viet Nam. Credit: MCRI / Peter Schied 2018.

Page 5: Students complete classwork in Vanuatu. Credit: DFAT / Connor Ashleigh 2013. © Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Page 6: Vaccine Champions training in Fiji. Credit: MCRI / Zoom Fiji 2022.

Page 7: Youth powering gender equality at the Commission on the Status of Women. Credit: UN Women / Ryan Brown 2017. CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Pages 8-9: World Scabies Program Team delivering mass drug administration for scabies in Fiji. Credit: MCRI / Zoom Fiji 2022.

Page 13: Dr Yoga Rossi Widya Utama, Dr Rony Trilaksono, Dr Jarir At Thobari, Dr Neti Nurani and Dr Braghmandita Widya Indraswari from Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia, participate in workshops at the Melbourne Children's. Credit: MCRI / Jane Hawtin 2017.

Page 14: World Scabies Program Team delivering mass drug administration for scabies in Fiji. Credit: MCRI / Zoom Fiji 2022.

Page 15: Teaching students with a disability in Tonga. Credit: DFAT / Connor Ashleigh 2013. © Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Back cover: Health Promoting Schools in Fiji. Credit: WHO / Tom Vierus. © WHO 2022.

¹ Faculty of Medicine Dentistry and Health Sciences, Advancing Health 2023. Available at: <https://mdhs.unimelb.edu.au/advancing-health-2030>

² Adapted from UNICEF, 'Using data to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for children'. Available at: <https://data.unicef.org/sdgs/>

³ United Nations, Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health 2016-2030: Available at: https://www.everywomaneverychild.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/EWEC_GSUpdate_Full_EN_2017_web-1.pdf

⁴ Requejo J, Strong K. Redesigning health programmes for all children and adolescents BMJ 2021; 372 doi:10.1136/bmj.n533

⁵ Clark H, Coll-Seck AM, et al. A future for the world's children? A WHO/UNICEF-Lancet Commission. Lancet. 2020 Feb 22;395(10224):605-658. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(19)32540-1. Epub 2020 Feb 19. Erratum in: Lancet. 2020 May 23;395(10237):1612.

⁶ Clark H, et al. A future for the world's children? A WHO-UNICEF-Lancet Commission. Lancet. 2020 Feb 22;395(10224): 605-658. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(19)32540-1.

⁷ Sheikh K, Abimbola S, editors. Learning health systems: pathways to progress. Flagship report of the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2021. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

⁸ Franzen SRP, Chandler C, Lang T. Health research capacity development in low and middle income countries: reality or rhetoric? A systematic meta-narrative review of the qualitative literature BMJ Open 2017;7:e012332. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2016-012332

⁹ Shroff ZC, Marten R, Hanson K, editors. Systems for health: everyone has a role. Flagship report of the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2022. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

¹⁰ Sheikh K, Abimbola S, editors. Learning health systems: pathways to progress. Flagship report of the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2021. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

¹¹ Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education. Indicators Relevant for Indigenous Peoples: A Resource Book [Internet]. Baguio City (PHL): Tebtebba; 2008 [cited 2023 Jan 29]. p. 37-62. Available from: <http://tebtebba.org/index.php/all-resources/category/7-training-manuals-andresource-books?download=112:indicators-relevantfor-indigenous-peoples>

¹² Schultz R. Closing the Gap and the Sustainable Development Goals: listening to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Aust N Z J Public Health. 2020 Feb;44(1):11-13. doi: 10.1111/1753-6405.12958. Epub 2019 Dec 11. PMID: 31825566.



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