Building Brighter Futures for Marginalized Children across Asia
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The Challenge
Science has shown that nurturing care during the first 1000 days of a child's life is crucial for healthy development. Yet, each year, over 250 million young children are deprived of that care and fail to reach their full potential. A study of child poverty in the Asia-Pacific region found that across several countries including Vietnam and Mongolia, an estimated 30 million children face severe deprivation. As toxic stress from poverty and adversity weakens a child's budding brain architecture, the lack of quality early childhood care and education (ECCE) further undermines that child's promising future. The research of Nobel Laureate James Heckman confirms that money spent on early childhood intervention in the lives of children at-risk produces a much higher economic return than any later efforts in secondary education, job training, or rehabilitation — as much as a 13% annual return for every dollar spent. Unfortunately, less than 1% of women living in poverty have access to quality, affordable ECCE and are often forced to choose between income-generating employment or staying home to care for their children. Subsequently, they either quit working when their children are born – perpetuating family poverty – or leave the children home alone or in substandard care settings that lack the capacity to provide stimulating learning experiences.

Our Solution
From our regional training hub in Hong Kong, OneSky is building local capacity in China, Vietnam, and Mongolia by hiring women and training them to train others to establish high-quality ECCE programs that empower marginalized children to thrive, breaking intergenerational cycles of poverty. We are transforming the quality of care for the most vulnerable: children left behind in high-poverty rural villages of China, migrant children of low-wage factory workers in Vietnam, and children in informal urban settlements like Mongolia's ger districts. We do this through:

- **High quality ECCE programs** grounded in an evidence-based curriculum to create safe, nurturing learning environments and train caregivers in responsive early care, fostering age-appropriate cognitive, motor, social and emotional development
- **Blended learning** with a mobile-friendly digital platform providing an online community of peers and child development specialists, a video resource library and other materials featuring global best practices early childhood development, and distance learning courses
- **Training of trainers** alongside local demonstration hubs to build the capacity of leaders, caregivers and trainers in the early childhood workforce to bring our approach to scale
- **Strategic partnerships** with government at all levels to affect systems change and transform the national standard of care for marginalized children
- **Robust monitoring and evaluation** including technology-enabled internal assessment tools as well as external impact evaluations with academic and research partners

Our Theory of Change
In the first months of life, if children lack essential nurturing care and stimulation, they will fail to reach their full potential. OneSky teaches caregivers how to provide at-risk children high quality daily interactions and trains local women, communities, and governments to implement and scale high-quality early care programs. When at-risk children receive loving and nurturing care, they develop secure attachments, self-confidence, and resiliency – an essential foundation that will allow them to enter primary school on a level with their peers. Better-prepared, once-marginalized children can grow up positioned to enjoy opportunities that arise as society around them develops. Seeing the impact of our programs, our government partners change policies and increase investments related to early childhood care and education, thus building brighter futures for the next generations. As evidence of our work is disseminated globally through conferences and professional associations, more countries and partners adopt our methodology for systems change.

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Our Story
OneSky for all children is a global NGO whose mission is to teach communities and caregivers to provide nurturing responsive care and early education that unlocks the vast potential hidden in our world’s most vulnerable young children. Founded in 1998 after a flawed social policy resulted in an entire generation of abandoned baby girls in China, OneSky began to train child welfare workers to bring family-like care to all children languishing inside Chinese orphanages. By 2010, China’s Ministry of Civil Affairs adopted our approach as the national standard for orphan care and invited OneSky to co-train every child welfare worker in the country on how to deliver our evidence-based methodology within child welfare institutions. The groundbreaking partnership became the National Training Program which now has reached over 30,000 caregivers in every one of China’s 31 provinces this year. Over the last 21 years, OneSky has trained 40,450 caregivers to provide life-changing, responsive care for 185,829 marginalized children in China, Vietnam, and Mongolia.

Impact and Evidence
OneSky is producing a landmark body of ECCE evidence, in partnership with leading academic and research institutions, to be disseminated through global platforms, journals, and conferences. In 2018, a three-year randomized control study of our work in China was completed by the China Development Research Foundation and the Amsterdam Institute for International Development. The impact evaluation showed that our programs had a statistically significant positive effect on caregiver attitudes and child development outcomes, particularly gross-motor and social-emotional skill development. This model has also been recognized as a noteworthy practice by the Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood. We are now partnering with Professor Aisha Yousafzai of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health on a new, pioneering impact evaluation of our work in Vietnam. The study will be the largest home-based childcare provider survey outside of the Global North as well as the first in Asia to look at home-based childcare in industrial zones.

A Call for Investment
Our greatest barrier remains limited financial resources to accelerate our impact at scale. We believe in the power of new resources and partnerships to crowd in even more long-term investment for the most marginalized children in these underserved communities, but we need commitments from funders and partners to make a positive difference for an entire generation of children at risk today.

- **$1 million** would create quality community-based care across 37 centers in high-poverty rural villages of China, changing the lives of over 10,000 vulnerable children left behind
- **$5 million** would build a best-in-class blended learning platform suited for mobile to digitally empower and upskill 10,250 frontline ECCE caregivers across Asia to improve the quality of care for 79,900 marginalized children across China, Vietnam, and Mongolia
- **$10 million** would train an estimated 14,300 home-based childcare providers reaching over 417,000 children of low-wage factory workers, transforming an entire system and national standard of home-based care in the industrial zones of Vietnam

Hope for the Future
Across Asia today, there are millions of young children languishing without the adequate care they need to thrive, at risk of abuse and neglect. Research specific to the region found that the total cost of child abuse and neglect is a staggering $209 billion, nearly two percent of the region’s GDP. At this pivotal moment, we are telling a new story about these children – a narrative of hope and promise about a brighter future these children make possible. We imagine a day when all the world’s children are valued and considered a precious human resource worthy of our investment. We believe such a day is within our reach. We are building the critical ECCE workforce and scaling up high-quality ECCE programs to ensure every marginalized child has a durable developmental foundation, which will reap dividends for developing countries as improved child outcomes translate into more robust and prosperous societies for decades to come.

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