



Strategic Plan 2026



A child's hands are shown stacking colorful blocks (green, blue, red, yellow) against a teal background. A white circle is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text:

Using data responsibly to improve outcomes for every child.

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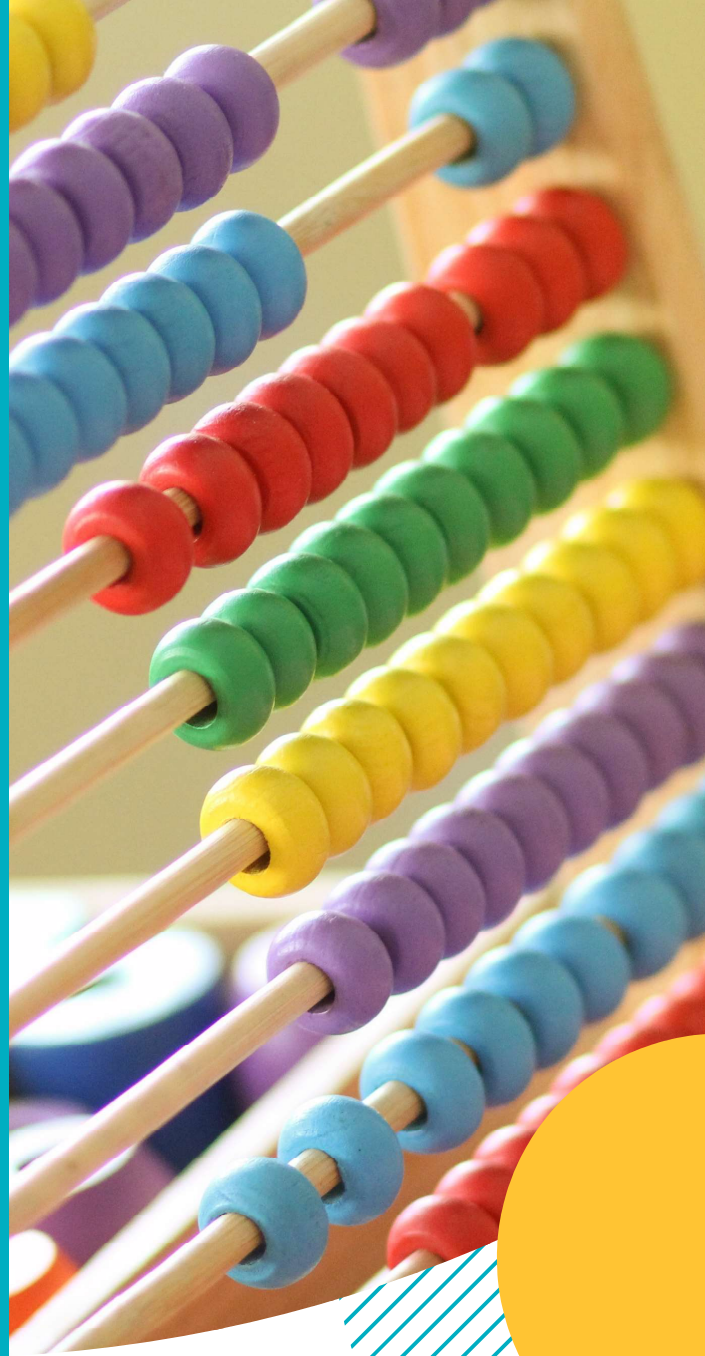
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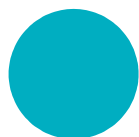
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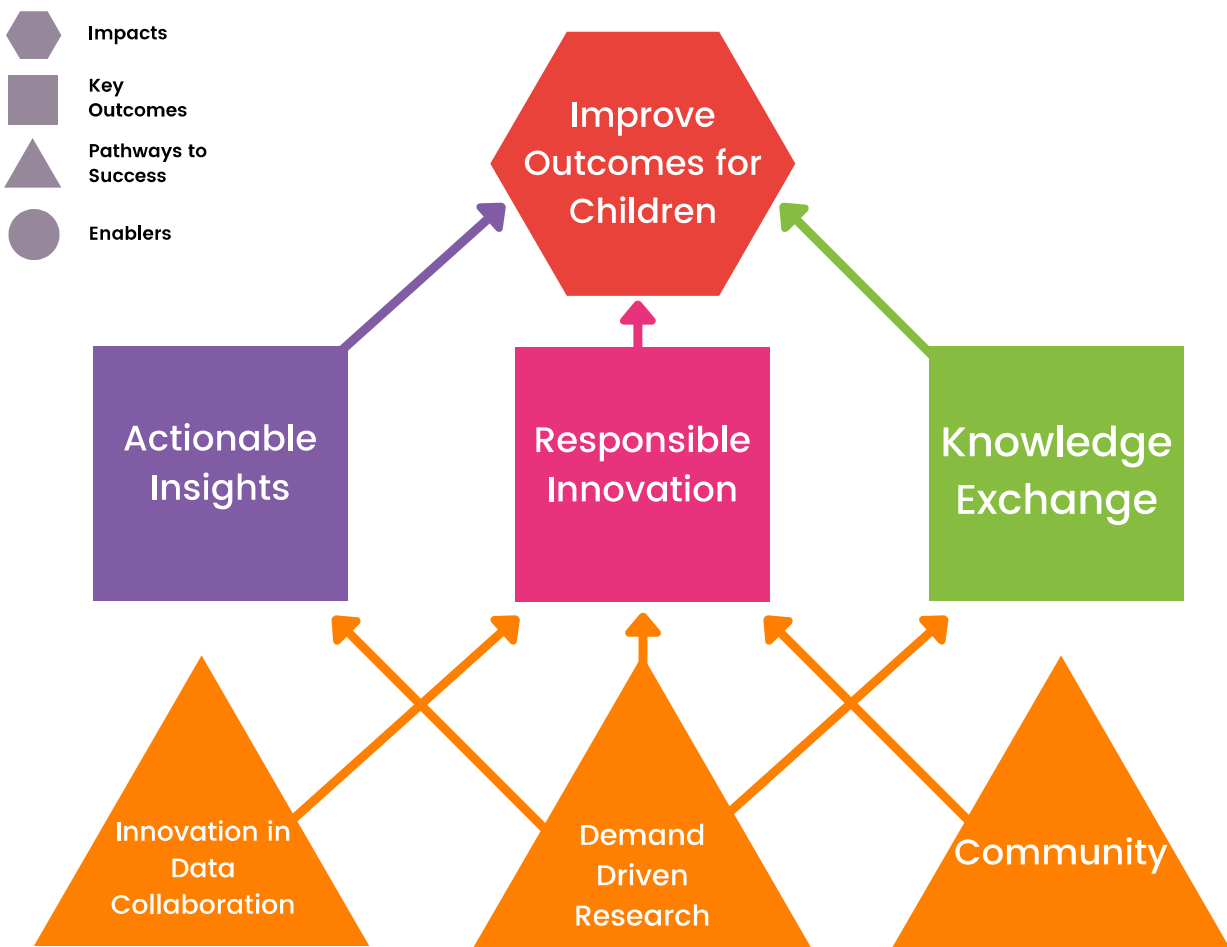
Iain Cartwright

The Collaborative Team



Our Theory of Change

Our strategic plan has been designed around a Theory of Change, which maps the linkage between our activities, outcomes, and consequent impact. We have used our Theory of Change as a reference point to ensure that all our objectives align with our core goal of improving outcomes for children.



Why does our Strategic Plan matter?

Today children are at risk from massive issues ranging from climate change to conflict, from epidemics and disease, to poverty and deprivation. It is clear that the world's complex socio-economic problems affecting children cannot be tackled by a single organisation alone. Collaborative data-driven solutions are critical to support those organisations that are working tirelessly to help children to survive and to thrive.



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Intensified by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an increasing urgency to come together to tackle the many complex issues facing children today. Doing so effectively, and responsibly, for children around the world requires access to different data sets and expertise from diverse sectors.

Bringing together access to big data, data science and expertise can provide a comprehensive and real-time picture of the situation of children, enabling partners to better evaluate impact, improve forecasting, tailor programmes, and inform policy-making.



The Data for Children Collaborative with UNICEF is a unique partnership between UNICEF, The Scottish Government and the University of Edinburgh.

Extending across child health, education and wellbeing, and not replicated anywhere else in the world, the Collaborative is a catalyst to trigger collaborative data-driven solutions to advance child rights everywhere, while at the same time, encouraging the exchange of data and expertise for social good.

In its first two years, the Collaborative has already launched twelve projects, in a range of countries across four continents, with over twenty-five partners spanning universities, industry, third sector and government.



Building on lessons learned, recognising the need to work with collaborative teams across a number of sectors and with a focus on impact...

...our Strategic Plan will increase our partner's ability to deliver results for children in the following ways:



ALIGN

Aligning our resources, and the resources of our partners, around common goals and strategies.



SUPPORT

Supporting our ability to make strategic decisions.



CREATE

Creating more effective communication about our work to win more support for the Data for Good sector.



STRENGTHEN

Strengthening our internal accountability framework.

Our Core Values

Underpinning everything we do within the Data for Children Collaborative with UNICEF are our core values:

For Every Child, With Trust, With Transparency and With Safe Data.

Using these core values as our compass, we deliver with the mindset that our methods and outputs are **Impactful**, **Innovative** and **Agile**. You will find reference to these values and this mindset through the rest of the strategy document.

For Every Child

With Transparency



With Trust

With Safe Data

Our Strategic Plan 2026

Anchored against the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, our Key Outcomes, Pathways to Success and Enablers sit across six Priority Themes of the DCC Strategic Plan 2026, specifically set to drive progress towards the achievement of our Strategic Objectives.

This will all help us realise our vision of:



**Enabling improvement in outcomes
for every child.**

**Drawing on the strengths of our
partners and their network to bring
insight and solve problems using
data and responsible innovative
data practices.**

What results will our strategic plan help achieve for children?

The overarching goal of the Strategic Plan 2026 is to use data responsibly to improve outcomes for every child.

Supported by Pathways to Success and Enablers, the Strategic Plan establishes three Key Outcomes:

1. Actionable Insights
2. Responsible Innovation
3. Knowledge Exchange



These outcome areas span our six Priority Themes:

Climate Change, COVID-19, Mental Health, Nutrition, Population and Poverty.



**By 2026, our
Strategic
Objectives are...**

Actionable Insights

1

We will provide sustainable, **impactful** solutions to multiple end users

2

We will deliver **innovative** and actionable insights aligned to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals

3

We will stand out as being **agile** in our ability to respond to world events

4

We will ensure ongoing financial sustainability of the Data for Children Collaborative with UNICEF through multiple channels to sustain **impact** for our partners

5

We will have a diverse portfolio of funding partners sharing our goal of **impact** on positive outcomes for children

6

We will increase the size of the Data for Children Collaborative with UNICEF core team to **safely** support our best in class outputs



Responsible Innovation

1

We will have a reputation for being the 'go to' for **safe** and responsible project delivery

2

We will have **safe** frameworks and **innovative** approaches that others will seek to replicate

3

We will develop robust yet **agile** governance structures, proportional to our own growth

4

We will share a catalogue of customer testimonials and related **Impact Statements**

5

We will receive commissioned challenge questions from organisations that **trust** us

6

We will be **transparent** in communicating our financial breakdown

7

We will have run a focused fundraising effort to increase the range of projects and impact through building **trust**



Knowledge Exchange

1

We will be known as a **trusted** global focal point for 'data for children' insights

2

We will have a clear evidence base of actionable insights and there will be **transparency** on how we delivered them

3

We will have further **impact** in the 'Data for Good' arena by educating others on using data to improve outcomes for children

4

We will educate our network on **safe** and responsible innovation practices

5

We will establish a shared virtual space for our community to have **transparent** discussions

6

We will **innovate** how to actively engage students in our projects



How will we achieve these results for children?

In order to deliver our three Key Outcomes, we need to break down these objectives into activities that support our Pathways to Success:

- Innovation in Data Collaboration
- Demand Driven Research
- Community



Enablers

We have identified enablers on which to focus our efforts in support of the Pathways to Success;

- Governance Framework
- Data
- Funding
- Challenge Questions
- Infrastructure
- Collaborative Teams
- Expertise Network
- Engagement



**By 2026, our
Planned Results
are...**

Actionable Insights

1

We will have delivered demand-driven outcomes, a minimum of three per theme, for our customers. Each outcome will have been built in partnership with the end user, ensuring adoption is sustainable and **impactful**.

2

We will have been **transparent** in the use of our prioritisation framework and governance models, ensuring the impact of our outcomes aligns to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

3

We will ensure our project outcomes are balanced across the six priority themes, while remaining **agile** enough to deliver three ad hoc challenge questions in response to world events.

4

We will have maintained a database mapping potential funding vehicles/ opportunities to projects / themes to ensure **agile** value add interactions with funding partners.



5

We will have managed a plan of activity to ensure the ongoing **transparent** financial sustainability through multiple channels.

6

We will have developed our Client Relationship Management system in an **innovative** way to manage our diverse relationships with End Users, Funding Partners, Expertise Network, Strategic Delivery Partners and Data Partners and build trust in those relationships.

7

We will **safely** follow protocols within the University of Edinburgh to recruit new staff members, best placed for our growth and ensure the support system and infrastructure is there for our collaborative teams.



Responsible Innovation

1

We will have published a minimum of twenty five **Impact** Statements from our project portfolio, highlighting project **impacts** and reflecting on lessons learned.

2

We will have further developed our Responsible Innovation framework. A particular focus in our **Impact** Statements will have been Responsible Innovation and the direct **impact** this suite of tools has had on our project outcomes.

At least five other Data Collaboratives and initiatives will have used our outputs in their own setting.

3

We will have developed further our governance bodies and their Terms of Reference, as we evolve our **agile** internal operations, setting up appropriate vehicles for decisions to be made around ethics, publications and youth participation.

4

We will have built catalogue of minimum twenty customer testimonials that tie across to the **Impact** Statements from the project portfolio, providing **transparency** and **trust** in our service offering.



5

We will have been commissioned to complete a minimum of six **innovative** challenge questions from end users external to the partnership, having gained **trust** in our capacity to deliver.

6

We will have published a **transparent** annual statement of funding income and sources.

7

We will have built a **trusted** partnership with a large funding partner based on the proven delivery model and the **impact** that we can have for end users, with a willingness to work on an entirely new area identified by that partner.



Knowledge Exchange

1

We will become an established focal point on 'data for children' insights through the creation of a **trusted** Knowledge Zone on our webpages. Leveraging UNICEF and the wider network's global offices and contacts, we will ensure the right decision makers have access to these outputs that support broader **impact** across the community.

2

We will have published the pathways from project outputs to **impact** for children for a minimum of ten projects.

These will be in the form of **Impact** statements, case studies and a podcast series.

3

We will have presented at a minimum three conferences per year to educate others in the sector on **innovative** approaches to using data to improve outcomes for children.

4

We will publish our training materials through the most appropriate means to educate our network on **safe** and **responsible** innovation practices.



5

We will have created a shared virtual space for our community to have **transparent** discussions and will have a minimum of 150 members with over 50% of members actively engaging in the content.

6

We will have **innovated** new engagement models that allow undergraduates, master and PhD students to contribute work to our projects and add value to their student careers. These student engagement models will be adopted by other areas of the University of Edinburgh for use.



Cross-cutting Priorities

Responsible Innovation

At the Data for Children Collaborative with UNICEF, all our activities are guided by our values and our mindset. A cornerstone of our work is our Responsible Innovation Framework. These are the steps we take to ensure our projects are carried out in a trustworthy, transparent and safe way, for every child.



Prioritisation Framework

Are we best placed to answer this challenge?



Project Initiation Document (PID)

Who, what, when, how does the project work?



Governance Approval

Do the partner organisations support this initiative?



Legals at a Glance

What have we all signed up to?



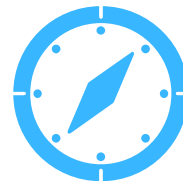
Safeguarding Training

What are our responsibilities towards every child?



Ethical Assessment

Are we doing the right thing in the right way?



Youth Participation

How do we meaningfully engage young people?



Impact Statement

What did the project achieve, and what lessons have we learned?





@dataforchildren



[www.linkedin.com/company/
dataforchildrencollaborative/](http://www.linkedin.com/company/dataforchildrencollaborative/)