The Handbook for Development Programmes

The Essentials

World Vision®

Acknowledgements

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World Vision is a Christian relief, development, and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families, and communities to overcome poverty and injustice.

As followers of Jesus, World Vision is dedicated to working with the world's most vulnerable people. World Vision serves all people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender.

Contents

Acronyms

ADAPT . . . . .   analysis, design and planning tool
CBO . . . .   community-based organisation
CMS. . . . .   Child Monitoring Standard
DF . . . .   development facilitator
DME . . . .   design, monitoring and evalution
FBO . . . .   faith-based organisation
GDP . . . .   Guidance for Development Programmes
ICD . . . .   Integrated Competency Development
IPM . . . .   Integrated Programming Model
LEAP . . . .   Learning through Evaluation with Accountibility and Planning
NGO. . . . . . .   non-governmental organisation
NO . . . .   national office
PDD . . . .   Programme Design Document
RC. . . . .   registered children
SMPS . . . .   Sponsorship Minimum Programming Standards
WV . . . .   World Vision

Introduction

This Handbook describes the essentials of WV's Development Programme Approach. The focus of this approach is equipping local-level staff to work effectively with communities and partners towards the sustained well-being of children, especially the most vulnerable. The approach serves as a vehicle to integrate and focus WV's development programmes on child well-being priorities – including the child well-being targets in the WV national office strategy.

WV's Development Programme Approach is built on good practices from many WV offices and programmes, as well as learning from other organisations. It reflects and enables continuous improvement of WV's development practice. The essentials of the approach should be applied flexibly in context, based on a national office's experience and learning.

This Handbook is designed for use by World Vision staff who seek to understand and apply the approach. The Handbook has three parts:

1. Background: World Vision Essentials
2. What Is WV's Development Programme Approach?
3. Putting WV's Development Programme Approach into Action

The Handbook can be used by programmes with sponsorship and programmes using grant funding.

This Handbook is part of World Vision's **Guidance for Development Programmes** (GDP), an integrated set of resource materials available to support World Vision development-programme staff as needed. The Handbook provides links to other resource materials that can provide further information and help to WV staff.

Figure 1. Overview of the Guidance for Development Programmes
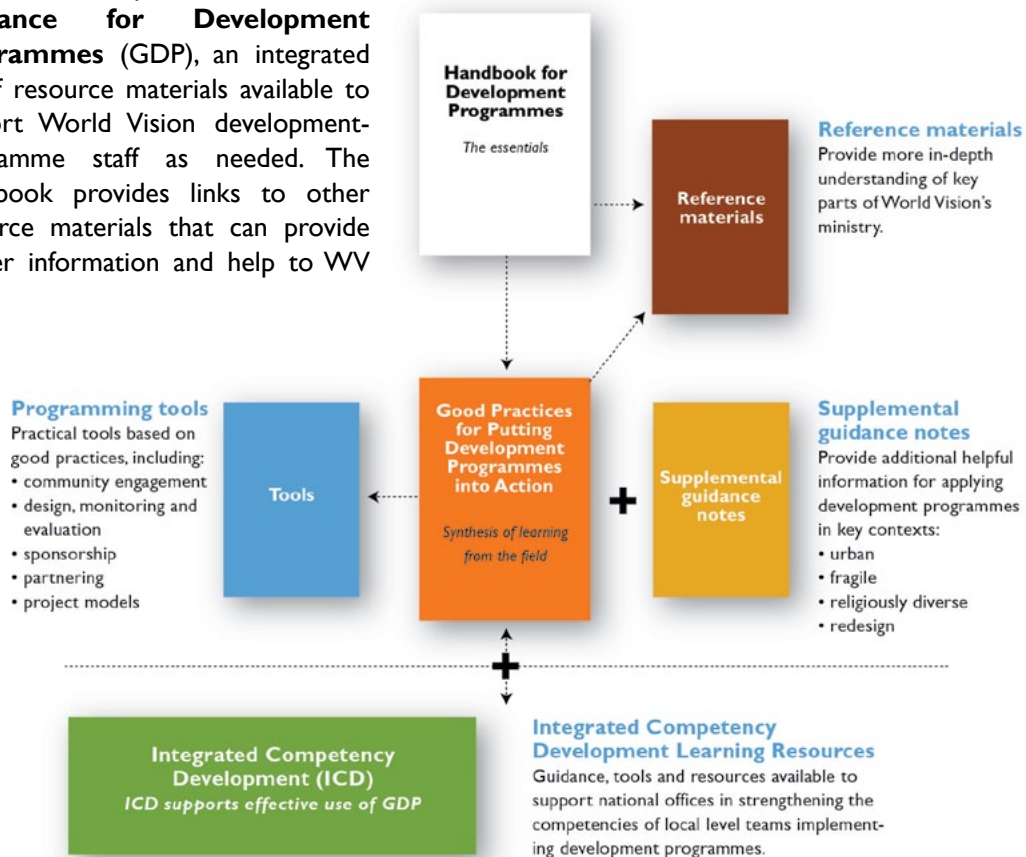
GDP brings together a range of tools and reference documents from different parts of World Vision into a flexible set of mutually reinforcing pieces. The parts of World Vision's ministry integrated in GDP include Learning through Evaluation with Accountability and Planning (LEAP), child sponsorship, Christian commitments, disaster management, local advocacy, sectors, and themes.

GDP is available online at: www.wvdevelopment.org.
Its contents can be downloaded and saved on a computer or other portable device.

The World Vision Ministry Framework

World Vision's Ministry Framework is the starting point for all WV programming. The Ministry Framework builds on WV foundational documents and integrates all areas of WV's ministry. It brings clarity to WV's understanding of poverty, inequity and vulnerability, and to our response. All WV programmes and projects are designed according to their context. Each contributes to the Ministry Framework's goal:

Sustained well-being of children within families and communities, especially the most vulnerable.

The framework's goal, aspirations, approaches and principles are illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. The World Vision Ministry Framework
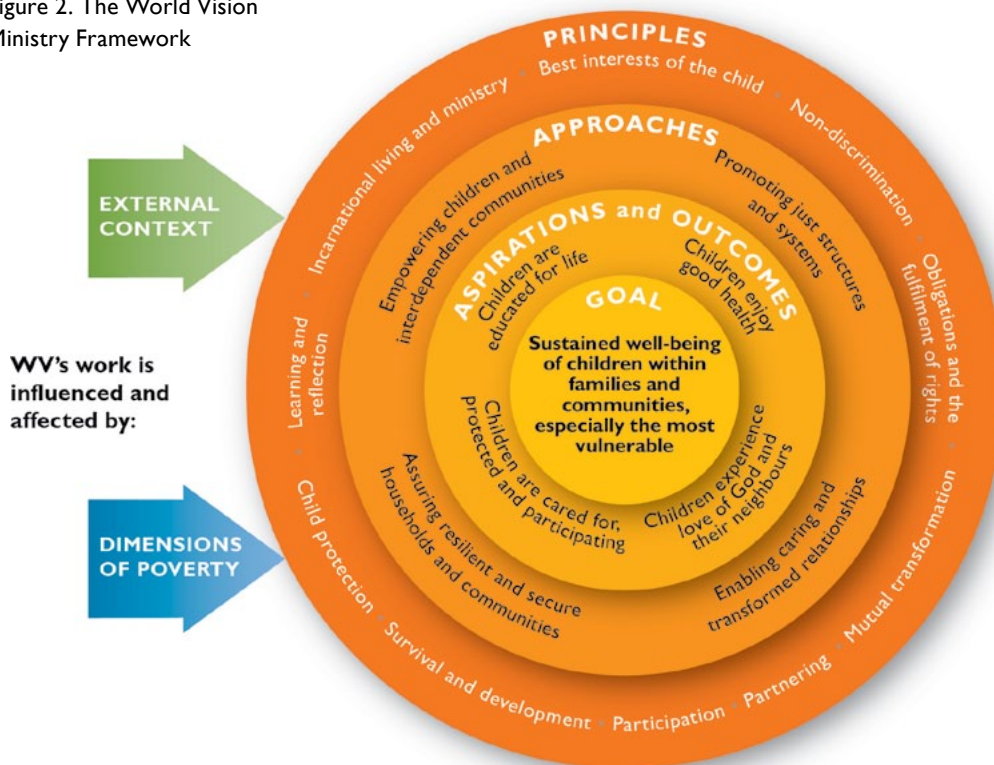
The principles and approaches of the Ministry Framework describe vital elements that need to be in place in order to achieve the ministry goal. The principles reflect WV's commitment to the rights of children, the responsibilities of adults, and the way in which WV staff work with others. The approaches describe the way WV puts these principles into practice. They reflect WV's Integrated Focus and Principle-Level Choices (see Figure 3 and Figure 4).

Integrated Focus means that in all places where WV works, staff appropriately express their Christian identity, prioritise children, and 'walk alongside' communities and partners who are rooted in the context.

Figure 3. World Vision's Integrated Focus
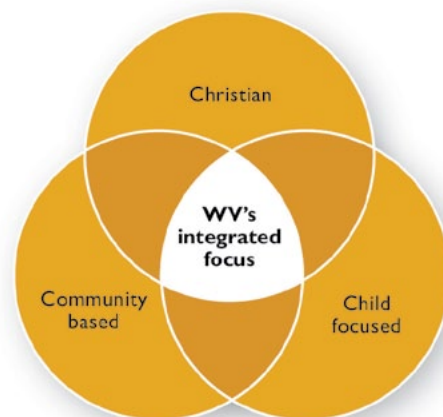
The **Principle-Level Choices** guide the development of strategies that tackle the root causes of poverty, inequity and vulnerability in ways that empower communities and local stakeholders. These choices are driven by local needs and maintain the multiple ministries of relief, development and advocacy.

Figure 4. World Vision's Principle-Level Choices

The WV Ministry Framework, the Integrated Focus, and the Principle-Level Choices documents can be found in the reference materials on the GDP website: www.wvdevelopment.org.

What is WV's Development Programme Approach?
▶ Overview

The purpose of WV's Development Programme Approach can be summarised in a single sentence:

Equip WV local level staff to work effectively with partners towards the sustained well-being of children within families and communities, especially the most vulnerable.

The approach reflects and supports continuous improvement of WV's development practice in contributing to child well-being – especially the WV child well-being targets. The approach enables WV programmes to put the Ministry Framework and national office ministry priorities into action in WV's development programmes.

WV's Development Programme Approach is rooted in decades of WV experience with transformational development. It integrates advocacy, disaster management, Christian commitments and all other parts of WV's ministry. This integration is done in a way that is appropriate to each context, building on local assets and existing efforts towards child well-being.

Formerly called the Integrated Programming Model (IPM), WV's Development Programme Approach has emerged from a process of co-creation involving staff across WV, with special emphasis on local level staff. It is based on good practices and learning from many programmes and offices within WV and from many other organisations. The approach is flexible and is applied innovatively based on context. It continues to evolve based on learnings from programmes and offices applying it.

▶ The Value of WV's Development Programme Approach

WV's Development Programme Approach

- **focuses** WV's programmes on contributing to sustained well-being of children, including WV's child well-being targets, and thus is a key vehicle helping a national office put its strategy into action

- **brings together good practices** in WV's ministry, including development, disaster management, advocacy, Christian commitments, sectors, and design, monitoring and evaluation (DME)

- **integrates sponsorship** as a core part of programming in programmes with sponsorship.

- **empowers communities and local stakeholders** to work together towards child well-being, building the local leadership and ownership essential for sustainability

- **supports effective participation of children and youth** in efforts to improve child well-being in the short term and the long term

- **embeds learning** throughout the programming process, building on and integrating LEAP.

Commitment to Sustainability

A commitment to sustainability was one of the major factors driving development of WV's Development Programme Approach. In collaboration with communities and partners, WV contributes to the sustained well-being of children by working at four levels:

Children: empowering children, especially the most vulnerable, with good health, spiritual nurture, and basic abilities and skills (including literacy, numeracy and essential life skills) that will enable them to be productive, contributing citizens and agents of change throughout their lives.

Households and families: improving household resilience, livelihood capacity and caregiving capacity. Caregiving includes physical, psychosocial and spiritual care as well as issues of resource allocation and gender equity within households to ensure that increased income and assets lead to improved child well-being for both boys and girls.

Community: strengthening the resilience and capacity of communities and partners to respond to present and future challenges to child well-being, including disasters.

Enabling environment: working to ensure that systems, structures, policies, and practices (at local, national, regional, and global levels) support and protect the well-being of children, especially the most vulnerable and enable meaningful participation of children.

The Four Main Aspects of WV's Development Programme Approach

W V's Development Programme Approach has four main aspects. Figure 5 illustrates these four aspects and how they work together towards sustained child well-being.

World Vision's Programme Effectiveness Standards are organised according to these four aspects of the approach. These standards, which are the basic principles of WV's development programmes, are on the next page. Each aspect of the Approach is explained in the following sections.

Figure 5. Four main aspects of WV's Development Programme Approach
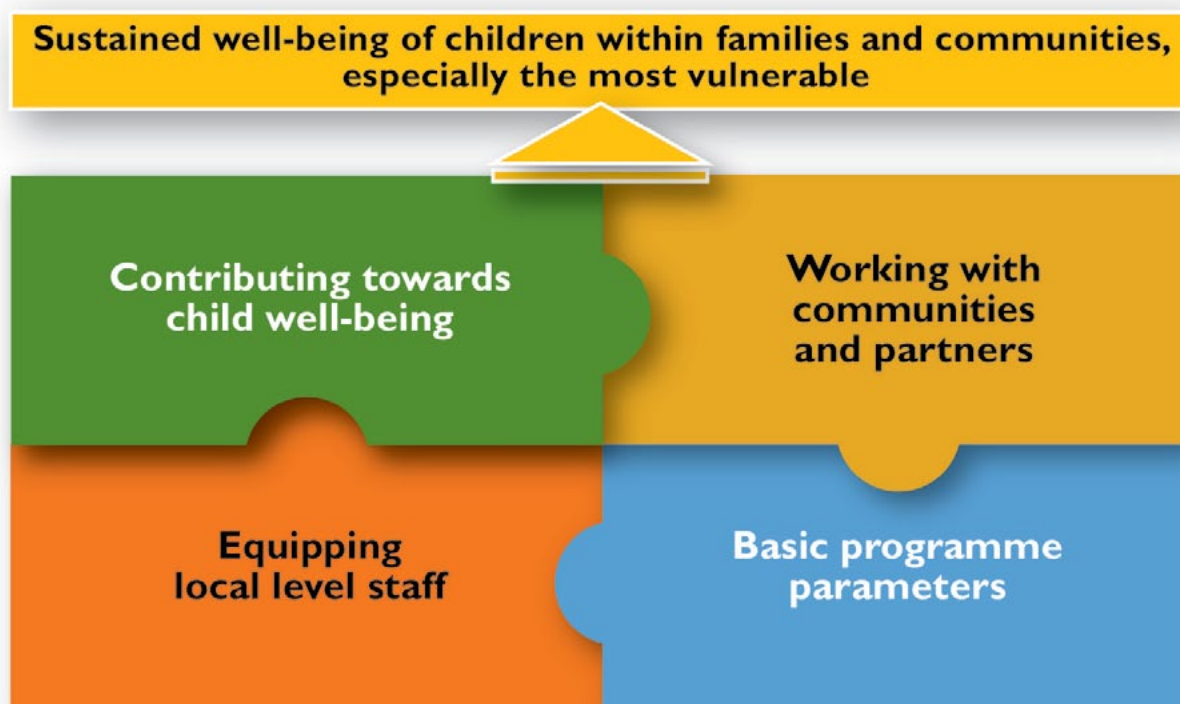
Programme Effectiveness Standards

The standards below define the essentials of Programme Effectiveness, organised according to the four main aspects of World Vision's Development Programme Approach. These standards are the basis for programme self-review and quality assurance. They are intended to be applied flexibly according to context. Further explanation of these standards can be found in the *Programme Effectiveness Self-Review* tool.

Contributing to the well-being of children within families and communities, especially the most vulnerable

1. The programme contributes to the sustained well-being of children, especially the most vulnerable.

2. The programme vision and priorities are developed with and owned by the community and local partners.

3. The programme integrates lines of ministry, sectors and themes, reflecting the national office strategy and the local vision and context.

4. Programme design, monitoring, evaluation and reporting clearly reflect the programme's contributions to child well-being outcomes.

5. In programmes with sponsorship, Sponsorship Minimum Programming Standards are applied through programming that contributes to the sustained well-being of children, including registered children, and enables meaningful engagement with sponsors.

Working effectively with communities and partners

6. World Vision's preferred local role is to serve as a catalyst and builder of the capacity of local partners and partnerships for child well-being.[1] In areas where children face critical well-being needs demanding immediate action, WV works with local authorities to plan its direct operational role in addressing these issues while strengthening the capacity of partners to assume the role over time.

7. Programme staff support communities and local partners in advocacy with government and other authorities.

Equipping local level staff

8. Key programme staff are committed to incarnational living among the people they serve.[2]

9. Programme staff have the core competencies required to fulfil their roles.

10. Programme staff have access to the technical resources and support they need.

11. Programme staff engage in regular, intentional reflection and learning that leads to improved practice.

Basic programme parameters

12. The geographic size of the programme is manageable and corresponds to existing local government boundaries.

13. Adequate resources are available to achieve the programme outcomes and meet organisational requirements.

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[1] *Depending on context, potential partners include government; churches, faith-based organisations (FBOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), community groups and other civil society groups; and local businesses.*

[2] *'Incarnational living' is defined in the Ministry Framework. Each national office will decide how to apply this appropriately in context.*

Contributing to child well-being

▶ Child focus

World Vision's Integrated Focus describes child focus as 'prioritising children, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, and empowering them together with their families and communities to improve their well-being.' Being child focused means that WV staff prioritise children's well-being in all their engagements with children, communities and stakeholders, and that all WV's work clearly contributes to well-being outcomes for children.

Evidence shows that a focus on children, especially the most vulnerable, can result in greater unity, more sustainable community action and, ultimately, deeper transformation of families and communities than community development that is not child-focused.

Key features of WV's child-focused programming include:

- **An ecological understanding of the child** – WV promotes an understanding that child well-being is dependent on a child's relationships with others and the social, political, economic, spiritual, physical and environmental contexts that the children lives in.

- **A systems-strengthening approach** – WV helps foster and contributes towards a set of coordinated responses by actors within the child's ecology to strengthen systems that develop and protect the whole child, building on existing local assets.

- **Awareness of the life cycle** – Children develop through lifecycle stages at their own pace. With each stage (prenatal to five years, six to 11 years, and 12 to 18 years), WV recognises that there are specific survival, growth and development issues to be addressed.

- **Empowerment of children** – Children and youth have the potential to transform both themselves individually and the society around them. Equipping children for meaningful participation provides a new generation with skills and competencies to relate positively to others and creatively address societal problems. WV programme teams are encouraged to include groups of children and youth as partners in the design and implementation of projects, as appropriate for age and culture.

- **Equity for the most vulnerable children** – WV works with the heart, head and hands to understand the issues around extreme vulnerability. This includes awakening and deepening our commitment and spiritual strength to explore personal fears and biases, recognising injustices and discrimination both within us and in the context where we work, as well as developing programming that addresses these practices in culturally sensitive ways.

▶ Child well-being aspirations, outcomes and targets

Jesus grew in stature, wisdom and grace with God and with others (Luke 2:52). In the same way, WV views child well-being holistically. The child well-being aspirations are WV's way of describing a holistic picture of child well-being and providing a common language for WV staff across the Partnership.

The four child well-being aspirations are the following:
- Girls and boys enjoy good health.
- Girls and boys are educated for life.
- Girls and boys experience love of God and their neighbours.
- Girls and boys are cared for, protected and participating.

The four aspirations are divided into 15 child well-being outcomes. They describe the developmental outcomes for children that contribute to these aspirations. Because child development is based on holistic and interrelated factors, the child well-being outcomes are interdependent. Effective programming can affect multiple outcomes at the same time.

The child well-being aspirations and outcomes are presented in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6. The child well-being aspirations and outcomes

GOAL	Sustained well-being of children within families and communities, especially the most vulnerable			
ASPIRATIONS	**Girls & Boys:**			
	Enjoy good health	**Are educated for life**	**Experience love of God and their neighbours**	**Are cared for, protected and participating**
OUTCOMES	Children well nourished	Children read, write, and use numeracy skills	Children grow in their awareness and experience of God's love in an environment that recognises their freedom	Children cared for in a loving, safe, family and community environment with safe places to play
	Children protected from infection, disease, and injury	Children make good judgments, can protect themselves, manage emotions, and communicate ideas	Children enjoy positive relationships with peers, family, and community members	Parents or caregivers provide well for their children
	Children and their caregivers access essential health services	Adolescents ready for economic opportunity	Children value and care for others and their environment	Children celebrated and registered at birth
		Children access and complete basic education	Children have hope and vision for the future	Children are respected participants in decisions that affect their lives
FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES	Children are citizens and their rights and dignity are upheld (including girls and boys of all religions and ethnicities, any HIV status, and those with disabilities)			

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The child well-being aspirations and outcomes are not imposed on communities by WV. Rather, they inform the dialogue with communities and stakeholders that leads to a shared vision and priorities for child well-being. It is not expected that all of the priorities will be addressed at one time.

These outcomes provide a framework for measuring the impact of WV's work on children's lives. The *Compendium of Indicators for Measuring Child Well-being* provides indicators for measuring this contribution.

WV's strategy emphasises child well-being targets for focus through 2016, based on the child well-being aspirations and outcomes. Specifically, the targets are the following:

1. children report an increased level of well-being
2. an increase in children who are well-nourished (ages 0–5)
3. an increase in children protected from infection and disease (ages 0–5)
4. an increase in children who can read by age 11.

WV regional and national offices determine which child well-being targets will be included in their strategy as part of the strategy development process. Each programme measures and reports on targets that are part of its programme designs, in alignment with the national office strategy. Careful consideration of the national office strategy, including the targets, is essential in the programme design process.

In dialogues with communities and stakeholders WV has a responsibility to highlight significant child survival issues such as poor nutrition and health, and lack of access to and quality of education, particularly where children are at risk because of these factors. It is important to act urgently to address severe child well-being issues in the near term.

It is also vital to look carefully into root causes and take into account the inequities (such as gender or ethnic discrimination) or abusive practices (such as exploitation or domestic violence) that may be causing or exacerbating these urgent issues.

If these factors are not addressed, the potential for lasting positive outcomes is limited. For more information please review the *Child Well-Being Targets Frequently Asked Questions*.

▶ Sponsorship Minimum Programming Standards

The *Sponsorship Minimum Programming Standards* (SMPS) define minimum standards for contributing to the child well-being outcomes in all programmes with child sponsorship. They are an important part of the dialogue with communities and stakeholders that leads to a shared vision for child well-being. The SMPS enable WV to focus and align its efforts and provide evidence of its contributions to the outcomes and targets.

The SMPS apply to children within the active programme areas, including the registered children. The *Sponsorship in Programming Design Guidance* provides guidance for applying SMPS in the programme DME processes. Ongoing monitoring both at the community level and at the individual registered child level contribute to reporting on measurable progress towards the outcomes and targets.

Child well-being targets describe the desired results in the quality of life of children in programme areas. SMPS describe programme interventions within the control of WV which can potentially result in children experiencing these results. This is illustrated in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7: Sponsorship Minimum Programming Standards and child well-being targets

Child well-being aspirations	Sponsorship Minimum Programming Standards (SMPS) for child well-being outcomes		Child well-being targets for 2016
Girls & Boys	RC age group	**For children in active programme areas (Including registered children [RC])**	
Enjoy good health	*0–59 months* *0–18 years*	Children (including RC) are included in local efforts to address health and nutrition of women and children. Programmes contribute to the reduction of under-five and maternal mortality. Children enabled to access community based emergency health and nutrition support. Indicators of malnutrition addressed.	Increase in children who are well-nourished (0–5 years) Increase in children protected from infection and disease (0–5 years)
Are educated for life	*Primary and secondary school age*	Children (including RC) are included in local efforts to enable children to access education and acquire functional reading, basic math, and essential life skills.	Increase in children who can read by age 11
Experience love of God and their neighbours	*All programmes*	Programmes address children's spiritual nurture in partnership with local churches. Programmes are sensitive to national strategy and context.	Children report an increased level of well-being
Are cared for, protected and participating	*0–18 years*	Full compliance with child protection standard. RC are selected from the active programme areas. Programmes promote participation of RC and their families or caregivers, together with other children in the active programme community.	

In programmes supported by child sponsorship, SMPS are applied in programming that contributes to children's well-being at different stages of their lifecycle, including the registered children. SMPS inform programming priorities in alignment with partnership child well-being targets. The Child Monitoring Standard (CMS) utilises the sponsorship child monitoring process to support these programming priorities while the community responds to individual children.

The most vulnerable children

Programme staff and partners need to ensure that the most vulnerable children and families in communities are identified and included. Otherwise, it is unlikely that programmes will impact them. If any groups of vulnerable children are left out of a programme, or if a programme is not tailored to the specific needs and situations of the most vulnerable children, WV's interventions may even reinforce existing discrimination or make it worse.

Identifying the most vulnerable children will depend on the context. This needs to be explored with local communities. Careful attention to the underlying causes of vulnerability is critical to good programming. However, a general definition is still helpful in order to make clear WV's understanding and special focus on the most vulnerable:

> ### Most vulnerable children are children whose quality of life and ability to fulfil their potential are most affected by extreme deprivation and violations of their rights.
>
> *These children often live in catastrophic situations and relationships characterised by violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, exclusion and discrimination.*

This definition includes four vulnerability factors which can assist in identifying the most vulnerable children:

- **abusive or exploitative relationships:** relationships which are characterised by violence or use of a child to benefit others sexually or commercially, or which consistently harm the child through intentional acts or negligence

- **extreme deprivation:** extreme material poverty or deprivation of caregivers

- **serious discrimination:** severe social stigma which prevents children from accessing services or opportunities essential to their protection or development

- **vulnerability to negative impact from a catastrophe or disaster:** natural or manmade events can seriously threaten the survival or development of a child, and certain children are more likely to be affected negatively and less likely to be able to recover.

Vulnerability is a scale, not a permanent state of being. Children may become increasingly vulnerable until they are defined as most vulnerable children. The more vulnerability factors children experience, or the longer they experience any one of these factors, the more vulnerable they become.

Tools, guidance and checks to ensure that the most vulnerable are identified and included are suggested in the *Good Practices for Putting WV's Development Programmes into Action* document. The tools should be adapted for each context. In programmes with sponsorship, registered children should, where possible, be selected from amongst the most vulnerable children. The selection criteria need to be adapted to the local context, and selection of registered children from vulnerable groups needs to be planned and managed carefully.

Including vulnerable children as registered children means that they will be part of regular monitoring by the programme. This can lead to a much greater understanding of the situation of vulnerable children. It can help programme staff, community and partners to improve their ways of working with vulnerable groups. It is important to ensure that projects include ways of monitoring and evaluating impact on the most vulnerable children.

Programme staff can often equip collaborating groups and organisations to be able to identify and understand the most vulnerable children. Depending on the context, children identified as the most vulnerable may or may not live with families. However, WV's Development Programming Approach places a special priority on including the most vulnerable no matter what context they live in. WV's desire is for these children to live in caring and loving families and communities.

LEARN MORE ABOUT CHILD FOCUS AND THE MOST VULNERABLE

- Child Well-being Reference Guide
- Child Focus Video Series

Working with communities and partners

▶ Introduction to local partering

World Vision's flexible approach to local partnering is rooted in its commitment to greater and more sustained impact in the lives of children. Many different stakeholders play a part in the different stages of a child's life. No organisation, including WV, can contribute effectively to the sustained well-being of children in isolation.

> World Vision's definition of **partners:**
> *Groups and organisations engaged in collaboration for child well-being in an area*

World Vision seeks to work effectively with a wide range of groups and organisations in ways that strengthen and empower them. WV seeks to build on its own strategies, roles and capacities to leverage far more resources and action for child well-being. Partners can include government, churches and other faith-based organisations (FBOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), local businesses and informal community groups – including groups of children and youth where this is appropriate for age and local culture.

Most of these formal and informal groups were in the area before WV arrived and will be there long after WV departs. One of WV's most valuable roles is to help key groups come together to focus on local child well-being priorities, help them find forms of collaboration that make sense in context then strengthen their capacity if necessary. This enables the groups to address child well-being challenges effectively both in the near term and in the long term – well after WV's presence in an area ends. Local ownership and capacity are critical to sustaining improvements in child well-being.

The contributions of all partners should be valued and encouraged. WV especially recognises and affirms the essential role of churches in contributing to the well-being of children within families and communities. This commitment to work with churches is part of WV's Christian commitment, grounded in the biblical call to serve the poorest and most vulnerable. WV seeks to build on the strengths and initiatives that churches already have and work with them in mutually beneficial collaboration for the sustained well-being of children.

WV also recognises that working with government is essential in all contexts where there is a legitimate, functional state. It is important to work with government not only at local levels, but also at higher levels (district, county and so on) to ensure that local efforts align with and leverage government policy and capacity at higher levels. In addition to government, it is also important to explore collaboration with other stakeholders (such as NGOs and businesses) who work beyond the local level and can contribute constructively to child well-being in the area.

Partnering does not mean that WV is only a funder of other groups, or that WV works only through other partners. Rather, WV works with other partners towards the sustained well-being of children, based on their roles and capacities. Effective discernment of the local context and existing capacities helps WV programme staff decide on appropriate approaches to partnering.

In a limited number of contexts WV may extend its partnering approach to include sub-granting or subcontracting. However, WV does so with caution and clear awareness of the risks as well as the potential benefits. Resource materials are available to guide staff in the cases where WV seeks to sub-grant or subcontract, including *Guidance for Financial Partnering* and *Sponsorship Guidance for Working with Partners*.

▶ The principles of partnering

Three principles have been found to be central whenever organisations choose to work together collaboratively:

1. **Equity** – All parties value one another's contributions to their collaboration.
2. **Transparency** – All parties are open and honest.
3. **Mutual benefit** – All parties involved benefit while contributing to a shared goal.

WV seeks to promote these principles in all collaborative relationships, because they greatly improve the quality and impact of working together. These principles enable trust, mutual respect and sustainable relationships, leading to the empowerment of local partners and fostering the sustainability of child well-being.

▶ Different forms of collaboration and partnering

Once groups decide that they want to work together, they need to consider carefully what form that collaboration should take. The ways in which groups and organisations can work together include:

- **networks** – sharing information on activities and learning on shared child well-being priorities
- **coalitions** – coordinating activities and plans and broader cooperation (for example, advocacy)
- **partnerships** – sharing co-created plans, resources, risks and benefits under a formal or informal agreement around common goals.

One form of collaboration is not necessarily better than another. The form of collaboration chosen by the partners should be appropriate to the context. It is also important to consider the different levels of multi-layered institutions (especially governments and churches) that should be engaged in collaboration. Overall, it is important that a programme is able to collaborate flexibly with different partners at different levels towards child well-being.

Collaborative relationships, like personal relationships, pass through stages. The kinds of collaborative relationships that are possible change over time as trust and awareness develop among the stakeholders.

Following are four key factors that can help organisations think through how they will collaborate together:

1. **The specific outcomes desired.** For example, while formal partnership has great potential, it may not always be the best way to achieve a particular set of outcomes. If information exchange is the prime purpose of engagement, then networking may be the best option.

2. **The readiness and willingness of organisations to work together.** Readiness relates to organisational capacity. Different organisational capacities are required for different types of collaboration. There must be an organisation-wide commitment to collaboration and partnering (not just one committed individual).

3. **Values compatibility.** There are both benefits and risks when collaborating or partnering with others. The closer the relationship, the greater these risks and benefits. When the parties share similar or compatible values, then these risks tend to be less and working relationships tend to be established more quickly.

4. **The timeframe available for working together.** Building relationships takes time. The closer the working relationship, the more time it will take to establish trust and effective working patterns. So, for example, if the timeframe is too short, partnership may not be a realistic possibility. This may be a significant factor in fragile contexts.

Figure 8 illustrates a range of collaborative options. All of these are discussed in more detail in the _Local Partnering Primer_.

A formal partnership requires the highest level of mutual understanding and respect; it should be selected only when appropriate. Organisations that are not able to be involved in a formal partnership can still play an active part in a network or collaborate in other ways. Success comes when the form of collaboration chosen is appropriate to the purpose, the current situation and context, and the capacities of the participating groups and organisations.

Figure 8. Options for collaboration
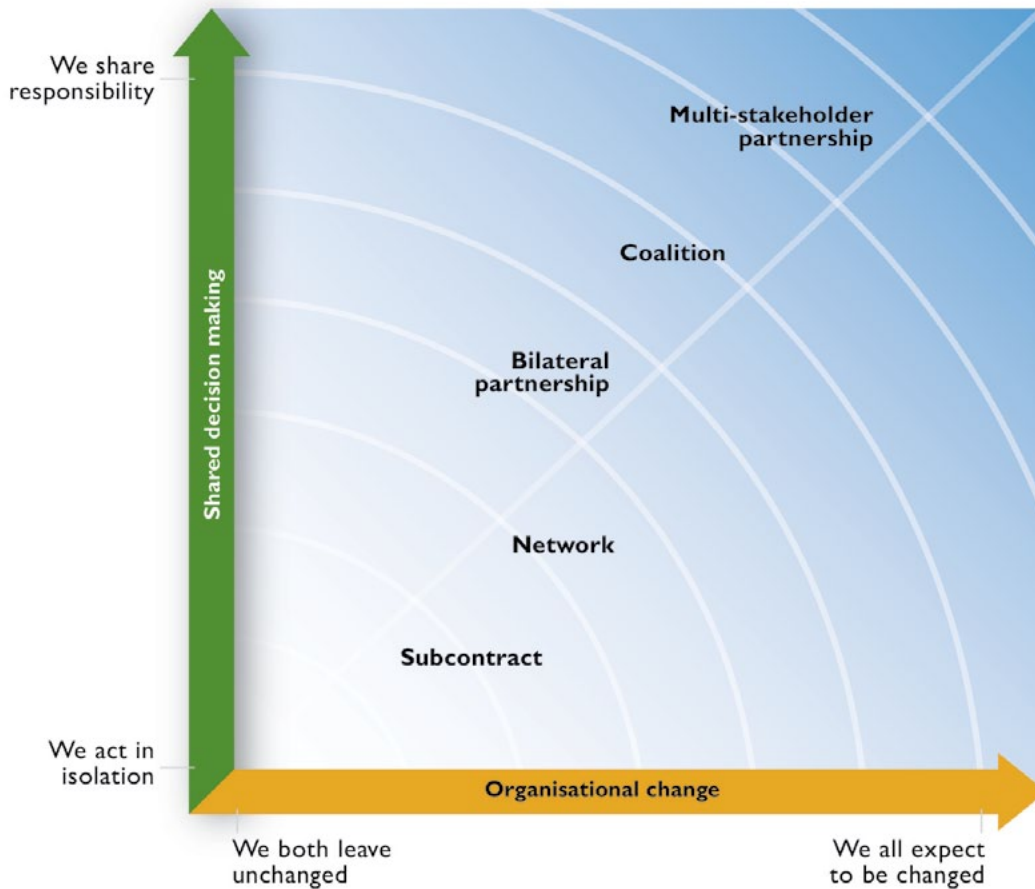
Flexibility based on context

The way in which WV works with local groups and organisations is affected by a range of factors. Two key factors are their readiness and capacity to contribute to the child well-being issues prioritised locally.

Throughout the programme planning process, WV works in ways that are appropriate to the local civil society context. Where civil society is stronger and local networks already exist, WV may join and support existing partnerships. Where civil society is weaker and there are few or no civil society groups, WV may mobilise local groups around key child well-being issues. WV will then work with these groups to strengthen their capacities in key areas. In areas where civil society organisations have readiness and some capacity but are not working together, WV will catalyse existing groups to collaborate on child well-being priorities and help them fill critical capacity gaps.

Partnering is not an end in itself. It is a means to the end of sustained well-being of children. WV works in some programme areas where children have urgent needs and there is little or no government or civil society capacity to meet these needs. In these cases, direct implementation by WV is planned in consultation with local authorities and is done in ways that build local capacities rather than undermining them.

Service delivery and empowerment

Empowerment and delivery of services need not be mutually exclusive. In choosing empowerment as its preferred approach, WV is not saying that the provision of essential services to the poor is not needed. Rather, WV tries to avoid a paternalistic development approach which sees the poor simply as passive recipients of things and ideas provided to them by an external agency. In contrast, empowerment sees the poor as the actors and the primary contributors of ideas and resources.

There is no question that provision of good-quality essential services is imperative for the well-being of children. In normal circumstances, government agencies provide such services to citizens – including education, health care and basic public safety and protection. When there is little or no government or civil society capacity to provide these essential services, WV will consider a direct implementation role, including service delivery. This should be done in a way that models and honours how the government would run the service and civil society would participate and contribute. WV should also provide any service in a way that helps build the capacity of local government to deliver the service in the longer term, while also working with communities to ensure that they hold the state accountable.

▶ What is local advocacy?

Local advocacy is advocacy driven by communities. WV focuses on local advocacy that empowers communities to work towards the sustained well-being of children within families and communities, especially the most vulnerable. Like all advocacy, local advocacy works to achieve the dual aims of policy change and citizen empowerment. WV's leading approaches to local advocacy include the *Citizen Voice and Action* and the *Child Protection Advocacy* project models.

Local advocacy is a critical component of WV's development programmes because WV seeks to tackle the root causes of child well-being issues, not just the symptoms. In most areas many of these root causes are issues of governance, leadership and capacity. Local advocacy targets policies and practices that affect the daily lives of children and other citizens in the communities where they live. Local advocacy provides tools which empower communities to ensure that government and other authorities deliver on their commitments to child well-being. This leads to better, more accountable service delivery in sectors including health, nutrition, water, education and social protection.

Naturally, some structural and systemic injustices cannot be solved at the local level. Communities solve these broader problems by forming networks, partnerships and coalitions and reaching progressively higher levels of government. The main thrust of local advocacy occurs at the lowest tiers of government. However, local advocacy also contributes to advocacy that influences higher-level policy processes because it provides legitimate evidence on which policy dialogue can be based. One example of this is the important contribution that local advocacy is making to WV's global Child Health Now campaign.

▶ Disaster risk management

Worldwide, the frequency and severity of disasters, both natural and manmade, are increasing rapidly. The severity and duration of disasters can sometimes overwhelm local resources, so that assistance from outside is required. During disasters where resources and humanitarian assistance from outside the community are required, the development facilitator (DF), relevant technical specialists and national office staff should work with the community and other partners to provide needs-based assistance and ensure protection of the most vulnerable. This assistance should be targeted through appropriate analysis, mobilising existing partnerships and building on local capacity.

In addition to emergency response, WV has a responsibility to work with partners and local groups to reduce community vulnerability to disasters and to build community resilience. If a community disaster plan is not already in place, WV will work with local stakeholders to facilitate community development and ownership of a plan.

Accountability

WV's Development Programme Approach integrates accountability to children and communities (sometimes called 'downward accountability'). This enables broader and more inclusive participation, and includes more vulnerable community members in programme plans and practices. Key principles that promote accountability to children and communities include:

- transparency
- accountability for results (where communities are influential in defining and measuring success)
- appropriate mechanisms for reporting concerns
- openness and willingness to listen and learn
- informed consent (where children and communities are provided with appropriate information to allow them to make informed decisions).

Methods for achieving accountability to children and communities include:

- **information sharing,** using appropriate language and methods

- **consultation** at every stage of a programme or project, including when plans need to change

- **appropriate participation** that ranges from information sharing and consultation to programme practices that are initiated and led by communities

- **participatory monitoring and evaluation processes** to allow communities to monitor WV's and partners' impact

- **developing suggestions, complaints and feedback mechanisms** in consultation with children, families, partners and the wider community.

> **LEARN MORE ABOUT LOCAL PARTNERING AND LOCAL ADVOCACY**
>
> - Guidance for Financial Partnering
> - Sponsorship Guidance for Working with Partners
> - Citizen Voice and Action project model
> - Child Protection Advocacy project model
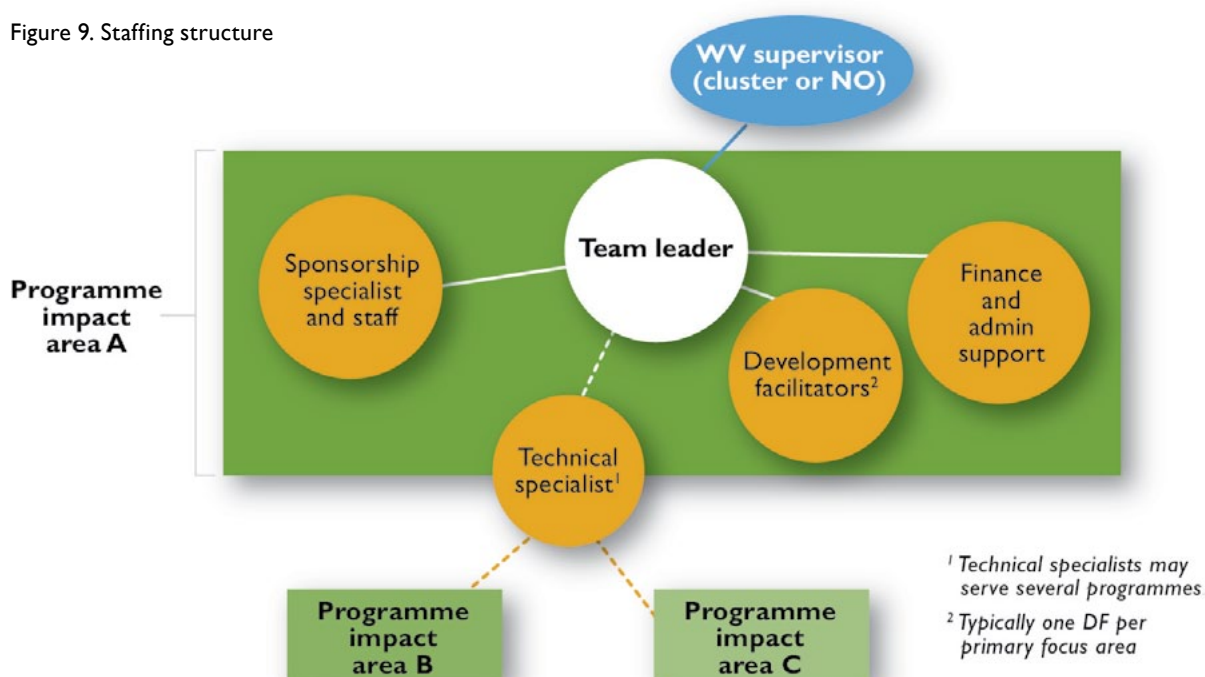> - Local Partnering Primer

Equipping local level staff

The most important success factor for WV's development programmes is the capacity of the programme staff. Having the right staff in place with the competency to fulfil their responsibilities is essential for effective application of WV's Development Programme Approach. This section discusses the recommended programme staffing structure and roles, staff competency development and support systems.

▶ Staffing structure and roles

The staffing structure and roles shown in Figure 9 can be adapted for the various contexts in which WV works. Full descriptions of each role, along with a job description and competencies for core roles, are available in the *Primer on Staffing Structure and Roles in WV's Development Programmes*.

Figure 9. Staffing structure

[1] Technical specialists may serve several programmes

[2] Typically one DF per primary focus area

The programme **team leader** leads the WV staff in the programme area, building a team of members who support one another and continually learn together. The team leader works extensively with stakeholders at the community and district levels, supporting effective collaboration towards child well-being. The team leader has overall responsibility for staff security, care and performance management as well as financial management and reporting. The team leader reports to a WV supervisor, who is typically based at a cluster level, supporting multiple programmes.

The **development facilitators** (DFs) work through an incarnational approach within communities to enable mutual transformation – in the lives of children, families, supporters and WV staff themselves. Effective DFs are deeply dedicated, humble and respectful of everyone they work with. They serve as the primary link between the WV programme team and local stakeholders and communities. DFs focus primarily on working with local groups and organisations to contribute towards child well-being priorities in the area. DFs help them build on their existing strengths and assets. DFs also facilitate links to technical support and funding from WV and other sources. WV national offices define the number of DFs needed for this work in a programme. In most cases, each primary focus area within a programme has one DF.

Technical specialists may be located at the programme level, cluster level, or national level. They specialise in a particular technical discipline aligned with national office strategy and local needs – such as nutrition, health, education or DME. Technical specialists help staff and community partners analyse and address the root causes of problems that undermine child well-being. They may suggest project models and help local partners adapt these to design a project. They often build capacity of local partners and WV programme staff to implement the project. They work closely with government staff and other relevant technical service providers in the area they serve to leverage local capacity and avoid duplication.

In programmes with sponsorship, the **sponsorship specialist** provides technical guidance and coordination for sponsorship at the programme level. The sponsorship specialist collaborates with the programme team and local stakeholders to ensure that sponsorship standards are met. The sponsorship specialist works closely with development facilitators to support the monitoring of registered children and ensure appropriate follow-up and responses.

▶ Competency development and support systems

It is essential that programme teams have the right level of staffing and mix of competencies to deliver on their commitments. Not every team member needs to have every competency; team members can complement one another's gifts, skills and experience. The *Integrated Competency Development (ICD) Learning Resources* are available to support team leaders and national offices in designing and implementing effective competency development for programme teams. Using a blended learning approach, these resources include a range of materials that can be combined flexibly for training, coaching, team learning and self-study.

Because of the challenging nature of their work, it is important that local level staff are supported in ways that promote and maintain their well-being and motivate them to perform their best. It is important to ensure that there are enabling policies and practices around recruitment, security, staff care and well-being, staff travel and working hours, and support for staff families, such as access to a quality education for their children. To help national offices support local programme staff effectively, the tool *Good Practices in Recruitment, Engagement and Retention of Local Level Staff* has been developed. It contains a range of options drawn from good practices in WV and other organisations.

> **💡 LEARN MORE ABOUT STAFFING STRUCTURE, ROLES AND COMPETENCIES**
> - Primer on Staffing Structure and Roles in WV's Development Programmes
> - ICD Learning Resources
> - Good Practices in Recruitment, Engagement and Retention of Local Level Staff

Basic programme parameters

WV's Development Programme Approach includes parameters and guidance for several basic elements of programme design: geographic size, life span and lifecycle. These are flexible parameters, intended to be adapted as appropriate in context. The document *Good Practices for Putting WV's Development Programmes into Action* gives practical examples of how these basic programme parameters can be applied in a number of different contexts.

▶ Geographic area

Each programme covers a specific geographical area. Geographic priorities are set through the national office strategy, which determines where WV will work. In general, programme impact areas should be places where new programming will 'Do No Harm' and will have a good chance of contributing to sustained improvement in child well-being, especially among the most vulnerable.

There are five issues that affect the geographical area selected for a programme impact area:

1. **Travel** – The geographic area needs to be manageable, so that programme staff can reach any of the communities or registered children involved in the programme within a reasonable timeframe.

2. **Political boundaries** – The geographic area should correspond to local government boundaries such as districts, communes, counties, parishes or wards. Government technical specialists and planning budgets are based at this level, making it much easier to work in coordination and partnership. Advocacy work will also have a greater impact if the programme area corresponds with government boundaries.

3. **Population density** – A programme impact area should have a population range of 15,000 to 50,000 people in programmes funded through child sponsorship, and up to a maximum of 100,000 in programmes that are grant funded. If the population density is high, then the geographic area is likely to be smaller. The programme impact area should be populated enough for sponsorship to work and small enough to be manageable.

4. **Geographical features** – If practical, the entire programme impact area selected should have similar geographical features throughout – such as landscape, climate and vegetation. This will enable similarity of approach and ease of working, even though the communities targeted may have differing needs.

5. **Risk** – Key risks in the programme impact area should be carefully considered. These include natural disasters, violent conflict and other hazards that may affect a programme. It is important for an office to consider what levels of risk are acceptable, and what precautions and preparations are needed if a decision is made to operate in the area.

There are two additional considerations. First, it is preferable for programme impact areas to have populations that view themselves as forming part of a community or set of communities. Also, basic electricity and communications infrastructure for the programme office is important for field staff to operate effectively within the WV Partnership.

Within the programme impact areas, key geographic areas with high levels of poverty and vulnerable children are identified as **primary focus areas**. This selection is usually done in consultation with the government and other key stakeholders. Registering a high proportion of children in these primary focus areas helps fulfil sponsorship standards and the principle of depth before breadth. In future years development work in a primary focus area often expands into the surrounding area. In addition, new primary focus areas may be planned. Both forms of expansion build on the relationships and experience of WV staff and partners.

Figure 10. Programme impact area and primary focus areas
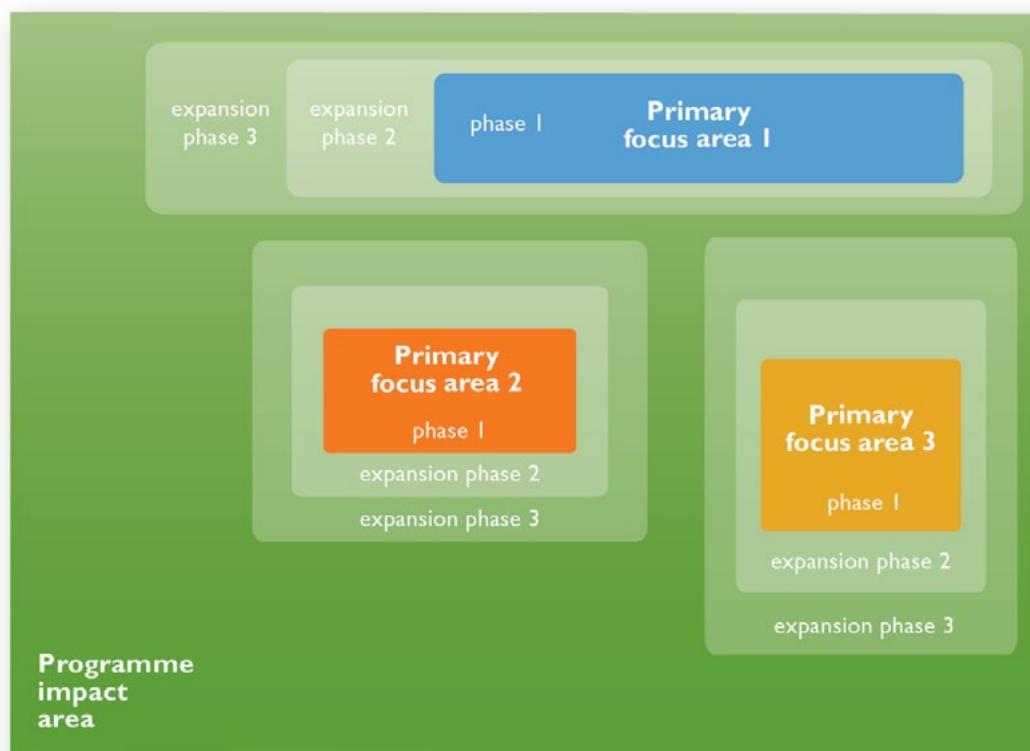
National offices often cluster multiple programmes together in a district or similar area. This enables programmes to share technical and functional capacity and resource people. It also facilitates scaling project models and other programming approaches that are appropriate across most or all the programme areas in the cluster.

Life span and lifecycle

A programme typically goes through a LEAP cycle every three to five years, with evaluation conducted at the end of each cycle. There is no set number of cycles for a programme's life span. Programmes with child sponsorship generally need to operate for at least ten years for sponsorship operations to be cost effective.

WV's Development Programme Approach does not require the same life span for all programmes. Instead, decisions are generally made based on impact. Is significant progress being made in contributing to child well-being outcomes, programme objectives and targets? How effectively are the needs of the most vulnerable children being met by households, local partners and partnerships? Are there community groups and organisations collaborating towards the well-being of children with the capacity to continue the work? All these issues will be discussed in deciding the life span of a programme.

WV's Development Programme Approach is designed to be applied in programmes with and without child sponsorship. This section summarises the key distinctives of each type of programme.

▶ Programmes with sponsorship

Child sponsorship builds relationships among children, their families, sponsors and WV staff. Each person in this relationship improves life for the others by sharing resources, hope and experiences. Sponsorship enhances the focus on the most vulnerable children and enables families and communities with local partners to provide and care for children. And sponsors contribute to children's well-being by funding vital programme work. In WV's Development Programme Approach sponsorship has been intentionally integrated as part of overall programming in order to enable:

- strengthening of community efforts towards children's well-being
- promotion of excellence in sponsorship within programming
- adoption of fun and meaningful approaches for working with children and effective communications with sponsors
- development of community ownership of sponsorship processes with appropriate engagement of volunteers and local partners.

More detail is available in the *Primer on Sponsorship in Programming*.

▶ Excellence in sponsorship within programming

The *Sponsorship Minimum Programming Standards* help inform community dialogue about the critical needs of children and prioritise contributions towards World Vision's child well-being targets. Sponsorship processes themselves enhance the focus on children and their well-being. The *Sponsorship in Programming Design Guidance* provide ways to make this happen. The following measures all make critical contributions to excellence in sponsorship within programming:

- **Feasibility and risk assessment** – Integration of the *Sponsorship Feasibility and Risk Management* tool within the assessment enables the programme to identify risks in different contexts and design strategies to manage them. These risk management strategies can be shared with the community, and included in the sponsorship integration project.
- **Community engagement** – Clearly defined community engagement processes with guidance on appropriate messaging enable the community to understand sponsorship well and lead to greater ownership.
- **Child selection** – The *Child Selection* tool equips programme staff to work with communities to develop and apply appropriate selection criteria with inclusion of the most vulnerable children.
- **Phased registration of children** – Phased registration of children, preferably over a two-to-three-year period to reach the optimal level of registered children planned for a programme, is based on community readiness for child sponsorship. This is a balanced approach that helps to ensure participation of registered children and their families in programming while reaching appropriate funding levels and economy of scale. The pace of child registration in a programme should be decided by the national office in consultation with the support office.
- **Integration of child monitoring** – Child monitoring standards are aligned with child well-being outcomes and integrated with programming processes. Much of the contact with children occurs during project activities, with children in groups, rather than in home visits. Sponsorship tools, including the *Child Sponsorship Monitoring* tool, help staff to integrate monitoring and facilitate community-based responses to children's needs. Data from child monitoring also helps WV to report on contributions to WV's child well-being targets.

▶ Sponsorship processes that are fun and meaningful

Sponsorship processes should be rights based, fun and meaningful for children and should provide meaningful communications to sponsors. These help build trust, nurture relationships and create opportunities for transformation of supporters. Child-focused activities are planned as part of other projects, with community processes for monitoring children and meeting sponsorship requirements.

▶ Working with volunteers and partners

Recognising that there are a wide range of approaches to managing sponsorship activities, WV's Development Programme Approach does not recommend any single way of managing sponsorship. In some contexts community volunteers or groups will be able to manage all the child selection and monitoring, and perhaps much of the correspondence. In a few contexts WV may choose to engage a partner to handle some aspects of sponsorship operations. However, this is an exception rather than the norm. In all cases WV retains responsibility for ensuring that standards are met. *Sponsorship Guidance for Working with Partners* and *Sponsorship Guidance for Working with Volunteers* provide detailed guidance on this.

▶ Programmes using grant funding

A significant portion of WV programmes are funded through means other than child sponsorship. A number of national offices receive no child sponsorship funding at all. These programmes are concentrated in the most vulnerable communities, including fragile, urban, remote or nomadic populations.

Programmes using grant funding fluctuate in size as new grants are acquired and old grants come to an end. Since it is not always possible to predict accurately how large a programme will become when setting it up, the ability to grow and downsize must be built in from the beginning.

Programmes using grant funding implementing WV's Development Programme Approach must be able to identify the financial and human resources to:
- work jointly with local communities and stakeholders to identify the community's vision and priorities
- conduct programme level activities, such as the coordination of projects and higher level reporting, monitoring and evaluation.

This requires sufficient resources to be available at the programme assessment and design phase, as well as throughout the life of the programme, to fund programme level staff. There are three principal sources. Most programmes will use at least two of the following:
- core funding provided by support offices
- internal funding identified from within national office budgets
- funding from institutional donor grants.

▶ Working with donors

Since most programmes without sponsorship rely on donor grants for funding, they must ensure they account for donor strategies and priorities while applying the essentials of WV's Development Programme Approach. When applying the approach in programmes using grant funding, national offices should:
- **carefully assess which donors to work with** – considering the fit with national office strategy and the potential impact of being associated with particular donors
- **work to influence donor strategies to support community-led programmes focused on child well-being** – through active, strategic engagement with donors
- **use an appropriate timeframe and process for design** – acknowledging that the amount of funding available and the constraints attached to that funding will affect programme staff's ability to follow the steps in the Critical Path and the scale and ambition of programme design.
- **produce flexible programme designs and staffing structures** – in order to enable programmes to adapt to rapidly changing social, economic, political and funding contexts.

> **LEARN MORE ABOUT SPONSORSHIP IN PROGRAMMING**
>
> - Child Focus Video Series
> - Sponsorship Quick Reference Guide
> - Primer for Sponsorship in Programming

Putting WV's Development Programme Approach into Action

Overview of the Critical Path

The Critical Path (see Figure 11) is a process for putting WV's Development Programme Approach into action. It is a flexible process that programme staff can apply as appropriate in their context.

The Critical Path has been developed to help WV programme staff collaborate with communities and local stakeholders towards the sustained well-being of children – especially the most vulnerable. It is intended to ensure effective response to the needs of children in the near term and the long-term. Based on learning and good practices from programmes across WV, it is designed to build on existing local efforts and enable local ownership from the very beginning of a programme.

WV's primary roles along the Critical Path are to facilitate the community and local stakeholders to conduct a joint planning process and to build the capacity of local stakeholders to implement and manage shared projects. The planning process may also identify a direct implementation role for WV in shared projects – especially when children's needs are urgent and local partner capacity is limited. When this is the case, WV always works to strengthen local capacity to assume these roles over time. WV's role may need to expand again if a disaster strikes or conflict arises.

Figure 11. The Critical Path

Applying the Critical Path

In its most basic form the Critical Path is a set of eight simple questions that can be asked at various times in the programming process to help WV work with others towards child well-being. The Critical Path is iterative rather than linear. Steps can be revisited as needed when new information becomes available or when the context changes.

A version of the Critical Path has been developed through research and piloting for use in new programmes starting up and in existing programmes going through redesign. For each step in this Critical Path a set of guiding questions and basic outcomes has been developed. These are included in the Appendix to this Handbook.

Each national office develops its own approach to applying WV's Development Programme Approach, including the Critical Path. In doing so, national offices consider the guiding questions along the Critical Path and look to achieve the outcomes for each step in ways that are appropriate while fulfilling the Programme Effectiveness Standards.

Each programme should adapt the national office's Development Programme Approach appropriately for its particular context. Among the key issues to keep in mind in this adaptation are:

- How are we listening to children and communities? Are we empowering them to develop and act on their own vision for child well-being?
- How are we collaborating with others already working towards child well-being in the area, rather than undermining or duplicating their work?
- How are we helping those organisations working towards child well-being to work more effectively together, leveraging greater commitment and more capacity than we can bring ourselves?
- How are we ensuring that the most vulnerable are appropriately included?
- How are we addressing the most critical well-being needs of children, especially in relation to child well-being target areas, in a timely and effective manner by working with relevant partners who share a similar vision and have resources to contribute?

WV seeks to engage with partners at all levels relevant to the programme (district, sub-district, village, and so on). A programme may apply the Critical Path at more than one level to develop relationships and collaboration effectively with relevant stakeholders at each level.

Practical examples of how the Critical Path can be applied in new programmes are available in the document *Good Practices for Putting Development Programmes into Action*. This is a synthesis of learning from pilots and early adopters across the WV Partnership. It intentionally brings together good practices in child-focused development work, local advocacy and disaster risk management, DME, accountability and learning – as well as sponsorship in programmes with sponsorship. This document also includes links to tools that have been tested and found useful by WV programme staff who have implemented WV's Development Programme Approach, as well as tips, cautions and examples. It is available as a reference for national offices and programmes to consult as they develop their own approach.

Applying the Critical Path is optional for existing programmes going through redesign. The *Supplemental Guidance Note for Programmes in Redesign* lays out considerations for redesigning programmes that are applying the Critical Path.

Three other reference documents have been developed to support programmes in applying the Approach appropriately in specific challenging contexts:

- *Supplemental Guidance Note for Urban Contexts*
- *Supplemental Guidance Note for Fragile Contexts*
- *Supplemental Guidance Note for Religiously Diverse Contexts*

▶ Spiritual discernment along the Critical Path

For WV, the journey along the Critical Path is more than building shared vision and effective collaboration. It is recognising, in humility, that God is already at work in a community. It is a process of seeking to discern how to join in God's work. Prayer and reflection based on a study of scripture and listening to children, the poor and partners are key parts of this discernment.

The *Discernment Resource* is a companion reference to this Handbook. It includes scripture-based devotions, spiritual reflections and prayer ideas to be used by WV programme staff as they move through the Critical Path

Stages of the Critical Path

When applied in design or redesign, the Critical Path can be divided into four stages.

Stage 1: Preparing

In the first stage, WV prepares to engage the community by learning about the programme area and by defining WV's identity in the area. This stage is made up of assessment and the first step of the Critical Path. Both are carried out mainly by WV staff. There is limited interaction with communities.

Stage 2: Engaging and visioning together

In the second stage, WV staff engage with communities and local stakeholders to find out who they are and what is currently being done to improve child well-being and to address vulnerability in the area. This stage culminates in development of a community-owned vision and priorities for child well-being. This is typically co-facilitated by WV and other local stakeholders committed to child well-being in order to ensure that it is locally owned and led rather than driven by WV. WV and the local stakeholders may form a 'starter group(s)' or similar informal groups for this process. The groups often include government staff and representatives from local civil society organisations.

Stage 3: Planning for partnering together

In the third stage, WV and local stakeholders work together to develop detailed project plans to address the child well-being priorities that emerged from Stage 2. The key outcomes of this stage are agreements on what will be done; what each stakeholder, including WV, will contribute; and how stakeholders will collaborate. WV often brings project models and other technical expertise to this planning process for local adaptation. WV also seeks to ensure that the situations of the most vulnerable children are addressed in the plans developed.

Stage 4: Managing and transitioning together

The final stage includes the implementation and eventual transition of shared projects and the programme. During steps 7 and 8, monitoring and learning systems are established that can be led by the communities and stakeholders. These systems provide meaningful information to partners, allowing them to make any necessary adjustments to programme plans. Baselines and evaluations are conducted in a way that builds the capacity of local stakeholders. Transition refers to the ending of WV's involvement in a shared project or programme. It is important for WV to end its involvement in a way that enables communities and stakeholders to sustain the benefits of the programme in the lives of children, their families and their communities.
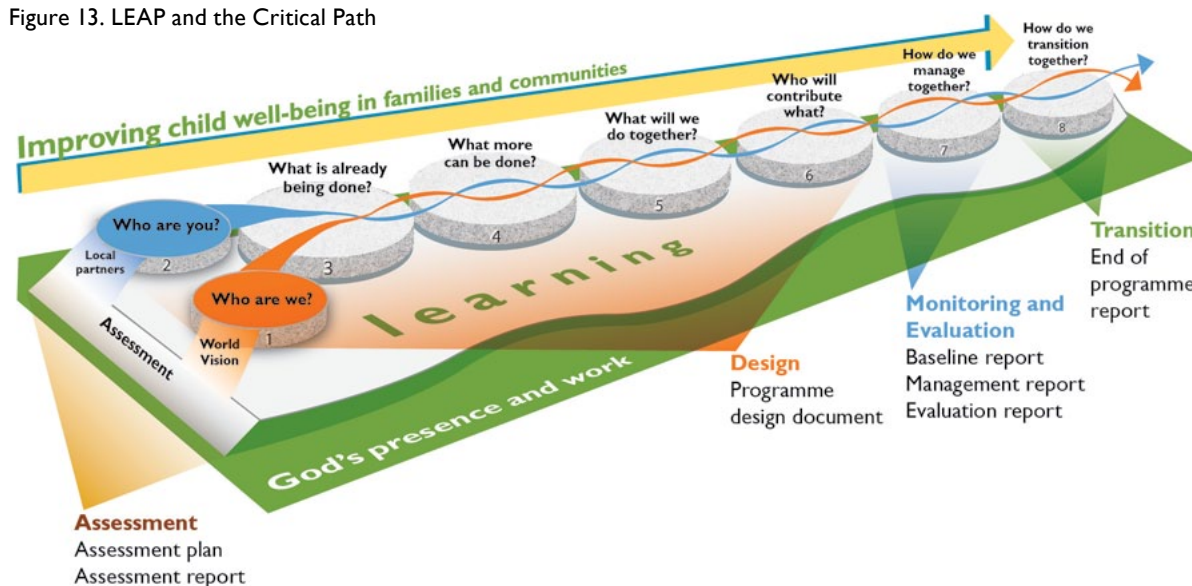
Figure 12. The four stages of the Critical Path
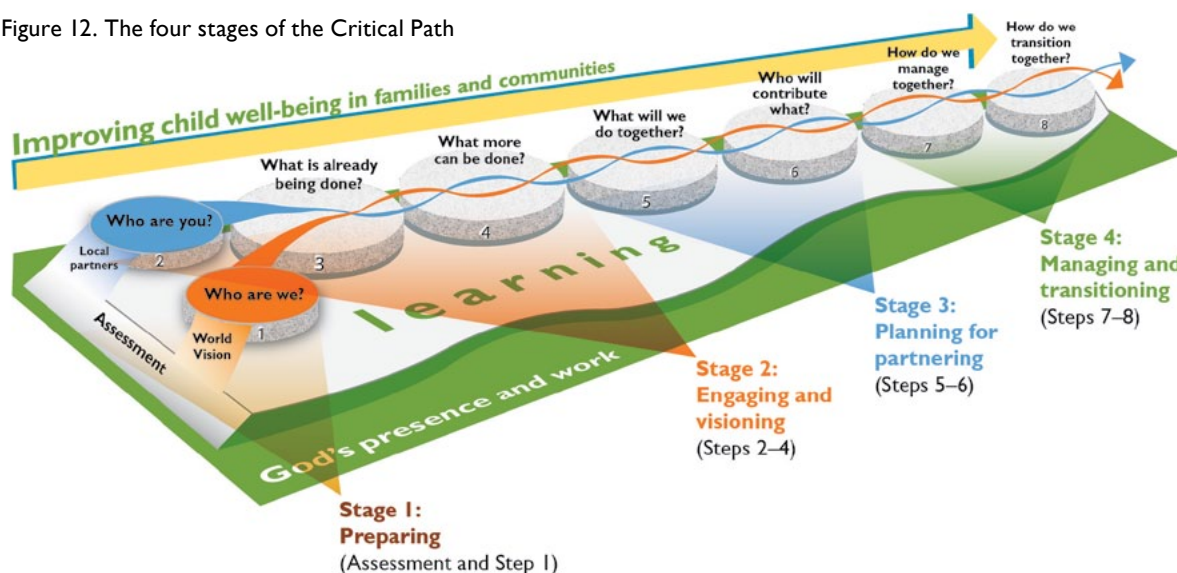
LEAP and the Critical Path

Learning through Evaluation with Accountability and Planning (LEAP) is WV's framework for design, monitoring and evaluation (DME).

Figure 13. LEAP and the Critical Path

LEAP is fully integrated into WV's Development Programme Approach. The components of LEAP are integrated in the Critical Path as follows:

- **Assessment:** **Assessment** is conducted before Step 1 of the Critical Path to determine whether to proceed with design. The _LEAP Programme Assessment_ tool is used to develop the assessment plan and report.

- **Design:** Steps 1 to 6 in the Critical Path cover the **design** process, including more in-depth root-cause analysis in Step 5. At the end of Step 6, the _LEAP Programme Design Document (PDD)_ is produced.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** **Implementation** and **monitoring** take place in Step 7. WV programme staff use the _LEAP Programme Management Report_ every six months to share about the programme's progress and any changes made based on learning. **Evaluation** is conducted at the end of Step 7 in preparation for Step 8.

- **Transition:** **Transition** is the last step of the Critical Path, but it is vital that WV and all other stakeholders begin to prepare for transition from the beginning of the process.

There is no required length for assessment and design. Assessment typically takes two to four months, and design often takes eight to fifteen months. As they decide how much time is needed in their context, national offices need to ensure that critical child well-being needs are addressed in ways that build on local efforts and enable local ownership.

The first six steps of the Critical Path describe a participatory and empowering planning process that leads to the production of a shared programme plan. This shared plan is not owned by WV. It represents the vision and priorities of the communities in the programme area and the proposed action of all the partners; as such, it should be fully owned by the communities and partners. It is important that the shared plan is recorded in a way that is easy for local stakeholders to understand and use.

WV contributes to achieving the shared plan, but the plan is bigger than the total contribution of WV. The PDD represents WV's contribution to the shared plan. At a high level this needs to show clearly the contributions that other partners will make. The outcomes of the programme cannot be achieved without the ownership and contributions of the partners.

The shared programme can include grant-funded projects from local or international donors. The grants may be obtained by WV, or WV may facilitate local groups to submit grant applications themselves.

Typically, WV contributes to most but not all projects within the shared programme plan. WV may decide not to contribute to projects that are outside the scope of national office strategy or its areas of technical capacity.
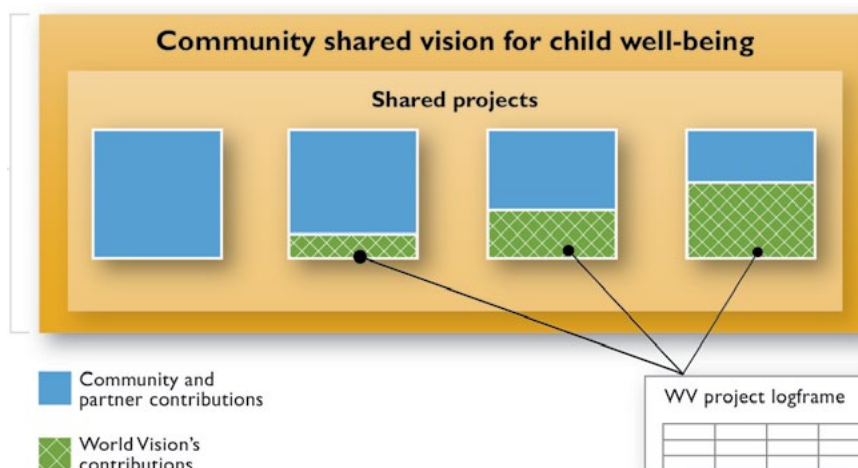

Figure 14. Shared programme

Project models and ADAPTs

A project model brings together globally recognised good practices for improving child well-being. These are the approaches WV recommends for putting its ministry strategies into action. WV programme staff can have confidence in using these technically sound approaches without having to design completely new projects.

There are two kinds of project models:
- A **specialised** project model reflects the priorities of one or more sectoral, thematic, or line of ministry strategies. An example is the _Basic Education Improvement Plans_ project model.
- An **enabling** project model is typically combined with a specialised project model to enable effective implementation of an overall project towards a local child well-being priority. An enabling project model often serves as a key component or methodology in a wider project. An example is the _Citizen Voice and Action_ project model, a local level advocacy approach that can be used as part of a project, especially a project focused on health or education.

WV can share project models with local stakeholders and potential partners as effective ways to contribute to child well-being priorities jointly defined by the community. WV works with partners and communities to determine what combination of project models and/or local approaches to use in a programme area. This is based on solid root-cause analysis of the child well-being priorities. Tools called ADAPTs (analysis, design and planning tools) have been developed to facilitate this analysis and project design. ADAPTs are typically used in Step 5 of the Critical Path. Both ADAPTs and project models are included as resources in the Guidance for Development Programmes.

If one or more project models are agreed upon, WV works with the local stakeholders and potential partners to adapt the approaches to the local context. This adaptation builds on and strengthens existing efforts. Careful attention is given to what is already being done by the government and other organisations in the area. This avoids duplication and encourages coordination with those already working for child well-being. In this way, ongoing work is enhanced rather than undermined.

Project models require different levels of technical support. Technical specialists from WV, the government or other organisations support development facilitators and community partners in their adaptation and application of these models. Implementation is typically co-owned with local partners for purposes of sustainability.

Action learning

Action learning is a structured reflection and learning process using actual experience as the source of the learning. Action learning is embedded in WV's Development Programme Approach. It is one of the parts of the approach that field staff have valued most.

▶ Three important reasons to ensure action learning

1. Action learning supports the development process and leads to continuous improvement in practice. It contributes to team building of programme staff by recognising each team member's observations and experiences gained. It also enables staff to share their expertise with others on the team.

2. Action learning helps staff work more effectively in collaboration with groups and organisations. Using action learning in ongoing monitoring and planning with stakeholders can result in increased capacity, stronger ownership, higher impact and greater sustainability.

3. Action learning offers a dynamic way for local staff to participate in the continuous improvement of how WV's Development Programme Approach is applied and supported in their national office, their region and globally.

▶ Resources to support action learning

There are two basic resources that support programme staff as they participate in action learning:

1. In the document *Good Practices for Putting Development Programmes into Action*, each step of the Critical Path includes reflection questions to support learning. These questions are organised in two categories: 'Looking back' and 'Looking forward'.

2. The *Discernment Resource* and the *Learning Along the Critical Path Resource* provides additional support. They include:
   • devotions, spiritual reflections and prayer ideas rooted in scripture
   • suggested learning activities
   • selected action-learning tools with full descriptions of how to use them effectively; these tools help guide, capture and share learning.

▶ The role of programme staff in the action learning process

Team leaders guide the action learning process for programme team members. Together with the team leader, programme staff:
   • meet regularly as a group to reflect and learn from their work
   • facilitate and document learning from communities and partners
   • assist partners in documenting their own learning
   • share the learning with the national office's national learning coordinator, who will facilitate sharing that learning across the national office and with the region
   • visit other programmes using the approach and host visits of programmes newly applying the approach in order to facilitate peer-to-peer learning and cross-fertilisation of good practices.

Appendix: Steps of the Critical Path

This appendix presents the guiding questions and outcomes for each step of the Critical Path when it is applied for design of new programmes or redesign of existing programmes. National offices and programmes have full flexibility to develop locally appropriate processes to achieve these outcomes while fulfilling the Programme Effectiveness Standards.

ASSESSMENT

Guiding questions

? Is it feasible and appropriate for WV to begin working in this area?

? What are the key issues related to child well-being and vulnerability in this area? What are the major causes of these that need to be understood and addressed?

? How would the proposed programme be financed? How feasible is child sponsorship or grant funding for this programme?

Outcomes

1. An assessment report that identifies key issues that need further investigation during the design phase, including:
   • key issues of child well-being and vulnerability in the area
   • key context factors
   • an initial list of key stakeholders.
2. Analysis of sponsorship feasibility and risk management, where appropriate.
3. Analysis of grant or other funding options, where appropriate.
4. An agreement between national office and support offices on whether to proceed with the design component of the proposed programme (and by implication, with the programme itself). This includes agreements on how the design phase will be funded.

STEP ONE

Guiding questions

? What are the key elements of WV's identity in this programme area?

? How do local stakeholders already perceive WV and other non-governmental organisations?

? How can WV's identity be communicated most effectively to stakeholders and communities in this area?

Outcomes

1. Programme staff have a clear understanding of how WV's global identity, national office strategy and programme assessment shape WV's local identity.

2. A set of clear and concise messages that summarise WV's identity in this area.

3. A communication plan and materials for presenting WV's identity.

STEP TWO

Guiding questions

? How is the community organised (including social groups, vulnerable groups and formal/informal organisations)?

? Which stakeholders are already involved in working towards the well-being of children in this area? Which stakeholders are working with the most vulnerable children?

? Which potential stakeholders could be involved in working towards the well-being of children in this area?

Outcomes

1. Primary focus areas identified.

2. Key stakeholders in the primary focus area identified.

3. Programme staff have an initial understanding of how the government and other key stakeholders are contributing to sustained child well-being.

4. Starter group has begun to form.

STEP THREE

Guiding questions

- How do starter group members view child well-being and vulnerability?
- What groups have the most influence on child well-being in the area?
- How can the starter group effectively engage the community in an empowering dialogue on child well-being?

Outcomes

1. Starter group members have a shared understanding of child well-being and vulnerability.
2. The starter group has identified what is currently being done to improve child well-being within the area, and the local assets that contribute to the well-being of children.
3. The starter group has developed a plan for engaging the community.
4. The starter group members have increased capacity to design and lead an effective, empowering community engagement process focused on child well-being.

STEP FOUR

Guiding questions

- What assets and resources already exist that enable children to thrive?
- What are the gaps in children's well-being?
- Who are the most vulnerable children? What are their key assets and their main challenges?
- What are the community's vision and priorities for improving and sustaining the well-being of children, especially the most vulnerable?
- Which groups and organisations in the local area can work together to address the community's vision and priorities for child well-being?

Outcomes

1. A growing number of people in the primary focus area care about the well-being of children and can explain what a good life for children could be in their community.
2. There is a growing awareness of the situation of the most vulnerable children in the community.
3. A growing number of individuals, groups and organisations are motivated and committed to improving the well-being of children, especially the most vulnerable.
4. An initial vision and key priorities for child well-being are developed and agreed upon by the community.

STEP FIVE

Guiding questions

- Given the civil society context, what is the most appropriate role for WV in enabling local groups and organisations to work together effectively towards the community's vision for child well-being?
- What are the root causes and the assets related to the community's child well-being priorities?
- What approach should be used to address the root causes, and what local and global project models could be applied?
- How will the perspectives, priorities and needs of the most vulnerable be included in the planning process?
- What forms of collaboration or partnership are possible for the groups, organisations and duty bearers planning to work together on the community's child well-being priorities?
- How will sponsorship management be implemented and integrated? Is it feasible for WV to work with partners on some or all aspects?
- Is it feasible for WV to facilitate relationships between working groups and local donors?

Outcomes

1. Increased consultation, information exchange, cooperation and coordination among groups, organisations and duty bearers on issues of child well-being.
2. Working groups are established, focusing on specific child well-being priorities.
3. Working groups agree on appropriate structures for collaboration and have developed shared goals, objectives and approaches to address their child well-being priorities.
4. Working groups have begun to plan shared projects and to define principles and ground rules for working together.

STEP SIX

Guiding questions

- In what ways can the resources of local community groups, organisations, households and duty bearers become the primary assets for each shared project, rather than relying mainly on external resources?
- What can each working group member (including WV) commit to contributing to the shared projects?
- How do all the shared projects fit together into an integrated programme for the sustained well-being of children?

Outcomes

1. Shared project plans are finalised.
2. Working relationships are agreed and finalised for each working group.
3. The resources needed to implement shared projects are identified and acquired.
4. Sponsorship integration project plans are finalised; roles and responsibilities of community, WV and others are agreed.
5. WV Programme Design Document is completed, submitted and agreed upon.
6. Children are registered for child sponsorship, and child histories are sent to the support office.

STEP SEVEN

Guiding questions

- How can WV staff strengthen local groups and organisations and support appropriate forms of collaboration and partnering throughout project implementation?
- How will the shared projects be monitored and evaluated jointly?
- How can each project ensure context-appropriate and effective child protection?
- How can continual learning and improvement be ensured throughout shared project implementation?
- How do WV and partners support communities to plan for and recover from disasters if and when they occur?

Outcomes

1. Shared projects are implemented successfully, resulting in tangible and lasting improvements in the lives of children, especially the most vulnerable.
2. Monitoring, reflection and evaluation are conducted jointly with communities and partners. They focus on the change in children's well-being and lead to improvements in project implementation.
3. In programmes with sponsorship, sponsorship systems are successfully adapted and implemented. Registered children participate in and benefit from shared projects along with the other children. Communication with sponsors is meaningful for all involved.
4. The community and stakeholders have clear plans for managing and mitigating disaster risks.

STEP EIGHT

Guiding questions

- How will families, communities, government and other stakeholders sustain and build on the gains made in child well-being once the shared projects come to an end?
- How can communities continue to mitigate and manage major threats to sustainability – for example, natural disasters, conflicts or pandemics?
- How does WV prepare to transition in a way that builds local capacities to continue working towards the sustained well-being of children?

Outcomes

1. Local stakeholders and communities are able to work together effectively towards a common vision of child well-being without ongoing support from WV.
2. Local stakeholders have an increased capacity to analyse and respond to changes in the local context.
3. Local stakeholders are able to mobilise their own resources and acquire needed resources from external sources.
4. Local stakeholders have an increased capacity to mitigate and manage disaster risk.
5. Clear plans are in place for the transfer of assets and responsibilities to local stakeholders once WV's contribution has come to an end.
6. Learning has been documented and shared.

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