

COUNTRY STRATEGY 2023-2027 Million Girls & Boys

Strategic Goal: Achieve sustainable well-being for 5 million girls and boys, particularly the most vulnerable ones

World Vision International in Cambodia

WHO WE ARE

World Vision International (WVI) is a global Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation. We support children, families and communities overcome poverty and injustice, irrespective of religion, race, ethnicity or gender.

Our Vision Statement

Our vision for every child, life in all its fullness. Our prayer for every heart, the will to make it so.

World Vision International in Cambodia (WVI-C) is a part of World Vision International (WVI). We commenced our work in Cambodia in 1970. Our focus is to support the most vulnerable girls and boys to reach their full potentials. Inspired by our Christian faith, our work reaches children and communities in needs, regardless their background.

We are driven by our desire to ensure that every girl and boy has what they need to grow in mind, body and spirit. Every day, our 600 staff across the country- who come from various backgrounds, work hard to empower children to live healthy lives filled with joy, love and protection. We work with them so they can go further they could have ever imagined.

Guided by more than 50 years of experience and expertise, our dedicated staff employ proven, effective development and relief practices to empower communities to become self-sufficient and bring real, lasting changes.

We work with all partners - children, youth, communities members and leaders, governments at all levels, service providers, non-governmental organisations, development partners and all other partners - with whom we have a shared vision to provide the best opportunities for all children, in particular the most vulnerable ones, in meeting their full potentials.

For children. For change. For life.

Message from Country Director

Dear Partners,

I am pleased to share with you World Vision International in Cambodia's Strategy 2023-2027.

This strategy is developed based on a series of consultation with a wide range of stakeholders in early 2022, including children, youth, parents, communities' leaders, teachers, health workers, the Royal Government of Cambodia at national, provincial and local levels, development partners and other stakeholders. We are also taking into account on COVID-19 recovery situation and World Vision International's Our Promise to the Most Vulnerable Children.



As a result, World Vision International in Cambodia's Strategic goal for 2023-2027 is to achieve sustainable well-being for 5 million girls and boys, particularly the most vulnerable ones. In meeting this aspiration, we will implement three (3) child-focused priority programmes, namely Integrated Nutrition, WASH and Livelihoods; Child protection and Participation; and Education. Disaster Risks Reduction & Climate Resilience; Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI); Policy Influencing and (service delivery) System Strengthening; Implementation of Social Accountability Framework; and Children and Youth Participation will be integrated across programming. We also plan to expand our geographic programmes coverage from 14 provinces in the previous strategy period (2018-2022) to potentially 23 provinces, where World Vision can add values to existing development, humanitarian and advocacy programmes of local governments and of other partners.

Having just joined World Vision International in Cambodia August 2022, I am encouraged to learn about the resilience of the people of Cambodia especially during the pandemic times in the past two years. My team and I appreciate solid Government leadership in responding to COVID-19 and the recovery efforts, in partnership with development partners, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and all partners. And I am humbled to work with such an incredible and committed World Vision team and partners. Therefore, I am very excited to embrace the opportunities and potential challenges ahead, and to work more closely to provide the best opportunities for all children, in particular the most vulnerable girls and boys in Cambodia, to reach their full potentials.

Sincerely,

Janes Imanuel Ginting



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DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Progress on child well-being and remaining vulnerabilities

Nutrition

Malnutrition addresses three broad groups of conditions: (1) undernutrition, which includes wasting (low weight-for-height), (2) stunting (low height-for-age) and, (3) underweight (low weight-for-age). The number of children suffering from malnutrition in Cambodia has declined over the past 20 years as indicated in the below graph. However, the rate of progress remains unacceptably slow.



Children with repeated bouts of diarrhoea due to poor sanitation and hygiene, and intake of foods with poor nutritive value and lack of diverse food groups are the leading causes of undernutrition in Cambodia. Maternal undernutrition and overweight also contribute to an intergenerational cycle of malnutrition and poverty. To address these issues, World Vision will implement integrated Nutrition with Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Livelihoods Programme.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene



General Only 1 toilets in facilities h





Only **1 in 3** schools have at least one girls and one boys toilet are functional with water (33%) (*ibid.*) 1 in 3 pre-primary schools does not have handwashing



About 90% of the poor live in the rural areas or countryside, while in urban areas, poverty is estimated to be 8.2%. Cambodia has economic development driven by the garment and tourism industries with agriculture remaining an important sector for livelihoods in Cambodia (32.3% of labour force engaged in agriculture in 2019) although its contribution to GDP is relatively modest (22.1%).⁴

WVI in Cambodia's livelihoods programme is designed to improve incomes of households in rural areas and address the remaining challenges in agricultural sector including:

• Inefficient systems

- Undiversified production
- Natural disasters such as flooding and droughts

Education

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) indicates relatively high primary enrolment rates for the 2020/2021 school year (91.9%). However, the early childhood education enrolment rate is significantly low at only 34.8%.⁵ Despite high enrollment, the primary completion rate is only 87.4%, with more girls completing primary school than boys by 91.6% vs 83.4%.⁶ The proportion of education spending allocation at both national and provincial levels also increased (10.8% /2015 to 12.3%/2017). However, most of the increased education budget was absorbed through increase in personnel emolument (primary education salaries and other staff-related costs).⁷

Poor natural resource management

Prior to COVID-19, the learning outcomes of children were of priority concerns especially for the most vulnerable children from ID Poor families, living in remote areas, and children with disabilities. The National Assessment Report 2019 highlighted that only **33.8%** of children passed the Khmer language examination, of which the children from mountainous (30.3%) and coastal (30.6%) areas performed lower than those living in the plains (34.9%) and Tonle Sap (34.7%) areas. World Bank's Growing Smarter: Learning and Equitable Development in East Asia and the Pacific report indicated one third or more of second graders in Cambodia cannot read.⁸

These are contributed by very low pupil-teacher ratio and quality of teaching. Cambodia has the lowest pupilteacher ratio in ASEAN, with one teacher for every **42-43 students** in both public pre-schools and primary schools? Official teaching hours in Cambodia are 684-760 hours in a school year,¹⁰ a figure significantly lower than the international recommendation of **850-1000 hours** per academic year.¹¹

Education is one of the sectors severely affected by COVID-19 prolonged lockdown. The consequences of 18 months of school closure have put the education of millions of children more at risk with potential long-term impact beyond education." According to WVI in Cambodia's COVID-19 Vulnerability Assessment report (2021), among 619 children surveyed, 34% reported that they could not access forms of formal education remotely due to a range of factors including lack of materials, little or no access to the internet, and limited support from parents/caregivers.

Due to COVID-19 lockdown, **34%** (of 619 children) could not access forms of formal education remotely¹² Furthermore, many children (**boys: 55%, girls: 65%**) were required to perform additional household chores, and others (**boys: 8%, girls: 5%**) reported being required to work to support household income. Collectively these factors and the prolonged school closure have each directly contributed to significant learning loss particularly for the most vulnerable children.

Child Protection & Participation

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has shown commitment to regional and global frameworks to protect children through the adoption and enforcement of national laws and regulations and international instruments. Cambodia ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1992 along with 18 relevant international conventions and has enacted 15 domestic laws and three articles within the Constitution, and a number of policies and sub-decrees that relate to the protection of children. For example, the Juvenile Justice Law was approved in 2016. In addition, the RCG is drafting a child protection law which is now under consultation with stakeholders.

Despite legal frameworks, child protection is often hindered by limited governmental implementation mechanisms, low resourcing of protective services, lack capacity of mandated structures to provide quality and inclusive services for abused, neglected and exploited children, and inconsistent implementation of child protection related laws. While formal structures exist at provincial, district and commune levels such as Women and Child Consultative Committees (WCCC) and Commune Committee for Women and Children (CCWC) respectively, the effective functionality of these mechanisms remains a challenge. CCWCs are commonly reported to be overloaded with limited capacity and resources to provide effective support services to vulnerable children and families. Coordination between the national, provincial, district, and commune levels within and among the ministries with mandates for child protection remains limited.

Boys and girls in Cambodia continue to experience significant threats including violence against children, child labour, sexual abuse and exploitation, and trafficking. These vulnerabilities are further compounded by prevailing negative and harmful community attitudes towards children, poverty and marginalisation of low-income families.





More than 50% of children experienced at least one form of violence before they turned 18 years old¹⁴.



About 18.2% of children aged 5-17 years are working (19.9% boys, 16.4% girls).¹⁵



80%

358 (80%) of the total 446 cases of rape or attempted rape investigated during the three-year period from 2017 to 2019 involved children under 18¹⁶



46% of the rape incidents experienced sexual violence from a blood relative, such as their father, uncle or

grandfather (ibid.)



54% experienced sexual violence inflicted by step-relatives and in-laws (*ibid.*)

Children Online Safety

On children online safety issues, UNICEF reported 11% internet users aged 12–17 in Cambodia were subjected to clear examples of online sexual exploitation and abuse of this represents an estimated 160,000 children¹⁷ Access to the internet and social media could expose children to the growing risks accompanying the platform, according to UNICEF report on the use of social media by children and adolescents in East Asia (including Cambodia). The report found that across the countries studied, three themes emerged - a lack of digital literacy among parents and caregivers, restrictive responses by adults to perceived misbehaviour in children's social media use, and a lack of evidence-based approaches into what works in keeping children safe online.¹⁸

Youth Unemployment

Growing unemployment among educated urban youth is a further emerging issue.¹⁹ Although informal youth employment has declined over the last decade, 41% of youth were employed informally in 2014, mainly in agriculture. Although youth neither in employment nor education or training (NEET) fell from 8.8% in 2004 to 6.4% in 2014, many youths are still economically inactive because of not having social capital, health problems or poor qualifications.²⁰ Further, youth are also exposed to negative lifestyle factors associated with severe diseases such as tobacco use (7.3% of youth aged 15-24) and alcohol consumption (14.2% of youth aged 11-18). The level of alcohol consumption among Cambodians aged 15-19 is among the highest in ASEAN, while about 42% of males aged 15 to 19 are current drinkers (27% for the females) (*ibid*.).

Children and Youth Participation

There has been increased participation of adolescents and youth representatives in decision making process affecting their lives at local (commune councils) and national level events; however, such engagements tend to be ad-hoc and one-offs.²¹ Children and youth are not systematically empowered to express their voice and interests at both local and national levels and commonly have limited access to information about decision-making processes. Young people tend to show limited interest in such matters, except in areas where there is NGO supporting youth activities. Part of the reason is that local governments often lack the willingness to address young people's issues or have adequate resources to arrange meaningful engagement. Following the FGD with parents WVI Youth TP baseline 2018, parents do not react favourably upon young people becoming engaged in politics or volunteering because they consider it both dangerous and take time away from studying.





STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2023-2027

The country strategy of World Vision International in Cambodia for the fiscal years 2023-2027 is fully aligned with the Royal Government of Cambodia's (RGC) Rectangular Strategy and other sectoral policy priorities, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and World Vision International's Our Promise to the most vulnerable children.

The Strategic Goal of World Vision International in Cambodia for 2023-2027 is to achieve sustainable well-being for **5 million girls and boys**, particularly the most vulnerable ones. This ambitious goal aims to reach directly and indirectly **85%** of Cambodia's children population. Cambodia has a total population of **15.5 million** of which **5.7 million (36.7%)** are children (0-18 years).²² The main focus of WVI in Cambodia's target population is "the Most Vulnerable Children/MVC". Of these children population, approximately a total **2,250,135** are considered MVC. For 2023-2027 Strategy period, WVI in Cambodia aims to reach **75% MVC**.²³

To achieve this strategic goal, WVI's 2023-2027 Strategy aims to realise Programme Impact on four (4) Child Well-Being Objectives (CWBOs), as follows:



To realise the four (4) CWBOs as Programme Impact through three (3) strategic objectives (SO#1, 2 &3), WVI will execute seven (7) other strategic objectives in the domains of Programme Funding, Organisational Process Excellence and People, Learning and Growth. These four domains are summarised in the following "Strategy Map for WVI's Strategy 2023-2027".





Programme Impact

Strategic Objective 1: Increase in children and adolescents who are protected from all forms of violence and participating in decision making (CWBO 2 & 3)

Child Protection & Participation Technical Programme



Children and adolescents, especially the most vulnerable are equipped and empowered with life skills, resilience, and capacity to protect themselves and participate in decision making



Parents, caregivers, and community members provide positive caring and protective relationships to children and adolescents



Improved collaboration of local child protection mechanisms to effectively protect girls and boys, especially most vulnerable children, from abuse, exploitation, neglect and other forms of violence



Improved governance and accountability mechanisms as the result of Child protection policy implementation to protect girls and boys.

Programme Approaches

Celebrating Families (CF) is an approach to empower parents/caregivers to create a safe and nurturing environment for children within families.

Child Protection and Advocacy works to engage key community stakeholders to address the root causes of violence against children through building capacity, increasing partnering, and collaboration between formal and informal child protection actors. These key community partners and stakeholders then work together to create a protective environment that cares for and supports all children, especially the most vulnerable ones.

Peace Road is a life skill intervention aimed at helping adolescents to protect themselves and their peers, treat others with respect, be active citizens, and collectively act to improve their communities.

IMPACT+ is a holistic and multi-sectoral approach to adolescent engagement that supports adolescents to transition well into adulthood as active citizens empowered with competencies, values, confidence, and social connectedness.

It Takes a World to End Violence Against Children (ITAW) is a National Advocacy Campaign focuses on ending violence against children. The campaign focuses on addressing the main root causes of use of corporal and humiliating punishments in Cambodia.

Social Accountability for Child Protection works to improve the performance of local Child Protection systems through collaboration and participation from community in planning and budgeting to ensure the accountability of all responsible stakeholders.

Mobilising and Strengthening Child Protection & Advocacy groups equips formal and informal local actors with the capacities to collaborate effectively, coordinate the implementation of Child Protection activities to strengthen the local child protection system.

Strengthening a Community Reporting and Referral Mechanism equips formal and informal local entities with reporting and referral mechanisms that ensure quality responses for incidents of child abuse, neglect, exploitation, and other forms of violence.



Strategic Objective 2: Increase in children who are healthy and well-nourished with access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene in financially stable homes (CWBO 5)

Integrated Nutrition Technical Programme



Health and Nutrition

Improved access to health and nutrition services and promote healthy behaviours among pregnant women and children under five years.



Water Sanitation and Hygiene

Improved WASH behaviors through behavior change programmes and appropriate WASH infrastructure.



Economic Resilience and Livelihoods

Improved household income of most vulnerable households (women, people with disabilities and youth) through Agriculture Co-operative to achieve child well-being objectives.

Programme Approaches

Community Health Workers (children aged 0-5 years) A set of behaviour change interventions and community-led activities to improve access to safe water and promote good sanitation and hygiene practices.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (children aged 0-18 years) A set of behaviour change counseling services aims to support mothers, children under 5 years and household members at timely intervals to improve health and nutritional status. Trained Community Health Workers will be engaged in facilitating monthly sessions with the mother's groups and grandmothers' groups on Early Childhood Care and Development.

Build Secure Livelihoods (children aged 0-18 years) Agriculture Co-operatives and Most Vulnerable Households in the community will be supported through skill-building programmes, and linked with markets and financial institutions to improve local production in terms of fish farming, vegetable farming and livestock and improved the market value chain.

Strategic Objective 3: Increase in primary school children who are equipped with literacy for life (CWBO 7)

Education Technical Programme



Programme Approach

Unlock Literacy (UL)

Project model involves strengthening reading instruction by training teachers to incorporate 5 core reading skills into lessons plans for the government curriculum, ensuring that children have a strong foundation in reading by the end of Grade 3. The model also goes beyond classroom learning, with the community and caregivers encouraged to undertake literacy-supporting activities at home and through volunteers trained to help children improving their reading in community-based reading group activities.



Programme Funding

Strategic Objective 4: Diversify funding sources to enable sufficient and sustainable funding to the programmes and projects that will create positive impacts on the Most Vulnerable Children.

Strategic Objective 5: Pre-position for local fundraising to increase share of funding from local sources including the public and private companies/institutions.

Organisational Process Excellence

Strategic Objective 6: Optimise operations and systems through digitalisation to allow for more convenient and simplified business processes for support staff.

Strategic Objective 7: Strengthen partnerships with local organisations to contribute to WVI in Cambodia's broader localisation agenda through working more closely with local NGOs, community-based organisations, people with disability organisations, professional associations...).

Strategic Objective 8: Enhance evidences of impact through integrated monitoring systems, externallyfocused research and publication capacity and innovative programme approaches through building stronger partnerships with research institutions, university think-tanks and individual research advisors/consultants to support WVI in Cambodia's programming focus and impacts.

People, Learning & Growth

Strategic Objective 9: Promote organisational culture of openness and servant leadership as a reflection of World Vision's values and Christian identity.

Strategic Objective 10: Recruit and retain talents, and Build high performing team.





CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

Oisaster Risk Reduction and Climate Resilience

Operating in a context vulnerable to climate change and frequent disasters such as floods, droughts, windstorms, and seawater intrusion, WVI in Cambodia will be more deliberate in its focus on disaster risk reduction and climate resilience. The focus will also include efforts to identify and to mitigate impact of disasters and or climate change to vulnerable groups such as women, children, people with disabilities, the elderly and other socially marginalised groups.

Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)

Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) is integral to achieving global sustainable development goals, and World Vision's "Our Promise" strategy and child well-being objectives. Acknowledging the issues around GEDSI such as gender discrimination, domestic and gender-based violence, negative gender norms, abuse, exploitation, social hierarchies, discrimination against people with disabilities and ethnicity, lack of social services available to them, etc., WVI-C will adopt key approaches both on our programming and organisational policies and practices.

On programming, WVI-C will conduct GEDSI analysis and assessment, integrate GEDSI in programming, develop staff capacity on GEDSI, ensure budgeting and planning for GEDSI, conduct Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, and promote partnering with GEDSI expert partners. On organisational policies and practices, WVI-C will work with gender experts to develop GEDSI capacity building to staff and partners, as well as to advise senior leadership team in establishing GEDSI-sensitive policies and practices.

Policy Influencing and System Strengthening

WVI in Cambodia envisions to sustain the collective impact on the well-being of the most vulnerable children in the main programme areas, in a sustainable way to impacting children beyond the operational areas. In doing so, deliberate policy influence efforts and system strengthening relevant to the technical sectors of WVI in Cambodia are required.

There will be three (3) main interrelated approaches to influence policy and to strengthen system relating to Child Well-being:

- 1. Influencing the policies relevant to the implementation of 3 Technical Programmes.
- 2. Leveraging from ISAF programme to improve health and education outcomes in the community. Integrate the learning from ISAF to empower and interface the citizen and service providers to demand and receive quality services.
- 3. Scaling up proven best practices at the national level, especially those that has an impact on the well-being of children.



Implementation of Social Accountability Framework (ISAF)

Objective

The Implementation of Social Accountability Framework (ISAF) empowers local communities and promotes dialogue with service providers to improve the quality of local public services provided by commune administrations, health centres and primary schools. In 2022, ISAF project is implemented in 590 communes/ sangkat, 62 districts, 14 provinces and Phnom Penh and work closely with over 1900 Community Accountability Facilitators (CAF) of which majority of them are women. In addition, where ISAF is implemented in WVI-C's Area Programmes, integratation will be made to strengthen primary education, commune administration, and health services (where applicable). In 2023-2027 period, WVI-C will expand ISAF to 20 provinces reaching out potentially 85-90% of communes/sangkat across the country.

How does ISAF work?

The ISAF process includes four steps implemented during an annual cycle:





Children and Youth Participation

WVI in Cambodia aims to realise meaningful participation of children, adolescents and youth in WVI-C local decision-making processes through the engagement of children, adolescents and youth in programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and acknowledging that they are primary partners for WVI-C's programmes.

Within the Child Protection and Participation Technical Programme, child voice and participation are the central themes focusing on:



Informing children of their rights and responsibilities to engage in decision-making that affects them (including the design and content of WVI-C child-focused programming),



Equipping children and adolescents with the skills they need to effectively participate in decision-making and express their views, and



Providing children, adolescents and youth with opportunities to engage and contribute in decision-making processes

WVI-C will also work to strengthen the institutionalisation of child and youth participation in WVI-C local and national leadership decision making processes. WVI in Cambodia also emphasises the role of local and national advocacy in working with communities and CSO partners to increase and strengthen the spaces and structures for children and youth to participate, looking outward to strengthen the ways in which children and youth participate in local and national government decision-making processes.



CONTRIBUTION TO RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES, CAMBODIAN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND WVI'S GLOBAL IMPACT FRAMEWORK

In addition, WVI in Cambodia will promote the community groups and civil society organisations to improve and increase the opportunities for children and youth to participate in local and national government decisionmaking process.



GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

In previous strategy period (2018-2022), WVI in Cambodia implemented programmes in 16 provinces. For the 2023-2027 period, while the confirmed number of programmes is less than year 2022's total projects, the geographical reach will be expanded to potentially 23 provinces, including the poorest provinces of Preah Vihear and Kratie. Selections of geographic focus are based on multiple factors, including but not limited to RGC's poverty data, Most Vulnerable Children's criteria, presence of other local or international NGOs to avoid duplication but to bring complementary supports, development partner's sectors and geographic focus; and some other technical/or programmes operations consideration.

Urban Programming will also be one of priorities in the next strategy period, recognising the unique

urban or city context in Phnom Penh and emerging children's issues in cities like Siem Reap and Battambang and other economic zones. As of 2022, 205 poor communities exist throughout Phnom Penh. In 2022, WVI in Cambodia's Urban Programme targeted 69 slums in 25 sangkats across Phnom Penh. Based on the city-wide Most Vulnerable Children estimation exercise, there is an estimated population of 23,683 most vulnerable children among a population of 46,220 children in target slums. Main vulnerabilities in the urban areas relate to the abusive or exploitative relationships and vulnerability to catastrophe or disasters. In addition, WVI-C plans to implement the ISAF programme in Phnom Penh. This has the potential to positively benefit all children in the city through improvement of local public services.



FOOTNOTES

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World Vision is an international partnership of Christians whose mission is to follow our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in working with the poor and oppressed to promote human transformation, seek justice and bear witness to the good news of the Kingdom of God.

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