

A CHILD-CENTRED FOOD SYSTEM TO END HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION



Why this matters

World Vision believes [food systems](#) can only achieve lasting, effective, and accountable results when children are at the centre of policies, strategic investments, and operational commitments.

Through our [ENOUGH campaign](#), we are working to end child hunger and malnutrition, building on evidence that lasting change is driven by partnership, accountability, and persistence, as well as World Vision's evidence-based, quality programmes that demonstrate what works in some of the world's most vulnerable communities.

By ensuring children's realities guide national and global action, stakeholders can achieve food systems transformation through more effective policy, investment and programme design.

Start with children's realities

Most food system discussions begin with production, markets or technologies. We begin elsewhere, with the daily realities children face: economic constraints, limited knowledge and choices, and the impossible trade-offs families everywhere navigate. These pressures determine what food is accessible, while climate change, poverty, cultural norms and health challenges shape children's diets, wellbeing, and long-term development.



A system that connects what a child needs

Children's nutrition emerges from many systems working together:



A safe, nurturing and healthy environment, within peaceful, reconciled families and communities and just society.



Quality education, including healthy, diversified and locally sourced meals at school.



Secure livelihoods of caregivers, with empowered women and girls and equitable distribution of resources.



Availability of clean water, sanitation and hygiene.



Stability from shocks, including through social protection and insurance.



Resilience of food sources amid climate change.



Protection from harm, inclusion and participation in decisions that affect them.

A child-centred food system begins with children's lived realities, not siloed agendas.

Children as participants, not observers

At World Vision, children's participation is fundamental. It drives our advocacy for spaces where children can express their needs, challenges and solutions. Children's perspectives ensure policies are more relevant, effective, and accountable.

We support safe and meaningful child participation across community consultations, national processes, and global platforms, including [FAO](#), the [Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty](#), the [Committee on World Food Security](#), the [World Food Forum](#) and the [School Meals Coalition](#).

Although young people aged 15–24 have recognised spaces, younger children are often absent. By bringing children below 18 and young people together, policies better reflect the full range of childhood and adolescent experiences.

Families as the foundation of food systems

A child's place in food systems depends on the stability and empowerment of their caregivers. World Vision invests in livelihoods, market access, microfinance, insurance and practical nutrition support to ensure families can consistently provide healthy diets. A resilient family creates the conditions for a nourished child.

World Vision's programmatic excellence demonstrates how this happens in practice:



Our [Transforming Household Resilience in Vulnerable Environments \(THRIVE\)](#) model strengthens household resilience through integrated livelihoods, financial inclusion and agricultural improvements, delivering strong income gains and greater stability for families.



[Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration \(FMNR\)](#) supports sustainable, climate-resilient food production by restoring degraded land and expanding access to diverse foods.



Through [Inclusive Markets for Communities \(M4C\)](#), we link economic empowerment directly to outcomes for children, ensuring that household gains translate into better nutrition, learning and well-being.



[VisionFund International \(VFI\)](#) expands financial inclusion through savings, credit and insurance, giving caregivers the tools to withstand shocks and protect their children's nutrition.

Together, these models show how empowered families form the foundation of a child-centred food system.

Measure what changes a child's life

Progress in food systems must be evaluated through outcomes that matter for children: better diets, healthy growth, stronger learning, greater resilience and improved safety. Children are not one indicator among many - they are the measure of whether a food system is working.

Practical examples: Citizen Voice and Action, Nutrition Dialogues + THRIVE

World Vision's [Citizen Voice and Action](#) provides a practical and immediate pathway for meaningful child participation in food and nutrition decision-making and is a distinctive contribution we bring to coalitions. The [Nutrition Dialogues](#), led by World Vision and the 4SD Foundation, create structured spaces where communities - including children and young people - shape national nutrition commitments. These approaches strengthen accountability, relevance and shared ownership.



World Vision also brings deep experience in integrated programming that strengthens household resilience and food security. Our [THRIVE](#) model combines livelihoods, financial inclusion, agriculture, and natural resource management into a unified approach that improves family stability and children's well-being. Independent analysis shows THRIVE delivers exceptional value, generating US\$6.67 in benefits for every dollar invested and significantly improving income stability and resilience. This integrated model reinforces World Vision's credibility in driving practical, system-wide change for children.

Our manifesto

To accelerate progress against hunger and malnutrition, food systems must place children at the centre of policy and ensure they help shape the decisions that affect their lives. This includes creating spaces where children can share their experiences of hunger and the systemic neglect of their right to adequate food, and ensuring these insights directly inform national programmes, school meal reforms, and [Fast-Track implementation](#).

We call on partners to help drive a child-centred transformation of food systems by:



Strengthening family resilience and livelihoods - including climate-resilient and shock-responsive solutions - so caregivers can consistently secure nutritious, diversified, and culturally relevant diets for their children.



Elevating and institutionalising children's voices - through approaches such as Citizen Voice and Action and the Nutrition Dialogues - so their lived experiences of hunger, climate shocks, and the systemic neglect of their right to adequate food shape national policies, investments, and accountability mechanisms.

This is an invitation to act boldly with us: to build food systems that listen to children, protect their rights, withstand climate pressures, and nourish every child's potential.

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