

WORLD VISION'S APPROACH TO LOCALISATION

World Vision seeks to be a trusted partner in lasting change. Guided by our vision and values, our local-to-global approach amplifies children's voices, fosters solidarity in complex challenges, and ensures principled action in crisis. This enables World Vision to be locally-led and globally-connected, upholding international standards and accountability while promoting greater aid effectiveness.

1. Background

Localisation, at its simplest, encourages putting local actors in the lead of development and humanitarian action, recognizing that they are already working before external interventions are introduced and will remain after they end.

Achieving sustainable development outcomes is globally understood to require inclusive, locally led approaches¹. In a world facing escalating humanitarian needs and mounting challenges - such as increasing inequality, persistent conflict, climate change, and a shrinking space for civil society - coupled with inadequate and restricted aid funding, an effective multilateral aid system is crucial. Localisation is part of reforming and strengthening the aid system in this context, as intended by the Grand Bargain and other related initiatives.

We believe that this occurs when diverse local actors, including children and families, community and youth groups, churches and other faith communities, civil society organisations (including local and national NGOs), and government set their own agendas and develop their own solutions.

Whilst local actors closest to the community enable local solutions, we acknowledge that in contexts of conflict, disaster, fragility, exclusion and injustice, international actors - including INGOs and multilateral organizations - play necessary complementary roles to local efforts in protecting children and ensuring their well-being. As development and humanitarian partners, international actors need to respect and enable the ownership, agency and knowledge of local actors, both state and non-state.

Localisation, through a re-balancing of power, is critical to put relevant local actors in the lead of development and humanitarian action. Thus, localisation requires international actors to continuously re-examine their roles, practices, and power dynamics within each local context, prioritising support for local leadership at all levels.

2. World Vision - a global partnership

World Vision mobilizes a global movement of individuals committed to child wellbeing through an international Christian Partnership. Our vision is for the most vulnerable children to overcome poverty and experience fullness of life. We serve children of all backgrounds, without discrimination and solely based on needs inspired by our Christian faith.

The World Vision partnership has evolved over its lifetime to share power across all its member entities. In 1978, World Vision made the bold decision to internationalise the organization, divesting authority from the founding U.S. office and forming a global federation of separate, equal, fully responsible and interdependent entities. These entities are linked together through shared commitment. In decision-making, all national boards and advisory councils are represented at World Vision's Triennial Council, where a majority of voting members are from the global south. The diverse international board is elected by national offices through seven regional forums.

¹ For example, see "[Donor Statement on Supporting Locally Led Development](#)".

As part of its commitments to child participation in decision-making², World Vision ensures children's active participation in the Triennial Council. This helps shape the organization's direction by amplifying their voices in programming, advocacy, and decision-making. This federated partnership enables World Vision as a whole to be 'locally led and globally connected.' Building on the richness of its global diversity, each office is embedded within its own civil society with deep local networks, relationships, and local knowledge.

3. World Vision's approach to locally led development and humanitarian action

For over 70 years, World Vision has worked in partnership with local actors to address the root causes of poverty and injustice for children and their communities. As a child-focused, community-empowering, Christian organization, World Vision is passionately committed to its work being driven by the voices of children and their communities. This is achieved through transformational development³, long term commitment, community led processes and accountability, and sustainability, assuring we are locally led in our work. We build long term sustainability into our development work using self-funding models such as savings groups, alongside microfinance and strengthening local systems through community-led social accountability. In humanitarian action, World Vision continues its commitment to localisation, including the Grand Bargain and the Core Humanitarian Standards.

Our core value 'we are partners' leads us to place equitable partnership with local actors, and the strengthening of local capacity at the core of World Vision's approach; this is achieved in our global strategic imperative to 'collaborate and advocate for long-term impact'.

We believe that sustainable development and principled humanitarian action requires that World Vision play a role that most effectively strengthens the local system so that local actors can own and maintain child wellbeing outcomes. Therefore, World Vision strategically analyses and adopts its most effective role in each context, ensuring that solutions are locally identified and driven and that diverse voices in communities and ownership are prioritised. Wherever possible World Vision works with and through partners, as connector, convenor, advocate and through capacity sharing. When necessary (for example, in fragile contexts where local and national actors are either not present or unable to implement because they have been affected by conflict or crisis themselves), World Vision implements directly, collaborating with communities, local government, and civil society (including churches and other faith groups and community-based organizations, including those that represent marginalised groups).

Aligned with global localisation frameworks, World Vision expresses its commitments to locally led development and humanitarian action through six pillars outlined in the appendix.

Governance across the World Vision Partnership

World Vision's member entities are primarily locally staffed and have varying governance structures. As of end 2025, of World Vision offices around the world:

- 42 have local governing boards and are independent legal entities;
- Some have their own names, such as Wahana Visi in Indonesia;
- 18 have national advisory councils;
- 29 are programme offices of World Vision International;
- Of the entities within the Global South, many raise some or all of their resources directly;
- 23 VisionFund microfinance institutions also have their own governing boards;
- World Vision country offices, including those with local boards and registrations, strive to communicate their membership of an international federated partnership and its value.

² [2023 Global Report on Child Participation in Decision Making External.pdf \(wvi.org\)](#)

³ See more at <https://www.wvi.org/development/transformational-development>.

Appendix: World Vision's practices of locally-led action

Pillar 1: Equitable Partnership	
<p>Equitable partnerships with local actors create sustained change for children and families. We work in genuine, equitable, and transformative partnerships with local actors including youth organizations, churches and other faith communities, faith-based organisations, local authorities, and organisations representing marginalised populations, e.g. women and girl-led and women's rights organizations, and organisations of persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Recognising the critical role and leadership of local partners in promoting, enabling and sustaining child well-being, World Vision works with them toward shared goals, adapting its role to context and capacities.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. World Vision takes an intentional approach to strategic partnering, building mutual trust and mutual accountability with our local partners and tackling problems together in a way that is reflective of local actors' goals. 2. World Vision assures meaningful partner collaboration and co-creation across the program cycle: including strategic visioning and problem identification, building partnership agreements, design, program implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. We uphold the ICVA Principles of Partnership. 3. World Vision implements effective and efficient risk mitigation processes for local partners, avoiding over-burdening local partners with disproportionate compliance requirements on top of those required by donors. With a posture of support and accompaniment, we strengthen the capacity of local partners to manage donor compliance and risk, adhere to international standards, and collaborate and advocate for joint standards and approaches.

Pillar 2: Quality Funding	
<p>Quantity and quality of funding for local partners (including overheads) enabling effective partnerships.</p> <p>In line with our commitment to equitable partnership, World Vision shares programme funding with our diverse local partners, including jointly applying for donor funding. World Vision plays diverse roles with our different partners, from leading programmes to working together in joint initiatives or being an implementing partner for others, each role with its own financial implications.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. World Vision - to the best of our ability and within donor partner funding guidelines - supports local partners to accurately assess and recover a fair percentage of their operational and administrative costs. World Vision ensures indirect cost recovery is built into partnering agreements, including sub-grants with local partners, according to donor permitted rates or policies. 2. World Vision provides as much budget flexibility as possible to local partners, within the context of donor regulations; and to advocate for more flexible provisions from donors. World Vision commits to supporting partners to meet the minimum donor partner auditing and reporting requirements. World Vision will strive to not add additional reporting requirements unless initial partnership discussions indicate that this is necessary and agreed by both parties. 3. World Vision advocates for donors to cover adequate overhead costs for partners, including local partner overhead costs, recognising the role of overheads in more effective and efficient programming, and increasing sustainability and capacity of local actors.

Pillar 3: Capacity Sharing and Strengthening

Strong and sustainable institutional capacities for local actors.

World Vision recognizes, respects, and is committed to sharing existing knowledge, skills, and resources with local actors to achieve the best possible outcomes for children. Recognising capacity is present at all levels, World Vision seeks to take an attitude of humility and learning in its capacity sharing strategies and capacity strengthening activities.

1. World Vision enables and supports sustainable local capacity and advocates for donors to incentivize capacity sharing and investment in local actors' long-term institutional capacities, as relevant.
2. World Vision's capacity strengthening activities leverage existing local assets and are:
 - Demand-driven and context-appropriate, with full transparency of capacity assessments;
 - Based on partners' self-identified needs, with particular attention to national and international standards, safeguarding, financial and risk management;
 - Consistent with immediate needs as well as long-term sustainability-related priorities;
 - Complementary to any existing capacity strengthening initiatives;
 - Supportive of context-wide capacity goals, including those agreed in cooperation with networks and alliances; and
 - Undertaken not only during or after crisis, but as much as possible before shocks occur, in the context of prevention and preparedness.

Pillar 4: Voice & Participation

Fuller and more influential involvement of children, families and communities in decision-making.

World Vision is committed to ensuring that the voices, skills and priorities of diverse groups of children and other programme participants and, where relevant, disaster-affected people have a central place in the decision-making processes. As such, World Vision will continue to prioritize meaningful participation of and accountability to program participants, including meaningful and safe child participation. Acknowledging and addressing the impacts of exclusion and marginalisation on current development and humanitarian challenges, we pay particular attention to diversity, and how gender, age, and disability may impact people's priorities, preferences and risks.

1. We continue to strengthen ongoing efforts to achieve inclusive access to information and to systematize community feedback mechanisms.
2. We promote participatory approaches for all community members, promoting gender equality, disability and social inclusion, and implementing inclusive monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning practices.
3. World Vision will continue to build on its tradition of community-based programming and social accountability⁴ to strengthen local ownership by engaging communities in program design and throughout implementation and program transition.
4. World Vision prioritizes accountability to the people we serve. We implement responsive, dignified, and people-centred community feedback systems that are accessible to children and adults, including the most vulnerable and excluded to continuously improve the quality and effectiveness of the assistance provided.

⁴ See [Social Accountability | Sector | World Vision International \(wvi.org\)](#)

Pillar 5: Visibility & Advocacy

Local actors participate in policy discussions and are given public recognition.

World Vision recognizes that local actors are crucial stakeholders in the elaboration of development and humanitarian policies, strategies, and activities. We believe children and the most marginalized communities should be given a central voice in the process.

1. World Vision supports efforts to enhance visibility and public recognition of the work and contribution of local actors in external forums, advocacy strategies, opportunities and events, and communications.
2. We support local actors' meaningful and informed presence, influence, visibility and active participation for evidence-based policy advocacy, leveraging our global presence to inform publics and donors. We prioritise the participation of local actors who will be most impacted by the policy decisions.
3. In our reporting to donors, media and other public communications, we recognize the role and contributions of partners and support their engagement and connections.

Pillar 6: Coordination & Leadership

Local actors are included in coordination mechanisms.

World Vision believes that leadership of local actors can contribute to more sustainable and locally-owned results. We recognise and value local knowledge and seek to promote more inclusive decision-making in development and humanitarian policy and programs. We seek the overall strengthening of civil society to determine what is best for their context and support governments in their role.

1. Depending on the context, World Vision acts as a facilitator, an enabler, and/or a collaborator towards greater participation, influence and leadership of local actors in local, national, regional and international development plans and humanitarian response plans (Humanitarian Country Teams and clusters), other coordination mechanisms, technical working groups, advisory bodies, etc, paying particular attention to marginalised groups.
2. World Vision advocates with donors for increased resourcing in support to local actors' leadership roles in all such coordination systems.