CHILD WELL-BEING
ANNUAL REPORT

World Vision LAOS
2015
A colleague recently shared a Lao proverb with me: ‘ໝໜ້າເຈົ້າມານໂອກາດເຮັດບາງສີງ ການຈະເຮັດມານໂລດກຸນຈະເຮັດມານຈະຊາກເກນໄປ’ which means, ‘Take the opportunity before it passes you by.’

Three years ago, World Vision Laos embarked on an ambitious change journey. We set out to put change for children as the singular focus of World Vision’s efforts in Lao PDR. We took the opportunity to learn new skills, change our policies, shift our funding commitments and embrace partnerships in a new way. The journey was not easy and many times we did not feel ready. This Fiscal Year 2014 World Vision Laos Child Well-Being Learning report indicates that we are on the right path.

Today, World Vision Laos staff, Support Offices, government partners (especially the National Committee for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication), donors and most importantly communities and children can say with confidence that together we are making positive and lasting change for children. While more work is yet to be done, over the last year we contributed towards Millennium Development Goals 1, 2 and 4 and improved child well-being for more than 200,000 precious children across Luangprabang, Bolikhamxay, Khammouane, Savannakhet and Champasak.

This next phase of our journey will be different. We will do better to focus on the most vulnerable children, using methods that are community-led and have a proven evidence base. We must be smarter about where we make our investments, focusing on the poorest villages first. Finally, we must be disciplined to use a rich process of continuous learning, based on our new 40 standard indicators. It is impossible to know all we need to know now, but with a strong learning process we will be better equipped to take hold of each opportunity and make the most of it.

This report is a testament of the passion, dedication and tremendous work of the World Vision Laos team, government partners and the communities we serve. I couldn’t be prouder of this remarkable team.

Amelia Merrick
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World Vision is a global Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. In 2013, World Vision Laos launched a three-year strategy focusing on supporting vulnerable children and their families. Between July 2013 and June 2014, World Vision was one of the largest International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGO) in Lao PDR, with programmes in more than 600 villages across 25 districts in five provinces. During this period, World Vision implemented programmes across health, education, livelihoods and child protection sectors, using transformational development, advocacy and emergency response approaches.

This report presents World Vision Laos’ contribution towards child well-being and outlines how World Vision will continue to make improved programmatic decisions for the future. The report is structured into four main sections. The first section provides an overview of the report and the methodology for collating the findings. The second describes World Vision Laos’ achievements and contributions in each of the programme areas. The third section presents World Vision’s key learnings. The final section identifies areas for World Vision Laos to improve upon as it continues its work with the Government of Laos, civil society organisations, and, last but not least, the vulnerable children and their families that inspire World Vision’s work.

**World Vision Laos Contributions:**
- Increased the number of households with enough food to eat year-round
- Increased household ability to access and purchase food
- Improved household knowledge of nutrition

**Learnings and Improvements:**
- Improve sequencing of interventions. Ensure food security programs have a gendered approach and strengthen women’s empowerment.
- Revise revolving loans schemes and discontinue livelihood and food security activities which do not show change.

**World Vision Laos Contributions:**
- Strengthened community engagement and participation in education
• Improved learning environments to be more accessible, child-friendly and adequately resourced
• Improved teaching and learning quality

Learnings and Improvements:
• Increase focus on systems strengthening. Shift efforts towards activities that promote education participation and quality.
• Ensure any future infrastructure development targets the most remote areas and children from ethnic groups.
• Infrastructure activities should complement a strong programme to ensure community participation and improved teaching outcomes.

GOAL 3: REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY (MDG 4)

World Vision Laos Contributions:
• Improved access to sanitation and hygiene
• Improved access to safe drinking water sources
• Improved access to primary and secondary health care services

Learnings and Improvements:
• Pursue Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) as the primary model for water and sanitation.
• Strengthen partnerships with other civil society organisations that have a strong systems focus.
• Scale up Positive Deviance (PD) Hearth and Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) projects.

GOAL 4: CHILDREN REPORT INCREASED WELL-BEING
(WORLD VISION LAOS CHILD WELL-BEING STRATEGY)

World Vision Laos Contributions:
• Increased number of children who are more safe and are aware of services
• More children actively participated World Vision Laos activities and have a voice in their community development process

Learnings and Improvements:
• Integrate child protection and participation into World Vision Laos’ core business.
• Include children in key planning forums, such as the District and Provincial Level Implementation Management Committees.

PROGRAM DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Learning and Improvements:
• Focus data collection and analysis on 40 standard indicators and review programme progress using these new indicators during District and Provincial Implementation Management Committee meetings.
• Consolidate core programs to 15 target villages per district.
• Identify supplementary funding for inaccessible and resource-intensive villages.
World Vision is a global Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. World Vision serves approximately 100 million people in nearly 100 countries around the world. World Vision is committed to working with all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender.


Between July 2013 and June 2014, World Vision was one of the largest International Non-Governmental Organisations in Lao PDR, with programmes in more than 600 villages across 25 districts in five provinces. During this period, World Vision implemented programmes across health, education, livelihoods and child protection sectors, using transformational development, advocacy and emergency response approaches.

World Vision Laos estimates that more than 200,000 Lao children have benefited from programmes or policy improvements as a result of World Vision’s work.
The purpose of this report is to present World Vision Laos’ contribution towards the Millennium Development Goals and child well-being and to outline how World Vision will continue to make improved programmatic decisions for the future. World Vision is a learning organisation and annually reviews progress towards child well-being. This report summarises World Vision Laos’ key learnings from July 2013 to June 2014 and includes more than 15 programme evaluations conducted by independent, external researchers.¹

### WORLD VISION LAOS’ GOALS

#### Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger² (MDG 1)

Lao PDR achieved an impressive rate of economic growth at more than eight per cent annually. According to the United Nations (UN), the national poverty rate in Laos has dropped by 40 per cent over the period from 1992/93 to 2007/08.³ With a poverty line set at $0.75 USD⁴ per person per day (rural)⁵, the Government of Lao PDR reports that 92,328 poor households live in extreme poverty. According to the UN, the poverty gap analysis shows that in geographically disadvantaged areas the poorest people are the poorest in the country and that their severity of poverty has increased.⁶

For the poor, food insecurity, inadequate livelihood opportunities and poor nutrition are the norm. An estimated 44 per cent of children in Laos PDR are stunted, indicating chronic malnutrition.⁷ In 2014, World Vision Laos implemented at least eight convergence interventions to address malnutrition across 24 districts.

World Vision Laos’ nutrition and food security programme aims to:

1. Increase the number of households with enough food to eat year-round.
2. Improve food production practices.
3. Increase household ability to access and purchase food.
4. Improve household knowledge of how to consume safe and nutritious diets.
5. Ensure the most vulnerable households are resilient in times of need.

¹ This report reflects more than 15 programme evaluations, 25 annual programme reports, 1 regional baseline study. For a full list of available reports please contact World Vision Laos – Programme Quality Department.
² Key contributions by World Vision Laos FY 2014/# of children impacted/beneficiary data for this Child Well-Being Objective is included in Annex A.
⁴ At an exchange rate of 8,000 LAK:1 USD
⁵ Decree 285, Special Letter from the Prime Minister 106, 30th September 2014
⁶ Ibid.
⁷ Ibid.
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education\(^8\) (MDG 2)
According to the UN, Lao PDR has “made steady progress towards universal primary education”.\(^9\) The Ministry of Education reports that the national primary net enrolment rate has now reached 96.3 per cent.\(^10\) While there continues to be significant opportunity gaps in education between rural and urban children, Lao PDR has reached an important milestone with 75 per cent of girls and boys now completing Grade 5 education. This is a major improvement from the 48 per cent reported in 1992.\(^11\)

From July 2013 to June 2014, World Vision Laos contributed to improvements in education at 660 schools across 25 districts in support of MDG 2.

World Vision Laos’ education programme aims to:
1. Strengthen community engagement and participation in education.
2. Increase the number of vulnerable children who participate in education and are ready to learn.
3. Ensure learning environments are accessible, child-friendly and adequately resourced.
4. Improve teaching approaches so they are more effective, child-centred and result in better learning outcomes, including literacy.
5. Boost children’s life skills.

Goal 3: Reduce child mortality\(^12\) (MDG 4)
The UN reports a significant decline in infant and under-five mortality rates in Lao PDR from the early 1990s to 2011. Today, more children have access to high-impact child survival interventions (immunisation, oral rehydration therapy, etc.) than ever before but coverage remains low and inequitable. Moreover, Lao PDR still has one of the highest under-five mortality rates in the region, with most child deaths due to preventable or treatable conditions.

Children in the most remote and rural areas are at the highest risk and have the least access to child survival interventions. One key opportunity to address this is to expand high-impact, low-cost interventions.

In 2014, World Vision worked across 24 districts to improve children’s access to life-saving health interventions.

World Vision Laos focuses efforts to:
1. Improve access to sanitation and hygiene.
2. Improve access to safe drinking water sources.
3. Increase community and households’ understanding and practices to improve child nutrition.
4. Improve access to primary health care at the village level, and secondary health care at the district level.

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\(^8\)Key contributions by World Vision Laos FY 2014 /# of children impacted/ beneficiary data for this Child Well-Being Objective is included in Annex A.
\(^12\)Key contributions by World Vision Laos FY 2014 /# of children impacted/beneficiary data for this Child Well-Being Objective is included in Annex A.
Goal 4: Children report increased well-being (World Vision Global Goal)
Child protection and participation are central to World Vision’s work as a child-focused organisation. The legal framework in Lao PDR supports both child protection and child participation. Laos became a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991, and National Decree Number 4 (2007) provides for the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children. The National Decree states: The state, society and family shall create conditions for children to participate in various activities and to express their views in all matters affecting them. Those views shall be given due and balanced consideration based on the age and discernment of the child.

World Vision Laos is actively working with its partners to make this statement become a reality for children throughout the country. According to a recent Lao Social Indicator Survey (2012), 76 per cent of children have experienced violent discipline and hundreds of children continue to be victims of exploitative labour and human trafficking.

World Vision Laos is working towards systemic change, which requires both change in community behaviours and institutional strengthening.

World Vision Laos aims to:
1. Ensure children are safe.
2. Make the target population aware of and able to access services for child well-being.
3. Ensure children actively participate and have a voice in decision making.
4. Ensure parents are supportive of listening to the voice of children in decision making.

13Article 35: Policies on the Protection and Assistance to Children: The State has policies to prevent and combat acts of child violence or exploitation, by adopting protective measures and assistance to children at risk of violence or exploitation, by assigning the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare to actively collaborate with other relevant sectors, such as: organisations in public health, education, justice, foreign affairs, public security, the Office of the Public Prosecutor, mass organisations and other concerned organisations. The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare shall issue regulations and instructions on protection and assistance to children, and establish the Committee for Protection and Assistance to Children, aimed at implementation, including monitoring, inspecting and encouraging [such] implementation. Decree of the President of the Lao PDR, On the Promulgation of the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children, No. 04/PO, 2007.
15Lao Social Indicator Survey (LSIS) and MDG Indicators – Lao PDR 2011- 2012.
The World Vision Laos FY14 Child Well-Being Learning report is based on a systematic review of World Vision Laos’ programme evaluation reports, annual reports and community consultation reports. These reports contained qualitative data (e.g. focus groups, interviews, text) and quantitative data (e.g. performance indicators, community surveys, finance) from both external and internal research teams.

An external monitoring and evaluation specialist conducted the analysis of the research and synthesised key findings and conclusions. This report was developed following a four-step process:

1. **Action Plan:** A Reference Team, Advisory Team and Data Collection Team were formed with members from across the organisation. An action plan was developed. Criteria to ensure organisational learning and validity of data were agreed.

2. **Data Mapping:** Data sources were identified and selected if they were: a) relevant to MDGs or child well-being; b) recent – only internal reports covering the 2013 to 2104 financial year were used; and c) reliable publicly available, peer reviewed and statistically sound documents. Each document was reviewed to determine the strength of the findings or conclusions in each report.

3. **Reflection:** The Reference and Advisory Teams reviewed the Action Plan and data map. Data limitations and strengths in the source documents were discussed.

4. **Analysis:** Findings and conclusions from each internal report were identified and where possible cross-checked with other reports to corroborate the finding (consistency check), to cross-check gaps in findings and to seek explanations (coherence check). Key findings for this report were developed by synthesising findings and conclusions from World Vision Laos’ internal reports. The Reference and Advisory Team provided the technical cross-check of key findings.

### Table 1. External and Internal Research reports commissioned by World Vision Laos

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<th><strong>EXTERNAL RESEARCH</strong></th>
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<td>5. Basic Programme Parameter review report (2014)</td>
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<td>7. WASH Consultancy report (2014)</td>
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LIMITATIONS AND DATA GAPS

Recognising that good programmatic decisions require a strong evidence base, World Vision Laos has made a significant investment to evaluate programme impact and to improve its evidence base in FY14. This is demonstrated by the high proportion of independent external research projects commissioned over the past 12 months (see Table 1 above). The Meta Mid-term Area Development Programme Evaluation and the 13 District Area Development Programme Evaluation reports, for example, are the most substantial evaluation project by World Vision Laos to date. These evaluations were undertaken by World Vision Laos concurrently across the country in May/June 2014. These evaluations involved:

- An external evaluation team and 170 field staff (World Vision Laos staff and District government staff)
- 130 villages across 13 districts and four provinces
- 5,200 focus group participants
- 2,600 surveys

This report is a compilation of several different data sources. In some instances only the report without the supporting data set was available, which limited the team’s ability to confirm original conclusions and generate new findings. To address this limitation every effort was used to cross-check the findings for consistency, coherence and technical relevance. Supplementary data was used where there was a high level of consistency, coherence and technical relevance.

The complexity of World Vision Laos’ data recording and management system contributed to the challenges of generating coherent programme performance data and reporting. This impacted the organisation’s ability to critically analyse programme progress and its impact across the 600 target villages. In June 2014, World Vision Laos introduced a range of measures to simplify its programme monitoring and reporting system in order to improve data quality.

Technical capacity within World Vision Laos to generate programme analysis influenced the quality of routine programme monitoring, reporting and evaluation. The organisation recognises the importance of its human resources and has put in place strategies to build competencies and knowledge around programme monitoring and evaluation. These include technical training, training of trainers, internal communications to improve organisational learning, improved data collection through better community engagement, and using social media to promote good practices.
GOAL 1: ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER (MDG 1)

In 2014, World Vision invested more than $2.5 million (USD) towards its nutrition and food security programme. Activities included: unexploded ordinance removal, farmer training, revolving loan schemes, animal vaccinations, home gardens, rice banks, and the PD Hearth approach for infant and young child feeding (IYCF) counselling programme.

Increase the number of households with enough food to eat year-round

The mid-term programme evaluation for 13 districts found that 72 per cent of parents report their children have sufficient access to food (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Children Have Enough to Eat

- 72% Enough to eat everyday
- 26% Not enough to eat each day
- 2% No response


The Poverty and Disaster Risk Reduction (PDRR) Project (2014) found 57 per cent of families report they “never lack rice to eat”. This is an improvement from 32 per cent of families who reported this in 2009 (Figure 2). Women reported the most significant change in food security. In 2009, a third of women surveyed reported their household had enough rice to eat all year compared with 59% in FY14. The PDRR project provided a “non-traditional, culturally constructed form of governance where women played a more significant role in decision-making” which may have contributed to these gains. According to Quisumbing et al, “there is a positive association between women’s empowerment and improved nutrition outcomes, and conversely, the disempowerment of women can result in reduced nutritional status for their children and themselves”.

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16 Evaluation conducted in February 2014. This project aimed to reduce community poverty and vulnerability in 19 villages in Nhommalath ADP of Khammouane Province from October 2009 to June 2014.
17 The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) summarises the evidence of the impact of programs that have a focus on women’s empowerment and nutrition. The review looks at maternal autonomy, education levels, women’s status within the household, and other factors reflecting “empowerment”, and identifies an association between women’s empowerment and improved nutrition outcomes for children. Quisumbing, A.R., Van Den Bold, M. & Gillespie, S., 2013. Women’s Empowerment and Nutrition An Evidence Review. In International Food Policy Research Institute. Discussion Paper 01294.
With that in mind, both the food security and governance approaches used in the PDRR project contributed reducing periods of hunger in target communities.

**Figure 2. Percentage of population that never lack enough rice to eat**


**Increase household ability to access and purchase food**

World Vision Laos makes a significant investment to promote food security and sustainable livelihood activities, such as revolving animal banks for income generation. Communities report that livestock are a primary source of income and security against unforeseen cash emergencies. Money from the sale of animals and animal products appears to be spent mainly on rice to cover shortages or to pay for large expenses, such as education, health and vehicles to support livelihood activities (tuk tuks, hand tractors, motorbikes or utility cars). Animal ownership is an effective livelihood strategy because it can provide a relatively quick return, security of value and required a low investment by households that are already poor. In villages without access to financial institutions, this has contributed to an improved access to credit.

The 2014 mid-term programme evaluations found that World Vision Laos' food security projects contributed to improved nutrition. However, results also indicated that the changes in the country’s economy and land use negatively impacted the food security and livelihood programmes for the most vulnerable people. Communities are facing increased pressure as the land previously available for upland cultivation and foraging is reduced. Foraged food traditionally makes a significant contribution to local diet, and communities across the 130 villages in the evaluation consistently reported that dwindling natural resources have reduced the amount of food available in forests over the years.

Demand for land is increasingly heightened in Lao PDR and many families are feeling pressure from the fast shift to a cash-based economy. With less land available for foraging, families now require cash to meet basic food needs. World Vision implemented a range of income-generation approaches, including seven revolving fund schemes and the Local Value Chain for Development project model. World Vision’s 13 Area Development Programme evaluations showed little improvements in income generation with about one out of seven households reporting “some increase in income” (Figure 3).

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18 A recent evaluation commissioned by the Lao Land Issues Working Group (LIWG) suggested that “enhanced access to land and secure tenure of that land for rural people, especially the poor, in Laos tends to improve levels of food security and nutrition.” Miles Kenney-Lazar, “Dynamics of the Land Tenure Security and Food Security Nexus in Laos,” pg 6.

19 Commonly foraged food includes bamboo, vines, mushroom and frogs.

20 The question about annual income is a sensitive topic and for accuracy a comprehensive questionnaire should be administered with the household head and other working age adults in the household. For the mid-term evaluation, the focus was on participant’s perception of degrees of income change. Caution should be taken when interpreting the results as the data is based on self-reported perception of subjective change in income, not quantified change measured against a national standard.
Improve household knowledge of nutrition

Despite the Lao PDR showing significant improvements in income per capita over the last 10 years, it has not necessarily translated into improved nutrition for all children and families. There has been little positive change in the rate of stunting. For that reason, during the 2014 High Level Round Table Meeting the Lao government reaffirmed its commitment to the Multi-sectoral Convergence Approach, outlined in the draft National Food Security and Nutrition Action Plan. This plan identifies 22 priority interventions across health, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), agriculture and education.

In the 2014 financial year, World Vision Laos contributed to at least eight priority interventions in 24 districts (Figure 4). While the convergence approach is still in its infancy in Laos PDR, this shows that World Vision Laos’ multi-sectoral district approach and nutrition project models are relevant and should be continued. As one of the few civil society organisations that are currently implementing multi-sectoral convergence approaches at scale, World Vision Laos should commit resources in order to document best practices and lessons learned and to share these broadly with other civil society organisations.

A key component of World Vision’s nutrition approach is the PD Hearth model. This involves working with rural and poor mothers to identify how to best feed their infants and young children using local resources and a positive deviance approach. It is extremely cost-effective and highly successful. A significant enabling factor
of the PD Hearth approach is that mothers learn together in their ethnic language. However, Village Health Workers reported that a shortage of local language nutrition resources hampered the success of their outreach work. For that reason, World Vision Laos developed six traditional folk song music videos in Lao, Hmong and Khmu languages to educate mothers. These are available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRDUIFPrFDQ.

GOAL 2: ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION (MDG 2)
According to the organisation’s FY14 Annual Report Summary, an average of 85 per cent of girls and boys in World Vision’s target areas completed five years of primary school education. The national average is 75 per cent.\footnote{Average based on available data from the Annual Report Summary of the Education Sector.} Five district programmes reported that all of the girls and boys completed Grade 5 (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Percentage of children completed Grade 5 in target districts

![Figure 5. Percentage of children completed Grade 5 in target districts](image)


While World Vision Laos continues to improve the quality of data, available evidence suggests that World Vision Laos’ efforts are contributing towards higher enrolment rates. The FY14 Annual Report Summary of Education Sector showed an average of three per cent increase in Grade 1 enrolment across target districts, compared to FY13 (Figure 6). The national average for enrolment is 96.3 per cent, compared to 96.8 per cent of enrolments in World Vision Laos target districts.\footnote{Ministry of Education and Sports data FY 13/14. The Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) target for 2015 is to achieve a net intake of 98 per cent. Ministry of Education and Sports, Education Sector Development Plan 2011-2015.}

Figure 6. Percentage of Grade 1 school enrolment in World Vision districts

![Figure 6. Percentage of Grade 1 school enrolment in World Vision districts](image)

Source: Annual Report Summary of Education Sector FY14. Note that data was not available for Atsaphone, Thaphangthong and Phonesay districts.
Since children from ethnic groups and remote villages are often the most disadvantaged, World Vision Laos is encouraged by the promising enrolment and Grade 5 completion rates. This likely speaks to World Vision Laos’ integrated approach, which includes campaigns to promote education, improved access and quality of schools and food security. World Vision Laos is committed to improving primary education and invested approximately $1.5 million (USD) in FY14.

**Strengthen community engagement and participation in education**

Many Lao parents have difficult choices to make – for example the choice to send their child to school or send them to the forest to forage for food. Recognising these pressures, World Vision conducted educational promotions in 355 villages. As a result more parents appear to understand the value of education for their children. Based on a survey of 2,587 households, 78 per cent of parents and caregivers expressed educational aspirations for their children.

Furthermore, consultations with 335 children, parents and Village Education Development Committee (VEDC) members revealed that parents understood the potential of improved future income through education and they recognise that social, technological and economic circumstances are rapidly changing. Parents do not want their children to be left behind.

Between July 2013 and June 2014, World Vision Laos trained VEDCs from 131 schools as part of the initial process of developing and implementing a local education plan. VEDCs play a key role in supporting the effective and sustainable use of school funds that are provided by the Ministry of Education and Sport, as well as donations from parents. World Vision Laos’ training enhanced the capacity of VEDCs to effectively manage village education funds. This training is therefore essential for helping community members to understand their roles and responsibilities.

**Ensure learning environments are accessible, child friendly and adequately resourced**

Strong learning outcomes are based on both access to and quality of education. World Vision Laos recently made significant contributions (approximately $600,000 USD in FY14) in school construction. In FY14 alone, World Vision Laos constructed 22 schools and renovated 16. The provision of improved facilities has increased the accessibility of education in villages where this posed as a barrier. This in turn has facilitated the improved enrolment and completion rates of children in Grade 5 in targeted communities.
Improve teaching and learning quality
Consultations in four districts revealed that children prioritise gaining new knowledge and skills over a new school building. Regardless of whether their school was a wooden building with no doors or a new concrete one, all the participants in the children’s groups valued education for fulfilling their great curiosity to understand and gain knowledge and skills. Children’s enthusiasm for learning activities was the same regardless of the ethnicity and socio-economic status of the village.

The country’s education system is currently hampered by a range of issues including teacher recruitment, training, pedagogical approaches and classroom practices. Teachers often receive limited training or training of poor quality and are not supplied with appropriate teaching and learning materials. Furthermore, many teachers do not get regular support, supervision or salaries which have encouraged high teacher absenteeism. In the 2014 financial year, World Vision Laos contributed to improved teaching by supporting more than 1,000 teachers to receive training. The organisation collaborated with district government partners to source training and provided practical assistance to rural teachers and volunteer teachers to access training.

GOAL 3: REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY (MDG 4)
World Vision Laos contributed to reducing child mortality through its commitment of more than $1.3 million (USD) on activities such as the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) project model, Community Lead Total Sanitation (CLTS), breastfeeding promotion and the PD Hearth model.

Improve access to sanitation and hygiene
According to 2,587 parents and caregivers surveyed in 13 target districts, 78 per cent of households reported “no” or “few” serious incidences of diarrhoea in the family during the previous 12 months.

World Vision Laos piloted CLTS in three districts and early evidence suggests the approach is working. For instance, 97 per cent of the households in Tang Oui village, Phoukhoun district, built their own home latrines with technical support provided by World Vision. Similarly, 89 per cent of households in Houaymaha village, Phonexay district, constructed their own home latrines as part of this model with the organisation’s support.

Improve access to safe drinking water sources
Three-quarters of the 2,587 parents and caregivers surveyed for the mid-term programme evaluation said their main source of drinking water at home was from an improved, clean source of water. World Vision Laos focused efforts on community education campaigns about drinking boiled water and using filters. Clean drinking water messages are integrated across sector activities, such as mother and child health, children’s clubs, school gardens, WASH and nutrition classes.

Improve access to primary and secondary health care services
In Lao PDR, primary health care is weak and women have very limited access to the four key mother and child health and nutrition services: antenatal care, safe delivery, post-partum care and women’s nutrition. Nationally, only four out of 10 mothers exclusively breastfeed their babies, which indicates inadequate post-partum care. By contrast, 71 per cent of mothers breastfeed babies for at least six months after giving birth, according to parents and caregivers surveyed in 130 villages where World Vision works (Figure 7).

28 Consultations conducted with communities in Mahaxay, Xe Bangfay, Thaphangthong and Phine ADPs.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 National average data from Lao Social Indicator Survey (LSIS) and MDG Indicators – Lao PDR 2011-2012.
Based on an evaluation of ECCD model project in Phoukhoun district, the percentage of women who attended antenatal care during their last pregnancy increased to 95 per cent from 40 per cent. Mothers who said weighing their children is “important” increased to 100 per cent from 65 per cent. The 13 district mid-term programme evaluations also found that villages participating in the ECCD project models had greater awareness of maternal health and child developmental needs than those who were not participating.

Through the model and health sector activities, World Vision placed a strong emphasis on increasing women’s access to village-level primary health care through capacity building of traditional birth attendants and Village Health Workers. Community and district government partners consistently reported that the immunisation of children and women is one of the most valuable contributions made by World Vision Laos. Nationally, only 43 per cent of children between 12 to 23 months are fully vaccinated. However, in World Vision Laos target villages, self-reporting statistics suggest that rate is doubled. According to World Vision Laos’ 13 district mid-term evaluations, 87 per cent of parents and caregivers reported all their children are fully vaccinated (Figure 8). While this was based on self-reports and should be verified with government records, it is a positive indication of community attitudes towards child vaccination. World Vision’s contribution to this emerging change is due to the close collaboration with district health partners who deliver life-saving immunisation services to children and women.

32 Source: Lao Social Indicator Survey (LSIS) and MDG Indicators – Lao PDR 2011-2012.
33 ECCD pilots in Phonexay, Phoukoun, and Mahaxay. PD Hearth pilots in Nhommalath, Xebangfay.
34 Almost 2,000 community participants in 130 villages participated in focus groups for the 13 ADP Evaluation Project, 2014. Over 40 district government staff also participated in focus groups for this project.
35 Lao Social Indicator Survey (LSIS) and MDG Indicators – Lao PDR 2011-2012. It is important to note that the comparison of the national average to this data is indicative only as the evaluation data did not confirm age groups or vaccinations against health records.
World Vision Laos supports 24 government district health teams to provide vaccinations to children in remote villages and also mobilises women and children to attend mobile health clinics. Other INGOs and development partners, such as Save the Children (North zone) and Luxemburg Development (Central zone), are also working in the area of immunisation and are making important contributions at the systems level.

GOAL 4: CHILDREN REPORT INCREASED WELL-BEING (WORLD VISION LAOS CHILD WELL-BEING STRATEGY)

Children are safe and are aware of services
World Vision’s Vulnerability Report on Human Trafficking revealed that Lao children have the lowest levels of awareness of human trafficking in Southeast Asia, which is compounded by low levels of literacy and education. Only four in 10 children and youth knew about human trafficking, compared to eight out of 10 children and youth in Cambodia, Myanmar and Vietnam.36

Additionally, only a quarter of Lao mothers knew about human trafficking, compared to 60 per cent of mothers in Cambodia, Myanmar and Vietnam.37

In the villages where World Vision Laos works, there are still very few functioning services that children can access when they have been abused, neglected, exploited or experience violence. World Vision is working collaboratively with the Lao government to create and improve both institutional and community-supported services. World Vision Laos developed the child protection training curriculum “Keeping Children Safe from Sexual Abuse” for children, parents, community representatives, private business sector representatives and government staff. As a result, 151 government staff were trained on the prevention of child sexual exploitation and human trafficking. Moreover, 1,406 children participated in the training and campaigns on the prevention of sexual exploitation in Luangprabang province.

Source: 13 ADP Evaluation report 2014. 13 ADPs, n= 2,587 adult participants.
North Zone = Luangprabang Province; Central Zone = Bolikhambay and Khammouane Provinces; South Zone = Savannakhet and Champasak Provinces.

Figure 8. Proportion of Children Vaccinated

Our children are healthier; they are not sick like four years ago…We don’t have women dying of childbirth. The vaccinations have been very successful and the community sees the benefits now.

Village head, Nakok village, Mahaxay Area Development Programme

The Vulnerability Report: Human Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub region, draft 2014
Ibid.

36 The Vulnerability Report: Human Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub region, draft 2014
37 Ibid.
Across more than half of the areas where World Vision Laos works, children reported their relationships with their parents are the most important in making them feel protected, safe and valued (Figure 9). The organisation’s Children’s Club engaged 279 children in six districts through a ‘friends help friends approach’ to learning about child rights and safety. Activities implemented so far demonstrated children and the community are increasing their awareness of children’s right to protection and participation.

**Figure 9. Children’s Protective Relationships**

Source: 13 ADP Evaluation report 2014, focus groups with children n=1,300.

**Children actively participate and have a voice**

World Vision places great emphasis on children’s participation in activities and decisions that impact their lives. In the community, 73 per cent of parents and caregivers surveyed said that ‘all’ or the ‘majority of children’ in the community participate in the organisation’s activities.13

In FY14, 11 Children’s Clubs targeting 10- to 14-year-olds were piloted in six districts. Children and teachers helped develop the selection criteria for ensuring the most vulnerable children were included in these clubs.

World Vision Laos also reinforced child participation through Children’s Rights events and through the annual Children’s Forum. The organisation collaborated with other civil society and government partners to promote the inclusion of children’s voice in community development processes and aspires to see children play a full role in development processes, particularly at the village and district levels. This is best seen in the Lao National Television segment found on [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pmjXmFiguMY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pmjXmFiguMY).

Finally, children participated in the Luangprabang Implementation Management Committee Meeting. This high-level meeting was attended by all government heads of Provincial and District Administration, Education, Health, Labour and Social Welfare, and Agriculture.

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WORLD VISION’S KEY LEARNINGS

GOAL 1: ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER (MDG 1)

• A multi-sector convergence approach is suitable for the Lao context.
• The ECCD and PD Hearth models indicate a strong correlation between improved health and food security outcomes.
• Strengthened decision rights of women influenced nutrition outcomes in the PDRR project.
• Income generation is an essential component for ensuring food security, particularly for the most vulnerable.
• Found weak evidence of improved livelihood strategies.
• Found weak evidence of the impact of nutrition programmes on children and mothers.

GOAL 2: ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION (MDG 2)

• The convergence of government policy, school infrastructure, community involvement and teaching resource has improved education outcomes.
• There are a number of key systemic issues, such as the insufficient allocation of teachers for rural schools and payment of teacher salaries, which are beyond the control of the World Vision Laos’ programmes. Previously, the organisation played a minimal role in strengthening systems for education at the district and provincial level. World Vision Laos will need to take a systems approach and equip education staff to advocate for achieving Government of Lao PDR education policy objectives.
• Quality education outcomes for children need a focus on both participation and improvement of learning methodologies. A focus on one without the other risks further school drop-out and repetition of grades.

GOAL 3: REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY (MDG 4)

• District health teams are well established and have strong capacities. This has been a key enabling factor for the success of the immunisation program.
• There are improvements in water and sanitation. However, the uptake of wet latrines and associated behaviour change remains a challenge.
• Vaccination support from district government teams is highly valued by the community.
Community education activities are an effective approach to engage children, parents, community leaders and government partners about children’s rights in a culturally-appropriate way.

World Vision Laos is continuing to develop a systematic approach to child protection work, however the organisation needs to better streamline all child protection program activities within the organisation.

Efforts to foster a shared understanding of children’s rights and their contribution to society have increased community and government awareness.

World Vision Laos should maintain good collaboration with government and external stakeholders in its approach to child participation and child protection work and advocate to include children in district- and provincial-level implementation management committees.
GOAL 1: ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER (MDG 1)

Increase the number of households with enough food to eat year-round
The FY14 evaluation found World Vision Laos’ approach to agriculture, particularly improved rice production and home gardens, are effective models. However, greater attention to the sequence of activities is needed to increase the effectiveness and impact of these activities, such as ensuring water is available to households before introducing home gardens. Villages with easy access to water at home indicated it was a strong enabling factor in the extension of home gardens.

 Increase household ability to access and purchase food
While World Vision Laos programmes have traditionally placed high importance on livelihoods strategies, such as revolving animal banks, evidence from programme evaluations suggests the impact has been slow and shallow. For this reason, the organisation will revise all seven revolving loans schemes (village development fund, animal revolving loan fund, animal vaccination fund, rice bank, weaving fund, seed fund, and organic fertilizer fund) and discontinue activities which do not show change.

Furthermore, World Vision Laos will work collaboratively with external stakeholders to find safe and acceptable ways for communities to participate in the dialogue regarding land use for livelihoods.

Improve household knowledge of nutrition
Working in a context where progress in child nutrition has been comparatively slower than other Southeast Asian countries, World Vision Laos is shifting away from expensive and often ineffective large-scale agriculture and livestock projects towards proven and cost-effective methods, like home gardens, PD Hearth and ECCD. The most important nutritional gains are made in the first 1,000 days of life and are often through community-based approaches. Therefore, World Vision Laos will continue to seek ways to strengthen civil society collaboration to improve nutrition, such as active participation in the Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Alliance.

GOAL 2: ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION (MDG 2)

Strengthen community engagement and participation in education
World Vision Laos is shifting the focus of education activities away from resourcing and infrastructure and towards activities that promote education participation and quality. World Vision noted increases in school enrolment in 58 schools where World Vision provided training. Though this demonstrates progress, more needs to be done to monitor the implementation of learning and to scale trainings across all VEDCs where World Vision Laos works. Given the importance of VEDCs to sustain education gains, this will be a priority for future programming.
Ensure learning environments are accessible, child-friendly and adequately resourced
Preliminary evidence suggests that even with ‘nice classrooms’ children are not reading at the expected levels. Although World Vision Laos’ data collection methods for assessing reading levels are limited, district government partners identified that few children are reading at an age-appropriate level. As a result, World Vision Laos will ensure any future investment in school infrastructure is targeted at schools serving rural, remote areas and children of ethnic groups. Future infrastructure development will also be complemented with a strong programme to ensure community participation and improved teaching outcomes.

Improve teaching and learning quality
In the past, World Vision Laos played a minimal role in strengthening systems at the district and provincial level. The organisation will invest in stronger technical capacities in education and expects to play a more significant role in systems strengthening in the future. World Vision Laos is a member of the Education Sector Working Group and is involved in dialogue regarding the Government of Lao’s five-year national education plan. The new plan will focus on improving the provision of quality education for all children.

GOAL 3: REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY (MDG 4)
Improved access to sanitation, hygiene and clean drinking water sources
In FY14, World Vision Laos provided subsidies for the purchase or repair of 1,034 latrines. It also raised community education and awareness about latrine use, hand washing and drinking boiled water. While the results show progress, World Vision recognised the need to move away from subsidies to a stronger community empowerment approach. For that reason, the organisation is pursuing the CLTS model as the primary intervention model for water and sanitation.

Improved access to primary and secondary health care services
Partnership with other INGOs appears to have a powerful catalysing effect. World Vision Laos acknowledges that the higher rates of immunisation in target communities in the Northern and Central Zones is associated with existing strong systems level actors. In FY15, World Vision Laos will intentionally explore partnerships with other civil society organisations, including INGOs and local non-profit associations, to strengthen village-level and district-level health care services.

The PD Hearth and ECCD pilot models are strong community-based programmes aligned to the National Food and Nutrition Security Action Plan. Given the success of these models, World Vision Laos will seek to scale up these preferred models across all target districts.

GOAL 4: CHILDREN REPORT INCREASED WELL-BEING (WORLD VISION LAOS CHILD WELL-BEING STRATEGY)
Children are safe and are aware of services
Resistance to the inclusion of children in participation and planning remains a challenge for World Vision Laos. There are few models of functioning child protection systems in the country. Greater integration of World Vision Laos’ three streams of child protection and participation work (Area Development Programmes, Child Safe Tourism and End Trafficking in Persons) is required. In addition to advocacy, training and modelling is needed to open up new doors.

Child protection and participation approaches will be integrated into the core business of the organisation’s programme. World Vision Laos needs to determine the ‘essential’ child participation and protection approaches and adequately resource teams for implementation.

41 Key contributions by World Vision Laos FY2014 /# of children impacted/beneficiary data for this Child Well-Being Objective is included in Annex A.
STRENGTHEN PROGRAMME DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Develop a coherent and shared understanding of programme objectives
A Theory of Change and Action Plan was developed for the education sector. In FY15, the organisation will complete the Education Technical Approach, which introduces a stronger community development approach and uses evidence-based models for early childhood education and literacy promotion. Linkages and integration with other sectors will also be a focus.

Simplify data collection, monitoring and reporting processes
World Vision Laos increased its investment in monitoring and evaluation six-fold. A new organisational reporting process that better supports the achievement of child well-being objectives was also introduced. All district programmes are now responsible for a maximum of 40 standard indicators that are collected and reviewed quarterly. Indicators are available in both Lao and English languages. Field staff are trained in data collection methodologies. World Vision Laos anticipates a more streamlined data set will enable the organisation to make improved programme decisions to achieve its child well-being goals. In the future, World Vision Laos expects that District and Provincial Implementation Management Committees will review progress against the 40 standard indicators during quarterly meetings.

Increase intentional targeting of the most vulnerable
World Vision Laos commissioned an independent assessment of current programme practices after recognising the concerns of field staff, Support Offices and government partners related to the extreme stretch of World Vision’s programmes. The review came back conclusive that World Vision Laos needs to improve programme targeting. By FY16 the organisation will consolidate core programmes to 15 target villages per district. Supplementary funding for less accessible and resource-intensive villages will be sought. World Vision Laos will also increase its field presence by equipping each Area Development Programme with a team of sector-specific development facilitators.
# ANNEX

## ANNEX A: KEY CONTRIBUTION DATA / # OF CHILDREN IMPACTED

### 1. Children report an increased level of well-being

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key contributions by World Vision Laos</th>
<th># of children or beneficiaries impacted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 11 Children’s Club pilots established in six Area Development Programmes and 10 Anti-trafficking Children's Clubs established</td>
<td>• 8,740 stakeholders participated in training on basic child rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduced a three-phase action plan to address child suicide</td>
<td>• 279 children in Children’s Clubs (59 are considered the most-vulnerable children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 2,820 children participated in Children’s Day celebrations across seven programme areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1,300 children participated in the mid-term Area Development Programme evaluation by expressing their ideas about education, health, relationships, nutrition and their future.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Consolidated Indicator Tracking Table database, 2014.

### 2. Increase in children who are well nourished (0-5 years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key contributions by World Vision Laos</th>
<th># of children or beneficiaries impacted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 39,340kg of rice seeds provided to households affected by flooding in Xonnabouly, Nong, and Mounlapamok Area Development Programmes.</td>
<td>• 1,357 farmers trained on rice field improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 17,548kg of cash crop seeds provided to households in flood affected Area Development Programmes.</td>
<td>• 1,220 households trained in animal husbandry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 11,162kg of organic fertilizer provided to households in flood affected Area Development Programmes.</td>
<td>• 455 households trained in crop cultivation techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 91 birthing attendants performing well.</td>
<td>• 1,447 people received family planning information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 280 metric ton of food provided to food-insecure families through food-for-work programmes.</td>
<td>• 78 village health workers trained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 25 mothers attended prenatal check-ups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 3,272 households impacted by floods received cash crop seeds to assist their livelihood recovery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 2,654 households impacted by floods received rice seeds to assist in their food security recovery.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3. Increase in children protected infection and disease (0-5 years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key contributions by World Vision Laos</th>
<th># of children or beneficiaries impacted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 12,943 households with year-round access to clean and safe water.</td>
<td>• 1,252 children under 5 years old received full vaccinations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1,284 households with access to latrines.</td>
<td>• 1,250 children received vitamin A supplement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1,034 latrines constructed or repaired.</td>
<td>• 422 mothers received full course of vaccinations, vitamin A and iron supplements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 900 households received mosquito nets.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 69 village drug revolving funds working well.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: ADP Annual and Semi-Annual Reports FY 2014.*

### 4. Increase in children who can read by age 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key contributions by World Vision Laos</th>
<th># of children or beneficiaries impacted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 25,273 textbooks, notebooks and story books were provided to school children.</td>
<td>• 131 Village Education Development Committees received training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 22 new schools constructed.</td>
<td>• 1,098 teachers participated in training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 16 schools renovated.</td>
<td>• 309 target schools were provided with teacher training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More children were able to progress to secondary schools.</td>
<td>• 355 target villages have participated in education campaigns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Average of 85 per cent of all enrolled children completed Grade 5.⁴</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: ADP Annual and Semi-Annual Reports FY 2014.*

⁴Based on data for 12 ADPs, Annual Report Summary of Education sector FY14.
ANNEX B: WORLD VISION LAOS’ CONTRIBUTION TO MULTI-SECTORAL “CONVERGENCE” OF NATIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY ACTION PLAN

Agriculture
2. Small animal promotion: World Vision Laos pilot project “Local Value Chain Development”
4. Post-harvest food processing, preservation and storage
5. Women’s employment generation: World Vision Laos pilot project “Local Value Chain Development”

Education
1. School meals
2. School gardens
3. Inclusion of nutrition in primary school curricula
4. Deworming of primary school children
5. Iron foliate provision for secondary school girls

Health
1. Weekly iron folic acid distribution to non-school attending females aged 12 to 25 years
2. Daily iron folic acid distribution to pregnant women
3. Vitamin A supplementation for children under five
4. Deworming for children under five
5. Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) promotion: World Vision Laos pilot project “Early Childhood Care and Development”
6. Micro-nutrient powder distribution to young children
7. Community-based nutrition counseling to women of reproductive age
10. Management of acute malnutrition (impatient)
11. Food supplementation for children 6 to 24 months
12. Food transfers for pregnant and lactating women who utilise facilities for antenatal care, delivery and neonatal care
13. Salt iodization

WASH
3. Household water treatment and storage
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