

Channels of Hope: Seeking justice and changing lives

Standing up for justice

Faith leaders are uniquely placed to protect the rights of the vulnerable in their communities through advocacy. They have profoundly deep, trusted relationships and links with their communities.¹ They can influence thinking, foster dialogue, set priorities for their communities, ensure increasing competency in their congregations to meet community needs and mobilise their congregations to do so. With the large number of trusted religious leaders in areas where World Vision works, especially in remote areas where government presence is limited, faith leaders can be instrumental in helping World Vision fulfil the organisation's Child Well-being Outcomes.



Faith communities from El Salvador participate in World AIDS Day

Faith leaders can actually be barriers to development when they hold to mistaken beliefs, myths and misinformation. Channels of Hope (CoH) empowers faith leaders to transform their thinking and thus their lives and the lives of others by directly addressing their misconceptions about especially volatile or taboo community issues. Faith leaders are thus empowered by CoH to become active participants in community life, committed to identifying and supporting the most vulnerable, using existing community structures and building them where they do not already exist.

Strategic importance of Channels of Hope

CoH falls within the “sweet spot” of what World Vision is as an organisation and how it functions. The organisation is committed to working with Christian churches as indispensable partners. “CoH continues to be the most effective tool we have for engaging with the Church to pursue the improved well-being of the world’s most vulnerable children.”² In addition, World Vision is committed to working and building bridges with those of other faiths. CoH provides proven means to do both, delivering tools for meaningful church and interfaith engagement that improve the lives of the most vulnerable. CoH enriches World Vision’s integrated ministry strategy and cross-sectoral collaboration, with CoH materials available for use in four sectors (HIV and AIDS, gender, child protection, and maternal, newborn and child health). These types of CoH programming amplify World Vision’s ability to help meet Millennium Development Goals and shape the emerging post-2015 goals, particularly in fragile contexts.

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¹ For example, 74 per cent of people in Africa identify religious leaders as the group they trust most. BBC Press Office, “World Service/Gallup International Poll Reveals Who Runs Your World”, 15 September 2005. www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2005/09_september/15/world.shtml

Further, more than 80 per cent of the global population (about 5.8 billion individuals) identify with a religious group. Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion & Public Life, *The Global Religious Landscape: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World’s Major Religious Groups as of 2010*, December 2012. <http://www.pewforum.org/global-religious-landscape-exec.aspx>.

² Ken Casey, Partnership Leader, Integrated Ministry, an e-mail of 30 August 2013.

CoH's use of existing faith structures enhances advocacy efforts by making it easier for community-level issues to be raised to national, sometimes regional or even global, levels and vice versa. For example, local faith leaders can contact their national faith leaders (and regional and global leaders where they exist) to bring issues to national awareness, and national faith campaigns can bring issues to the community level with relative ease. No other World Vision programme provides this ease of ability to impact all levels necessary for effective advocacy.

Perhaps most importantly, CoH makes lasting change and justice for children an achievable goal. With CoH training and workshops that help faith leaders confront and change their core attitudes, and thus the core attitudes of the community, real development progress is attainable.

Channels of Hope in action

"CoH is a critical tool to producing sustainable change in the lives of children. We have already seen many inspiring examples of CoH mobilising faith communities around issues impacting the well-being of children."³

The interactive CoH workshops touch the minds, hearts and hands of faith leaders. Faith leaders or other community members who stand out as local, committed advocacy leaders are identified and trained in World Vision's Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) programmes to address community vulnerabilities and injustice, and mobilise community groups, local service providers and government officials. This leads to positive changes in attitudes and practice, practical programming, and empowered leaders who speak out for justice on the issues affecting the most vulnerable in their communities, especially children. This focus, inherent in all CoH workshops, includes the study of justice and dignity based on guiding Scriptural principles, the core competencies faith leaders need, and congregational development of action plans.

CoH overcomes the self-identified limitations of other World Vision advocacy programmes. A national campaign, such as Child Health Now, finds it difficult to get advocacy messages down to the community level. Programmes such as Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) have difficulty getting national attention for local advocacy issues.

CoH offers the opportunity to build national partnerships with faith-based groups and churches/ denominations (e.g. the Anglican Church, the Catholic Church, the Supreme Council of Muslims in Kenya). These national partnerships link World Vision and its partners with national advocacy campaigns. With their ties to community churches and faith-based groups, national-level faith-based partners help disseminate advocacy messages to the congregational (community) level.



Heather Sinclair, a trained facilitator for CoH HIV, engaging with community members after a street play in Mumbai, India

³ Charles Badenoch, Partnership Leader, Advocacy and Justice for Children

Channels of Hope: Impact

Beginning in 2003, World Vision has used CoH to work closely with more than 375,000 faith leaders and community members, both Christian and Muslim, to forge common goals, address stigma and support strong, positive responses to people living with, or who are affected by, HIV and AIDS. Studies showed that those who were trained had significantly better knowledge of HIV and AIDS than others, and they had sustained improvement in attitude and behaviour changes in their approach to affected people. Further, communities were transformed to be more just, equitable and caring by CoH interventions (*World Vision operations research project: Zambia and Uganda, 2005–2009*).

CoH's overwhelming success in the arena of HIV and AIDS led to a wider rollout of the methodology to include maternal, newborn and child health, child protection and gender challenges, complementing World Vision programming and advocacy across the world.

Key advocacy issues raised and addressed by CoH to date include a wide range of topics, such as preventing transmission of HIV from mother to child, standing up against gender-based violence and preventing exploitation of children.

CoH HIV	CoH MNCH	CoH Gender	CoH Child Protection
Make high quality services for the prevention of mother to child transmission (PMTCT) accessible for all mothers.	Distance to health clinics is minimised to a reasonable distance.	Standing up against gender injustice and gender-based violence.	Engage in advocacy opportunities raised through various Child Protection Advocacy programmes.
Make anti-retroviral drugs and treatments for sexually transmitted illnesses available for children, women and men.	Promote quality services in health clinics (PMTCT, stock outs, well-trained nurses and doctors, proper procedures and treatment, etc.).	Promote the creation and enforcement of laws that protect the rights and privileges of women and men, boys and girls.	Advocate for all child rights (e.g., birth registration, preventing child marriage and child exploitation).
Eliminate policies and practices that encourage or maintain stigma and discrimination.	Advocate for justice issues such as child equality (gender preference) and protection and care of pregnant and lactating mothers (including by their husbands).	Foster peacebuilding within families.	Uphold the equality, dignity, inherent value and infinite worth of children (gender preference, child labourers, disabled, etc.).

Channels of Hope: The future

In the future, CoH will catalyse faith-based movements for justice across communities, provinces, and nations. These movements will benefit from integration with other World Vision advocacy programmes, including the Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) approach and the organisation's global Child Health Now campaign.

The organisation will continue to build upon the success that CoH has had in order to motivate and mobilise faith communities to take action to improve child protection, gender balance, care for those impacted by HIV and AIDS, and maternal newborn and child health. CVA will then provide the concrete tools needed for faith communities to effectively engage local authorities and improve services for the most vulnerable. Finally, the evidence generated through the CVA process will be leveraged to broker coalitions of faith leaders to help transform policies for the benefit of children, enabling World Vision to meet its desired Child Well-being Outcomes and build a better future for those most in need.



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World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. Inspired by our Christian values, World Vision is dedicated to working with the world's most vulnerable people. World Vision serves all people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender.