

	WORLD VISION PARTNERSHIP POLICY & DECISION MANUAL	
Date of Issue:		
17 Sep 2009		
Date of Revision:	Title of Policy / Decision:	Section:
10 Nov 2010	<i>Children's Well-Being</i>	<i>Ministry Strategy</i>
WVI Board Reference:		Group: Integrated Ministry
BD/09/56; EC/10/39		

PREAMBLE

“Our vision for every child, life in all its fullness; Our prayer for every heart, the will to make it so.” At the heart of World Vision’s core documents are three foundational elements of being *Christian, child-focused and community-based* in our ministries. We partner with community groups, churches, governments and other organizations, with children as our primary focus. Our aim is the sustained well-being of children within families and communities, especially the most vulnerable.

In 2003, “child well-being” principles were addressed in partnership policies for Transformational Development and Child Sponsorship. The WVI board endorsed the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2004, and approved the Integrated Focus strategy document with principles for child-focus in August 2007. The Child Well-being Outcomes were approved in 2009 following extensive partnership consultation. In 2010, the aspirational nature of the outcomes was further clarified. This policy consolidates these key principles with earlier partnership policies on Child Protection and Children Deprived of Parental Care, and establishes the foundation for partnership standards in these areas of our work.

DEFINITIONS

Child	A child is a person under 18 years of age.
Children's Well-being	We view well-being in holistic terms. Children's well-being refers to positive relationships, healthy individual development (involving physical and psycho-social health, cognitive, social and spiritual dimensions), and contexts where all children experience safety, social justice, and participation in civil society.
Ministry Goal	World Vision's ministry goal is "the sustained well-being of children within families and communities, especially the most vulnerable."
Child Well-being Aspirations	Our aspirations for children's well-being are that girls and boys: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enjoy good health• Are educated for life• Experience love of God and their neighbours• Are cared for, protected and participating
Child Well-being Outcomes	<p>Guided by these four aspirations, World Vision works with partners to contribute to child well-being outcomes. While our active contribution to specific well-being outcomes varies from context to context, our definition remains holistic and recognizes that the outcomes reinforce each other to enable an integrated, holistic approach to ministry. We do not impose our understanding on others; rather, the child well-being aspirations and outcomes provide a catalyst for discussion and visioning as we work together with children, parents, community partners, churches, governments and other organizations.</p> <p>For the Child Well-being Aspiration "Children enjoy good health" our desired Outcomes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children are well nourished• Children are protected from infection, disease and injury.• Children and their caregivers access essential health services. <p>For the Child Well-being Aspiration "Children are educated for life" our desired Outcomes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children read, write and use numeracy skills.• Children make good judgements, can protect themselves, manage emotions and communicate ideas.• Adolescents are ready for economic opportunity.• Children access and complete basic education. <p>For the Child Well-being Aspiration "Children experience love of God and their neighbours" our desired Outcomes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children grow in their awareness and experience of God's love in an environment that recognises their freedom.• Children enjoy positive relationships with peers, family and community members.• Children value and care for others and the environment.• Children have hope and a vision for the future. <p>For the Child Well-being Aspiration "Children are cared for, protected and participating" our desired Outcomes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children are cared for in a loving, safe family and community environment,

with safe places to play.

- Parents or caregivers provide well for their children.
- Children are celebrated and registered at birth.
- Children are respected participants in decisions that affect their lives.

Scope

Children are the starting point of all World Vision's Christian community based development, relief and advocacy ministries. We intentionally integrate all programme sectors and ministry streams to contribute to children's well-being and the progressive fulfilment of children's rights at each stage of their lifecycle.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the partnership ministry policies and programming related management policies.

Principles and Practice

1. Children's well-being and rights

Our programmes and advocacy are based upon Christian principles, evidence-based good practice, and the international standards set out in Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).¹ Children's rights are understood within principles of Christian holism, righteousness and justice. God gives adults responsibility for children's nurture and well-being, and human rights are tools that enable them to fulfil this duty.

2. Children in context of family, community, society

A nurturing family, community and society environment is required for children to thrive. We recognize, respect and strengthen others' legitimate roles in upholding the rights of children and contributing to their well-being. This includes empowering children, families and communities to promote well-being, to hold governments to account in upholding children's rights, and work with partners on projects that support such initiatives. Our child-focused approaches build on community assets that sustain children's well-being.

Families are the primary social units and the basis of civil society. Our work supports families to strengthen their resilience and improve livelihoods, enabling them to provide and care for children. In accord with the Biblical principle of equal worth and dignity of all people, World Vision programs promote transformed lifestyles and relationships between women, men, girls, and boys that enable children's well-being and prevent violence and discrimination.

Please refer to the Partnership policy on Gender and Development, and Partnership standards on Child Protection and Children Deprived of Parental Care.

3. The most vulnerable children

The most vulnerable children are those most affected by extreme deprivation, serious rights violations, abusive or exploitative relationships, and vulnerability to disaster. We prioritise the poorest and most vulnerable girls and boys, and seek to empower them together with their families and communities to improve their well-being. We advocate for safety nets as we seek to increase their resilience. Project assessment, planning, implementation, and monitoring include the most vulnerable

¹ The principles of dignity, equality, non-discrimination, and participation underpin all human rights instruments. We also recognise the principles of best interests of the child, developing capacities, provision and protection that address the particular vulnerabilities of children as laid out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

children and their families. Evaluations address the impact of World Vision programmes with the most vulnerable children.

4. Lifecycle stages

We frame our work around children's lifecycle stages to enhance opportunities to improve cognitive, social, physical and spiritual development. Giving attention to the special needs of girls and boys and to each stage of development from prenatal through infancy (generally, up to two years of age), and early childhood (generally, age 3-5 years), middle childhood (generally, ages 6-11 years) and adolescence (generally, ages 12-18 years) also contributes to breaking intergenerational cycles of poverty in families and communities.
5. Equality and inclusion

Children are citizens and their rights and dignity are upheld equally for girls and boys of all religions and ethnicities, HIV status and for those with differing abilities. These principles are addressed in World Vision's related ministry policies and standards.
6. Inclusion of disabled children and adults

The rights of persons with disabilities may be violated by attitudinal, institutional or environmental barriers that exist in society. We recognise God-given abilities, rather than focusing on individuals' impairments or functional limitations. We work to enable people to be treated with dignity, not pre-judged or portrayed as victims, incompetent, or in need of medical care. Language and images used in communications and in the words, actions and attitudes of World Vision staff uphold the dignity of disabled people. Decisions, principles and goals set for World Vision's programmes and projects apply to adults and children with or without disabilities. Management shall establish Partnership standards for inclusion of persons with disabilities.
7. Children's well-being and Christian spiritual nurture

We respond to God's profound love for children through our relationships and actions, with the desire that children experience fullness of life in any context. Spiritual nurturing is expressed in ways that encourage love for God and others, empower children and build resilience and hope. World Vision's role in children's spiritual nurture is primarily supportive and facilitative, expressed through partnerships as well as through the character and witness to Jesus Christ of our staff, partners and volunteers. World Vision does not proselytize, nor does it use its resources to promote other religions or provide spiritual nurture in other faiths.

Please refer to related Partnership policies on Witness to Jesus Christ, Partnerships with Churches, Interfaith Relations, and partnership principles on Children's Spiritual Nurture.
8. Participation

Children can play a significant role as agents of transformation. We seek to build children's ability to participate, taking into account their age, maturity and context. We uphold children's rights to be listened to, to express their opinions on matters that affect them, to freedom of expression, thought, association and access to information, while respecting the roles and responsibilities of parents and others in authority. When children learn to communicate opinions, take responsibility and make decisions, they are prepared for improved academic performance and good citizenship. We support child-led associations that give children a public voice and contribute to development of leadership skills. Children's participation must be relevant and voluntary, and must never be tokenistic or manipulative.

9. Protection

Child Protection prevents and responds to exploitation, neglect, abuse, and other forms of violence affecting children. Guided by Christ's teaching, we seek to enable fulfillment of children's rights to protection from all forms of abuse and violence within families, schools, institutions and communities. Together with partners, we support prevention of exploitation, harmful traditional practices and violence against children in their family and community; protection of children living in risky situations in communities; and restoration of children who have been abused, neglected or exploited.

Management shall establish Partnership child protection standards for every World Vision office and entity, to ensure fulfillment of its responsibilities regarding protection of children. The standards are intended to enable World Vision to be a safe place for children, making every effort to keep children safe from possible abuse by staff, volunteers, sponsors, partners and other parties affiliated with World Vision. The standards shall also address child protection programming, advocacy, and reporting of child protection incidents. World Vision national entities shall establish child protection policies that are culturally sensitive and legally sound, and consistent with the Partnership child protection standards.

10. Children deprived of parental care

Children grow and thrive best in a family-based environment, not in institutional care. World Vision responds to children deprived of parental care by strengthening families to care for children, reducing risk of separation from their immediate and extended family, strengthening systems that provide alternative community-based options to institutionalization, and supporting transition and deinstitutionalization processes. World Vision will sometimes support interim care facilities that are family-like in their design, in situations where protection is needed whilst longer-term community based care is arranged. World Vision does not support building of facilities for long-term institutions, or programming in long term institutions that perpetuates the institutionalization of children. World Vision does not facilitate adoptions. Management shall establish Partnership standards for every World Vision office and entity, for addressing children deprived of adequate parental care.

11. Measurement of World Vision's contribution to child well-being

The primary measure of impact for all World Vision relief, development and advocacy work is improvement in the well-being of children, especially the most vulnerable. Partnership management shall establish indicators for measurement of World Vision's contribution to child well-being, including summary indicators that will be used with consistency across the partnership to enable regular reporting on World Vision's contribution to children's well-being.

Please refer to the Partnership policy on Programming Effectiveness, and the compendium of indicators for child-well being outcomes.