

Decision Gate Tool

What is this tool?

This tool describes the different approaches to partnering and provides guidance on deciding the appropriate approach or combination of approaches to partnering with groups and organizations in a primary focus area.

objectives

A decision on what partnering approach (or combination of approaches) for World Vision to take for each child well-being priority

product

Decision regarding approach to partnering in the primary focus area

who facilitates

The Development Facilitator or a facilitator from the starter group

who participates

Starter group members (if interested) and potential partners

preparation

List of potential partners, community-determined child well-being priorities, and learning from previous steps

time allocation

May be done in a single meeting or a series of discussions.

note

This decision-making tool suggests criteria for choosing the best pathway for World Vision to approach partnering with local groups and organisations. It also suggests general actions to take with each approach.

Selecting the appropriate approach to partnering is important because, in every context, civil society and the public and private sectors vary from weak to strong, across various dimensions, such as the existence, capacities and strength of individual groups and organizations. The levels of interest in child well-being of potential partners identified in Steps 3-4 also differ, as do their levels of engagement with vulnerable groups.

Different levels of capacity of groups and organisations within a primary focus area make different approaches necessary. The groups and organisations work around one child well-being priority may be at different stages of capacity. Therefore, World Vision might use more than one approach to partnering for each child well-being priority. The Development Facilitator carefully makes decisions of relationship building, organisational capacity building and mentoring that are appropriate to each potential partner.

Activity

The Development Facilitator, interested starter group members, and potential partners together:

- Review list of potential partners
- Discuss the existence, strength, and child focus of potential partners for each child well-being priority
- Decide on appropriate approach (or combination of approaches) to partnering for each child well-being priority.

In discussing potential partners, consider asking the following questions of the groups and organisations already working in each child well-being priority:

- What work are they already doing, and how effective is it?
- What are their maturity, capacity, and reputation?
- How closely are they aligned with the child well-being priority?
- Are they organisationally willing and ready to partner?
- Do they have the potential to mature into a stronger partner role over time?
- Are they safe for children?
- What are the potential benefits and risks of partnership?
- Do they have responsibility for contributing to the priority?
- Does the situation mandate that they are part of the partnership at this time?

Consider using the **Onion** tool to describe each group or organisation, with the following information in each of the four circles of the onion:

- a. Group or organisation's name, along with its aims and objectives with regard to child well-being
- b. Group or organisation's existing work for child well-being
- c. Group or organisation's maturity, strength, and reputation
- d. Group or organisation's willingness to partner, together with other issues and opportunities regarding partnering

Description of approaches

Where local groups and organisations lack the capacity to enter into partnership, the Development Facilitator may decide to first mobilise new groups and organisations or to build the capacity of existing but weak groups and organisations.

Mobilise new groups and organisations.

Criteria: This is done where few groups and organisations exist. This is likely to be the case where healthy civil society has not been able to emerge due to conflict, history or issues with governance. This is also likely where vulnerable children and families are not organised into strong groups and organisations that are ready to partner for child well-being.

Actions: The Development Facilitator works with local community representatives and stakeholders to identify:

- all forms of social capital, and
- all formal and informal civil society groups.

The Development Facilitator:

- mobilises groups and households around specific child well-being issues,
- builds awareness and dialogue, and
- develops interest groups.

This may require community discussions on key issues. It may also require the development of some life skills among certain groups before mobilising CSOs. The mobilisation approach can also be applied to raise up partners in the public and private sectors. Once groups and organisations are mobilised, the process of capacity building begins.

Build capacity of existing but weak groups and organisations.

Criteria: This is done where there are groups and organisations that, with some capacity building and mentoring, can become effective implementers and partners.

Actions: A key part of capacity building is helping partners to be child safe organizations that do not put children at risk. World Vision can share resources and guidelines to help partners take steps to minimize any risks to children. Capacity building also includes helping partners increasingly include the most vulnerable children. Finally, capacity building is essential for the local partner(s) that WV selects to manage aspects of Child Sponsorship.

The **mobilise** and **build capacity** approaches cultivate groups and organisations that over time will partner together effectively to address child well-being priorities and include the most vulnerable children. In cases of severe child well-being needs, World Vision may combine these approaches with an intervention to improve child well-being undertaken with partners.

Where local groups and organisations already have adequate capacity, the Development Facilitator may decide to catalyse new partnerships or to join, strengthen, and support existing partnerships.

Catalyse organisations into partnerships.

Criteria: This is done where partners show adequate capacities, but are not yet active on child well-being priorities, or do not work together. Some organisations have good capacity, but don't yet include the most vulnerable children.

Actions: In the **catalyse** approach, the Development Facilitator and partners begin to create plans to jointly improve and sustain child well-being. Plans include special consideration for how to include and benefit the most vulnerable children, as their situations typically present unique challenges or opportunities. Partners may form various types of partnerships with each other and/or with World Vision – some informal, others formal; some between two parties, others between multiple parties.

Join, strengthen and support existing partnerships.

Criteria: This is done where capable organisations are already working in partnerships for child well-being, and there remains need and space for a clear role by World Vision.

Actions: In the **join, strengthen, and support** approach, the Development Facilitator engages with existing partnerships. Together they revisit and possibly revise their analyses and plans. World Vision may engage as a partnership member, broker, or other support role. In this situation, WV may encourage the participation of groups and organisations from among the most vulnerable groups, even if they are not yet capable partners.



Tips

- **Understand government contribution to child well-being:** Conduct a deeper review of local government plans and obligations to child well-being, the current quality of and access to services, and the budgets that contribute towards the priorities.
- **Consider public and private sectors:** Potential partners don't come only from civil society. Potential partners also come from groups and organisations in the public (government) and private (business) sectors. Government and business partners can bring increased innovation, credibility, and access to resources to the partnership. Furthermore, partnerships that include partners from these sectors are more likely to develop and implement projects that are more comprehensive, holistic and sustainable.
- **Consider the vulnerable:** Engage partners from vulnerable segments of the community. This builds up their capacity and ensures that their voice is heard.