



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

2015-2020

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SUMMARY

Child Participation STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2015-2020

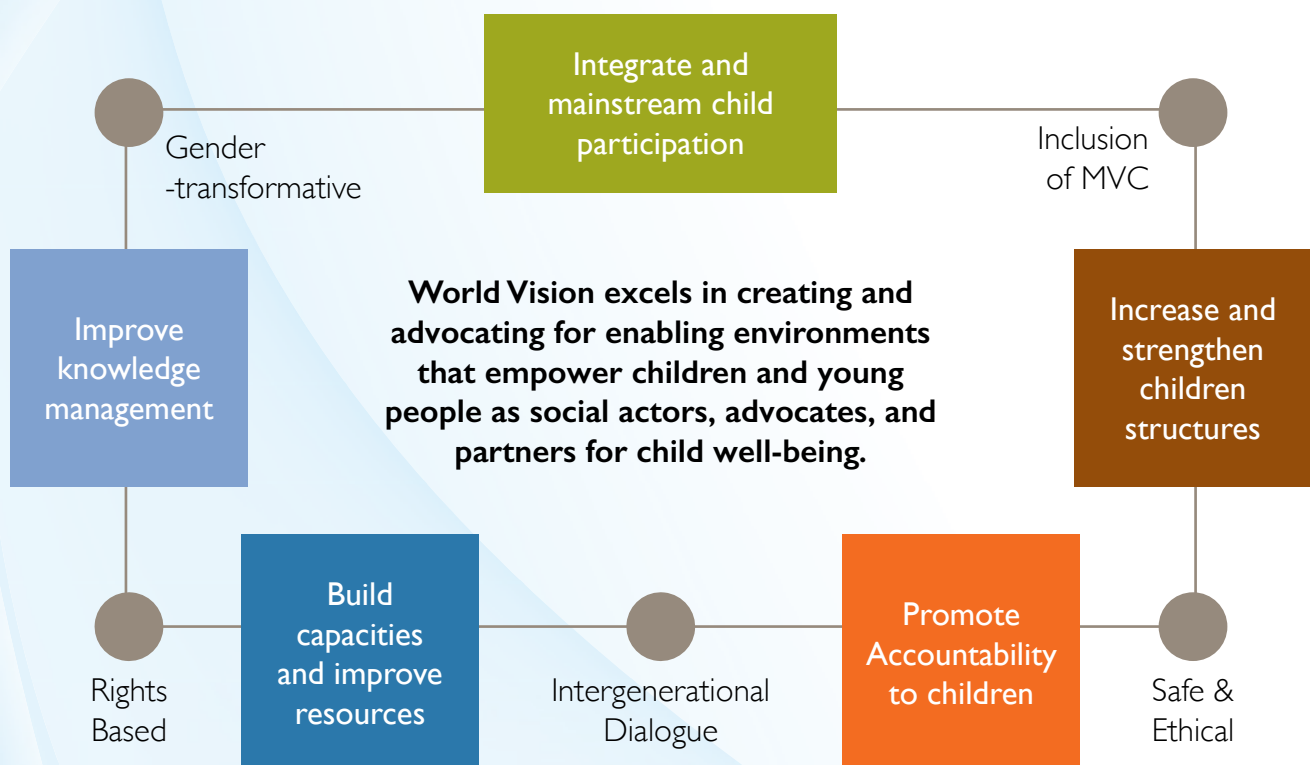
GOAL:

World Vision excels in creating and advocating for enabling environments that empower children and young people as social actors, advocates, and partners for child well-being.

CONTAINS:

5 Priorities and 5 Core Approaches.

Each Priority has specific objectives and deliverables to accomplish in the next 5 years.



This Strategic Direction aims to assist practitioners in prioritising their efforts and developing better practices to ensure that children and young people are recognised as active contributors to their families, communities, and their wider society.

It also intends to position World Vision as a leading organisation to take part in key external and internal processes that present new opportunities for enhanced child participation, namely:

- WW's transition to LEAP 3 and the development of Technical Approaches and Technical Programs
- The Post-2015 Development frame and the global goal of ending extreme poverty by 2030
- The Sustainable Development Goals and the new impetus to have young people as partners in the implementation of the SDGs



INTRODUCTION

In the last 3 years World Vision has made significant advancements in the area of children and young people's participation. Internally, World Vision has strengthened guidance and technical support to staff members who work directly with children, increased board members' and senior-level staff's commitment to children's participation, and developed good practices and proven tools. Externally, the world has progressed in its ability and desire to include the voices of children in global decisions. The unprecedented level of children's voices in the lead-up to the Sustainable Development Goals and the forthcoming Post-2015 Development Agenda will pave the way for young people's participation over the next 15 years. In general, children and young people's participation is increasingly being considered as a proven approach to development and poverty reduction.

“My life has changed drastically because a new factor was added, which is leadership, so I had to attend meetings, I had to prepare, come up with new proposals, see the problems at my school and in the street, I had to pay more attention to my social surroundings”. Child in focus group discussion, Bolivia

Globally, the growing interest of academia and researchers in producing resources and studies on children and young people's participation has received more wide-spread recognition due to the exponential impact this field has on good governance, social accountability and citizen participation. Over the last decade, many theoretical positions and models have been developed that inform our understanding of children and young people, and their role in public decision-making, especially concerning public and collective participation in decision-making. Furthermore, major multilateral organisations, United Nations agencies and large international non-governmental organisations have developed children and young people's participation strategies in order to include young people within their decision-making processes in a meaningful, ethical and effective way.

Child participation is one of the core principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which asserts that children and young people have the right to freely express their views and that there is an obligation to listen to children's views and facilitate their participation in all matters affecting them within the family, schools, local communities, public services, institutions, government policy, and judicial procedures.

WorldVision believes that children can play a significant role as agents of transformation with the ability to engage in decision-making processes, in accordance with their evolving capacities and gradually increasing autonomy. When children learn to communicate opinions, take responsibility and make decisions, they develop a sense of belonging, justice, responsibility and solidarity.

WorldVision's work in the field of children and young people's participation reflects its International Board's endorsement of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, implying organisational support for the rights of children to be listened to; to express their opinions on matters that affect them; to freedom of expression, thought, association and access to information; all the while respecting the roles and responsibilities of parents and others in authority.

"I really learnt the expression we have in Albania, that if we are together, we are stronger and age is not important. Our group had a mix of ages and a mix of girls and boys. Put the minds of boys and girls together and you will get a very good solution". Young person from Albania

WorldVision has learned that children and young people need care and protection but also trust from adults in order to actively engage and take part in contributing to their own well-being. The fact of participation is an imperative for them to reach their full potential and experience the fullness of life. This Strategic Direction aims to assist practitioners in prioritising their efforts and developing better practices to ensure that children and young people are recognised as actors who have agency and are active contributors to their families and communities. As World Vision grows in its understanding and practice of participation and representative voice, we will continue refining this Strategic Direction to improve our ways of working, to define new goals, and to overcome new challenges in children and young people's participation.

EXTERNAL LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

World Vision commissioned an external landscape assessment on children and young people's participation. Based on the literature review of theories and practices, several general and specific recommendations were developed to contribute to the debate and strategic decisions around child participation¹.

The recommendations for ways forward for international non-governmental organisations and NGOs working on children and young people's participation were:

- Promoting a human rights-based approach.
- Supporting cultural and value shifts.
- Implementing children's participation in the different programmes and sectors, thereby increasing support for children's active citizenship rights and engagement in advocacy work.
- Encouraging accountability and showing impacts on children's participation.
- Advocating for children and young people's participation.
- Fostering collaborative efforts amongst child-focused agencies.

The recommendations for ways forward for regional and country-level actors were:

- Institutionalising the participation of children and young people.
- Working with adults who are engaged with children and young people.
- Involving children and young people, including the most marginalised, at different decision-making levels.
- Advocating for children and young people's participation at the government level.

1. Find the full report at: <http://www.wvi.org/child-participation/publication/research-study-what-next-ways-forward-children%E2%80%99s-and-young-people%E2%80%99s>



“Being able to talk to authorities has been sort of difficult, they gave us little tips in a training session but it was hard at first. But once we were inside, we started getting into it more and more, and they stopped saying, ‘...yeah sure, yeah come in...’—now they say, ‘Come on in guys we want to talk to you; what ideas do you have?’” Child participant in a focal group discussion, Camiri, Bolivia

PROCESS OF FORMING THE STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Strategic Direction is the result of a comprehensive review of the current child participation models and practices in community development programmes, both internally and externally. The process involved extensive consultations with over 50 World Vision staff members from every level of the organisation, as well as a review of the external landscape of child participation made with a consultant. The priorities, objectives, and deliverables were formed and agreed upon by these contributors who will also be involved in the Strategic Direction’s implementation. This process also included the analysis of the links between policy, practice and theory in order to strengthen children and young people’s participation from a development, disaster management and advocacy perspective. A diagram illustrating the process of forming this Strategic Direction in the Appendix (section 7.4).

NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

Throughout the strategy, ‘children and young people’ is typically used, following young people’s preference in some countries to be referred to as ‘youth’ or ‘young people’ rather than ‘children’. Broadly speaking, ‘children and young people’ refers to children up to the age of 18, following the definition according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. As a subcategory of children, young people can be defined as children aged 15–18. Another age overlap issue is the definition of ‘adolescents’, which refers to young people, aged 12–18. The definition of children as people under the age of 18 can sometimes clash with other definitions of youth, as the United Nations defines ‘youth’, as people between the ages of 15 and 24, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States.

More definitions can be found in Appendix 7.1.



STRATEGIC DIRECTION GOAL

Based on this extensive landscaping and stock-taking process, an overarching goal statement was formed for the Strategic Direction: “World Vision excels in creating and advocating for enabling environments that empower children and young people as social actors, advocates, and partners for child well-being”. This goal statement encompasses the direction of our work in children and young people’s participation. Further explanation of each part of this goal statement is provided below.

1- CREATING AND ADVOCATING FOR ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS

An enabling environment for participation is one where the voices, opinions, and perspectives of young people are sought, listened to, and respected at all levels of society. We understand World Vision’s role as one that works with and empowers local partners and community members to create an environment where children’s participation rights are realised in every aspect of their lives. This includes advocating for specific policies that encourage children’s views and opinions to be heard in local, national, and international decision-making spaces.

2- EMPOWER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

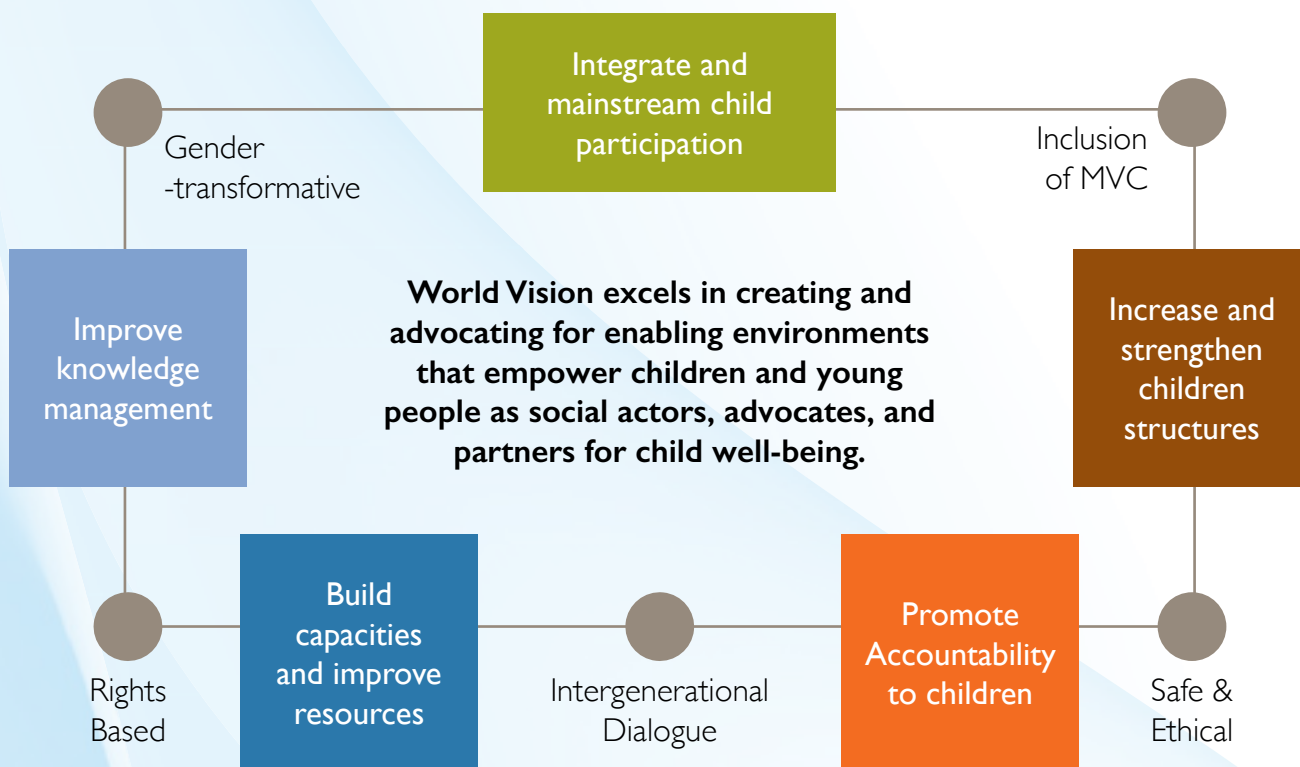
What do we want these enabling environments to do? We don’t want to stop at just creating a space for participation. An essential component is ensuring that children and young people have the skills and capacities to take action on issues that are important to them and that they are empowered with the confidence and capability to claim their rights in a safe and meaningful way.

3- AS SOCIAL ACTORS, ADVOCATES, AND PARTNERS FOR CHILD WELL-BEING

In all of World Vision’s efforts, we hope to empower children and young people to become a) social actors who are involved in the decisions about their communities and their lives, b) advocates who use their voice effectively on behalf of their peers, and c) partners in pursuing child well-being.



**GRAPH I:
GOAL, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES
AND APPROACHES**





CONTRIBUTION TO CHILD WELL-BEING ASPIRATIONS, OUTCOMES, AND TARGET 1

The Strategic Direction contributes to World Vision’s Child Well-Being Aspirations, especially the one stating that “children are cared for, protected and participating” within their communities. While children and young people’s participation is a critical part of achieving all of the Child Well-Being Outcomes, the Strategic Direction is particularly rooted in three:

- 1. Children are respected participants in decisions that affect their lives**
- 2. Children enjoy positive relationships with peers, family, and community members**
- 3. Children have hopes and visions for the future**

This Strategic Direction reinforces the foundational principles of the Child Well-Being Aspirations that state that children and young people are citizens and their rights and dignity are upheld, including girls and boys of all religions and ethnicities, any health status, and those with disabilities. Children and young people’s participation is a critical element to achieve effective and sustainable outcomes across all target areas, with a specific focus on Target 1.

The Strategic Direction also intentionally incorporates specific deliverables in response to the five children and young people recommendations from the 2013 Triennial Council:

- Shared strategies so services do not become redundant,
- Full representation with community members,
- Establishing trust for the utilisation of resources,
- Adults as consultants instead of ‘managers’,
- Including children in National Office board meetings and governance.

More information on each of the recommendations can be found in Appendix 7.6.



PRIORITIES & OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Strategic Direction contains five priorities and accompanying objectives that outline key areas of focus for the next five years in order to reach the goal statement. These areas each have a set of deliverables—formed largely through the internal and external landscaping process—which outline the resources, actions, and processes needed to achieve each priority and objective. The full set of deliverables can be found in Section 6 and the Strategic Direction Work Plan Document.

“In my opinion, there are some problems regarding child participation. First of all, there are a lot of youth and children that still don’t know about their right to participate. Secondly, there are still a lot of youth organisations that don’t have recognition from their governments, and so these governments tend to ignore our voices, especially children and young people who are marginalised. Thirdly, we don’t know whether our voices are being considered or not”.

Irwa, age 17, Indonesia

**GRAPH 2:
PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES**

INTEGRATE AND MAINSTREAM CHILD PARTICIPATION

Specific actions are taken to integrate and mainstream child participation in WV's work in development, advocacy, and disaster management.

INCREASE AND STRENGTHEN CHILDREN STRUCTURES

Children structures, associations, and networks are promoted, equipped, and strengthened, especially those which are child-led.

IMPROVE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Staff members across the partnership have access to information, opportunities for professional development, action research and learning.

BUILD CAPACITIES AND IMPROVE RESOURCES

Cutting-edge child participation resources, tools and guidance are relevant, easily accessible and utilised by staff members, partners, children and young people.

PROMOTE ACCOUNTABILITY TO CHILDREN

Children and young people have access to information and to safe and effective mechanisms to hold to account WV, governments, duty-bearers, and other key stakeholders at the community, national and international level.



PRIORITY 1:

Integrate and mainstream children and young people's participation

Objective: Specific actions are taken to integrate and mainstream children and young people's participation in WV's work in development, advocacy, and disaster management.

During the process of forming the Strategic Direction, the need to ensure that children and young people's participation is mainstreamed into every line of ministry and sector area was identified by key informants of the advisory group as well as through the external landscape report. In many cases, participation is largely disconnected from an office's efforts in sector areas such as health, water and sanitation, Sponsorship, and education. Key contributors noted the lack of an integrated approach between participation, protection, education, life-skills development, and other sector areas that had programming options for children



and young people groups. Mainstreaming participation would mean intentional efforts to place children and young people's participation as a key component to achieve each sector's goals and outcomes. It would mean integrating participation into each sector's technical approaches, technical programmes, and DME processes for all three lines of ministry.

Mainstreaming children and young people's participation is essential because of the cross-cutting nature of participation. By including children and young people's voices and opinions in the decision-making processes of every sector, our programmes, advocacy, and disaster-management work will be more effective, relevant to our target beneficiaries, and sustainable in the long-term. This Priority is deeply connected to the overarching goal of the Strategic Direction, since an enabling environment that empowers children and young people is impossible if children's voices are not respected and listened to in all areas affecting their lives.

To accomplish this Priority, several key deliverables have been identified that will focus our efforts around the following:

- Increasing organisational will for children and young people's participation within World Vision,
- Embedding participation in the different thematic areas/sectors of World Vision,
- Leveraging Sponsorship as a platform to mainstream participation in sponsorship-funded ADPs,
- Providing clear guidance on how to incorporate participation into the new LEAP 3 technical approach and programme processes,
- Strengthening the understanding and practice of measuring and monitoring children and young people's participation.

“For me it is very important to represent the children from my village and to convey what they need and the activities they want to have. I am very interested in meeting children from other cultures and ethnicities and to exchange the things that we have in common. I have learned a lot in the training sessions and I never thought that I would be able to do it. [...] I feel very valued and in a place where everyone can give an opinion and be listened to”. Aline, age 15, Lebanon

PRIORITY 2:

Increase and strengthen children and young people structures

Objective: Children and young people structures, associations, and networks are promoted, equipped, and strengthened, especially those which are child-led.

This Strategic Direction has identified strengthening children and young people structures as a key platform for meaningful children and young people's participation. This approach is consistent with the findings of the internal landscape assessment that showed that there is a strong, growing presence of children and young people's clubs, parliaments, groups, and networks at the community level (especially those which are child-led).



This Strategic Direction promotes a shift away from taking ownership over children's groups towards an approach that strengthens the active participation of children and young people in the formulation, preparation, implementation and follow-up of their groups or associations. This approach entails that World Vision staff members act as facilitators and enablers rather than as group managers. Furthermore, the role of staff members should not be limited to facilitating children's groups; their role should really be to empower children to self-organise, to lead their own initiatives and to become more autonomous and self-determined. This is a gradual process that involves intergenerational dialogue and partnership between children and adults, especially with World Vision, who will continue supporting children's groups within an interdependent framework and with a mind to innovative child-adult partnerships.

This Strategic Direction does not indicate any specific type of structure for children and young people; children and young people are free to choose the structures that they consider relevant for their own contexts such as clubs, councils, parliaments, committees, associations, or even virtual forms of connecting to one another. These structures, if created well, can give children and young people a public voice and also contribute to the development of their leadership skills, autonomy and confidence.

“We have learnt that we can influence policy formulation at the local level if we are organised and have enough information on the topics that we want to change”. Young person from Sierra Leone

In terms of advocacy work, this child-led approach implies that children and young people have the right to be involved in self-organised advocacy as well as in World Vision's own process of policy influence, campaigns, and determining advocacy priorities and positions. When children and young people are provided with tools, skills and knowledge they become agents of change in their communities and countries, and they can lead successful advocacy initiatives at the community or national level that promote justice and equality. This can be accomplished by empowering and supporting children and young people, which means that World Vision's role can gradually move away from initiating these actions with young people and towards empowering and supporting them to lead on their own.

To accomplish this Priority, several key deliverables have been identified that will focus our efforts around the following:

- Developing an end-to-end guidance approach for effective children and young people “collective spaces”,
- Developing guidance to foster children and young people networks and strengthen local to national links to civil society organisations (adult or child-led),
- Producing a concept for a virtual children and young people internet-based group for connecting children and young people networks,
- Building learning and best practice approaches on successful existing children and young people spaces from across national offices and regions.

PRIORITY 3:

Promote accountability to children and young people

Objective: Children and young people have access to information and to safe and effective mechanisms to hold to account WV, governments, duty-bearers, and other key stakeholders at the community, national and international level.

One important element of meaningful participation for children and young people is ensuring that there are appropriate mechanisms for young people to hold those who have the responsibility for improving children's lives to account. The external landscape report revealed this as a major weakness in participation efforts across the world. Many times, organisations tend to focus more on participation activities and events rather than on participation's role in systematically keeping community and national leaders accountable to what is promised or intended for child well-being. When children and young people advocate for certain policies or decisions, one of the main barriers in accomplishing their goals is the lack of accountability and follow-up after children's efforts on campaigns, social media, events, consultations, etc. have come to a close.

This fourth Priority intends to begin closing this gap in children and young people's participation practice. It is not enough to only listen to children's voices—we need to respond to their views and make sure that they have a way to hold us and other stakeholders accountable. Children and young people's participation helps to build accountability and promote good governance within our organisation and at the community and national level.

World Vision seeks to identify and strengthen creative ways to ensure children and young people's participation in social accountability and good governance. World Vision also supports the 'child friendly cities' or 'child friendly local governance' initiatives as promising programmes undertaken in many countries to engage children and young people in decision-making on matters affecting them. An intrinsic component of accountability is participation, so our approach should be to create enabling environments for children and young people's voices to be heard. This approach requires that we empower children and young people to hold others to account, in order to provide them with the opportunity and space to influence relevant decisions affecting their lives.

Learning from the field has shown that the role of children and young people in social accountability and good governance is stronger when they are organised into formal or informal structures where their voices are collective rather than individual. Organised groups of children have a better impact on articulating their needs and concerns, mobilising for change, and monitoring the performance of government institutions.

A prime example of this within our own organisation is following up on the five recommendations that children and young people gave to the 2013 Triennial Council. These statements reflect what children and young people hope for regarding their participation and partnership with World Vision. Ensuring that there is an appropriate mechanism that they can use to show progress on the recommendations and keep us accountable to them is an important deliverable within the Strategic Direction.

By giving them the opportunity and space to keep us accountable, we are communicating that we value their opinions and desire to engage with them continually—not just at a special event or activity.

To accomplish this Priority, several key deliverables have been identified that will focus our efforts around the following:

- Research into what makes accountability mechanisms meaningful and useful for children and young people,
- Child-friendly tools to help children keep governments accountable, especially in regards to the forthcoming Post-2015 agenda,
- Ensuring appropriate follow-up and progress on the five Triennial Council recommendations,
- Increased alternative reporting to the Universal Periodic Review and the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

“I think it is very important for us to participate in an international process such as the post-2015. This is the opportunity that we needed to speak up. Today we expressed our opinions about poverty, violence and discrimination. I made my voice heard and I was able to talk on behalf of the marginalised, poor and disadvantaged black young people from the slums”. Caroline, age 21, Brazil

PRIORITY 4:

Build capacities and improve resources

Objective: Cutting-edge children and young people's participation resources, tools and guidance are relevant, easily accessible and utilised by staff members, partners, children and young people.

This Strategic Direction has identified the development of resources, tools and capacity building as an important factor for meaningful children and young people's participation. There is an increasing need to transform traditional views of children and young people by recognising that they themselves are holders of their own rights. In order to achieve this, World Vision will work to strengthen the learning and development of staff members, partners and community members to challenge their own long-established attitudes that discourage the participation of children and young people based on the belief that they are not ready to make choices on important matters in their lives.

World Vision is aware that the only way that this Strategic Direction can succeed is by providing staff members with the core competencies in terms of the knowledge and attitudes required to work with children and young people from an empowering perspective. Staff members are called on to facilitate participative processes with children and young people, to support them in engaging with adults in order to influence decision makers and enter into an intergenerational dialogue.

Part of the Strategic Direction involves the development of tools and resources to assist staff in embracing these new approaches. Likewise, it addresses the need for learning and development programmes to equip staff members with the skills and tools needed in order to mentor and empower children and young people. Part of this should include the transferring of knowledge from staff members to local partners to ensure the sustainability of their work. Learning programmes should also be developed for children and young people in order to build their ability to express their own aspirations and experiences, and also through technical skills, knowledge and competencies so that they are meaningfully equipped to participate in society.

To accomplish this Priority, several key deliverables have been identified that will focus our efforts around the following:

- Promoting and monitoring the use of the WV Guidelines for Child Participation,
- Developing guidance materials for intergenerational dialogue between adults, children,
- Developing coaching programmes, training, and learning materials for staff to change traditional adult attitudes toward children and young people's participation, including an e-learning module on children and young people's participation
- Developing or adapting methodologies and approaches to children and young people's participation for fragile, conflict-affected, and emergency settings,
- Developing guidance materials for the engagement of children and young people in advocacy and policy work,
- Identifying a pool of qualified children and young people's participation subject matter experts on the Global Technical Resource Network (GTRN).



PRIORITY 5:

Improve knowledge management

Objective: Staff members across the partnership have access to information, opportunities for professional development, action research and learning.

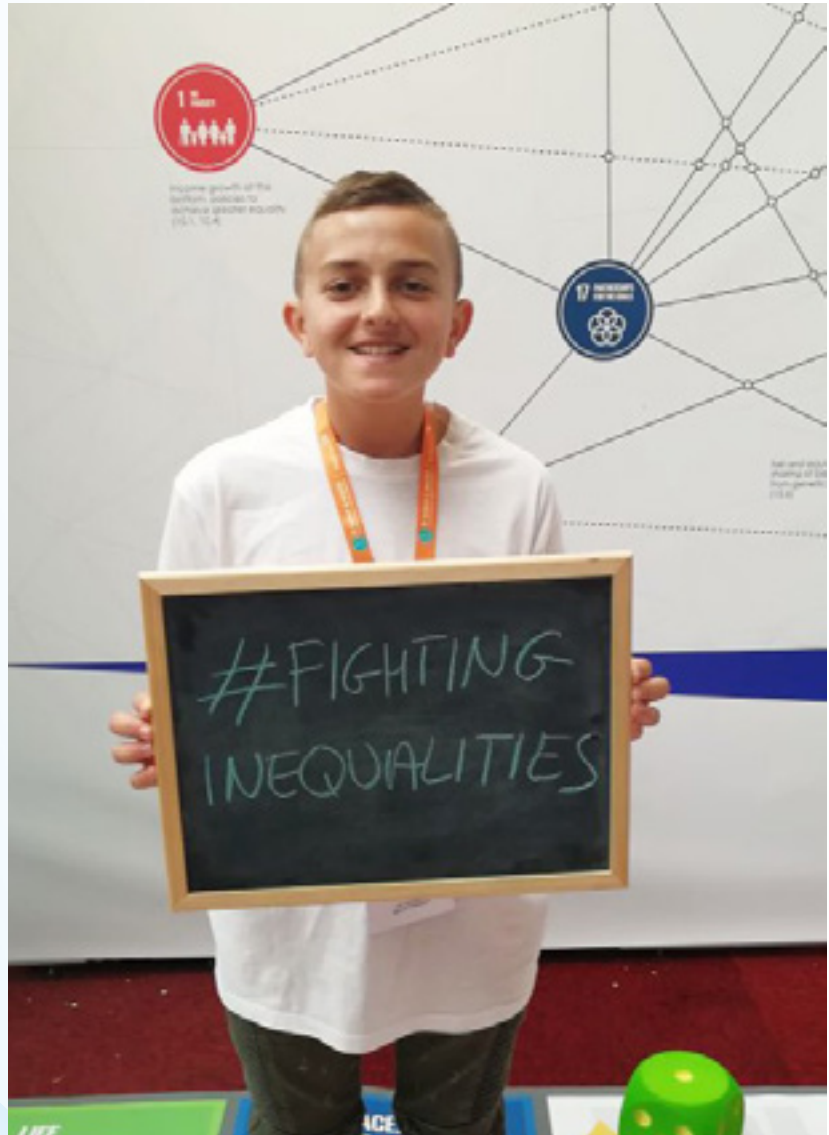
Knowledge management is the process of capturing, developing, sharing, and effectively using organisational knowledge about a certain topic or sector area. It refers to a cross-disciplinary approach to achieving organisational objectives by making the best use of knowledge. While most people think of knowledge management as maintaining a database of information, it is really about creating a culture where staff members within an organisation feel confident collecting/documenting best practices, pursuing and experimenting with new approaches, and connecting with one another to improve work processes in a specific discipline.

If World Vision is to be an organisation that stays abreast of the latest trends, approaches, and research in children and young people's participation, we need to have effective knowledge management in the form of web-based platforms, formal and informal mentoring and training, and spaces, both physical and virtual, to share, discover, and contribute to new learning. In the internal landscaping process, key informants cited a need for a common platform for frontline staff members who are working directly with children and young people to share and receive information. This is tied to the need to build staff capacity in participation, as effective knowledge management can contribute to strengthening individual and group planning/practice around engaging and empowering children and young people. Also, opportunities for participation in global research around participation are limited in part due to the currently scattered and piecemeal ways that our organisation identifies good practice.

To respond to these needs, a new Child Participation and Rights Community of Practice is being formed, building on the success of the Child Rights Network.

Effective knowledge management is a critical success factor in achieving the Strategic Direction's goal. To accomplish this Priority, several key deliverables have been identified that will focus our efforts around the following:

- Establishing a thriving new CoP space for children and young people's participation, empowerment, and rights,
- Capturing, documenting and sharing promising and innovative practices in working with children and young people,
- Building evidence and collaboration in global research with other child-focused agencies around children and young people's participation.

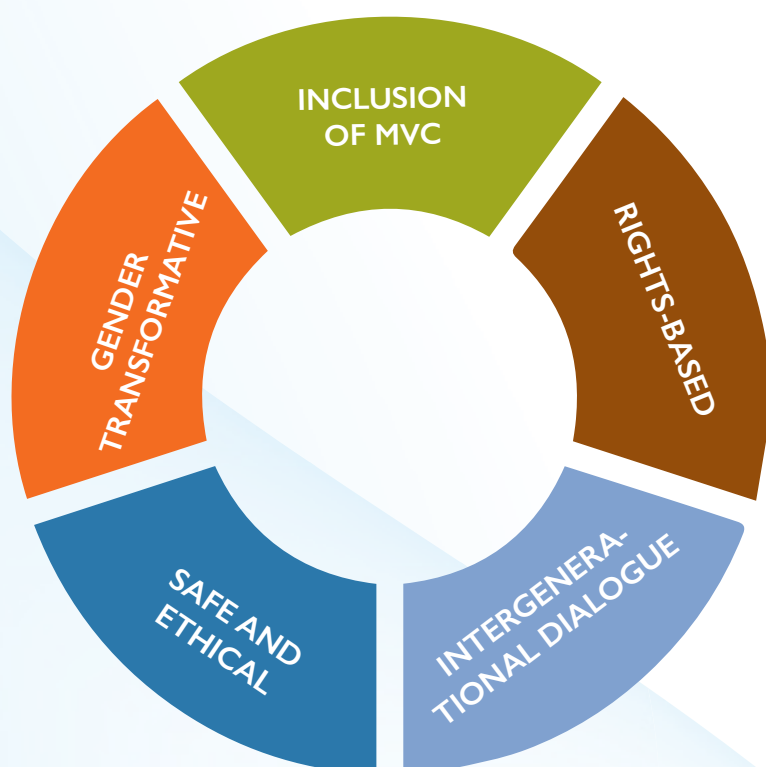




CORE APPROACHES TO THE STRATEGIC DIRECTION

World Vision seeks to embody several core approaches in the way that we do our work in children and young people's participation. The following approaches should be reflected when implementing the goal, priorities, objectives, and deliverables of the Strategic Direction.

**GRAPH 3:
CORE APPROACHES TO THE
STRATEGIC DIRECTION**





INCLUSION OF THE MOST VULNERABLE

KEY DOCUMENTS AND USEFUL RESOURCES

Brief Overview of Development Programmes Approach, World Vision International

Good Practices Guide for Putting WV's Development Programmes into Action, World Vision International

WorldVision's ministry goal is the "sustained well-being of children within families and communities, especially the most vulnerable". This special focus necessitates an approach that clearly prioritises the inclusion and impact of those who experience extreme factors of vulnerability. These factors include:

- Extreme deprivation,
- Abuse or exploitative relationships,
- Serious discrimination,
- Catastrophic or disaster situations.

It is important to note that just because a child experiences one of these factors does not automatically mean that he or she is among the most vulnerable. Vulnerability is not a permanent state of being; rather, there

are successive stages and factors that can increase or decrease vulnerability. The more vulnerability factors that a child experiences, or the longer they experience those factors, the more vulnerable they become.

Our special focus on the most vulnerable demands that all of our resources, technical guidance, approaches, and programmes be clearly tailored toward the specific needs and situations of the most vulnerable children, including children with disabilities. This does not mean that we exclude less vulnerable children in favour of the most vulnerable, but rather that we take the necessary steps to ensure that the most vulnerable are always identified, included, and impacted by our development, advocacy, and disaster-management work. Facilitating spaces for participation is a positive way to address vulnerabilities as children and young people boost their self-esteem, and develop levels of resiliency and spiritual strength.

Reflection questions that each programme or project area should consider when thinking about how to identify, include, and impact the most vulnerable are provide in Appendix 7.5.



RIGHTS-BASED

KEY DOCUMENTS AND USEFUL RESOURCES

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm

Committee on the Rights of the Child (2009). "General Comment No. 12: The right of the child to be heard", Geneva: UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Getting it right for children: A practitioner's guide to child rights programming (2007). Save the Children.

This Strategic Direction promotes a child-rights-based approach that recognises children and young people as stakeholders in society, as one group amongst others in decision-making. World Vision's endorsement of the Convention on the Rights of the Child implies that its policies and programmes need to be developed in accordance with the principles outlined in the Convention: participation, non-discrimination, best interest of the child and the right to life, survival and development. Promoting a rights-based approach means that World Vision engages more actively with decision makers in the broader socio-economic context in which the organisation operates, so that they can build their capacity to fulfil the rights promised to children in the CRC. It also means increasing the capacity of communities and children to advocate for their rights and the well-being of others, thereby enhancing World Vision's work of community empowerment for social accountability.

This Strategic Direction aims to strengthen WV's use of rights-based approaches within its development programme approach and policy work. This serves to embody the foundational principles of the Child Well-Being Aspirations and Outcomes, where strategies and programming on children and young people's participation aim to fulfil their rights and get them actively engaged in the decision-making process. In line with this approach, the Strategic Direction seeks to equip children and young people with tools, knowledge and skills needed in order to be involved in decision-making processes on issues that affect them.



INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE

KEY DOCUMENTS AND USEFUL RESOURCES

Wyness, M. G. (2013). "Children's participation and intergenerational dialogue: Bringing adults back into the analysis".

Mannion, G. (2010). "After participation: The sociospatial performance of intergenerational becoming".

Intergenerational dialogue is an effective approach to empower children and young people, and to create a platform for dialogue between the members of younger and older generations. Intergenerational dialogue refers to the intentional gathering of children and adults for the purpose of collaborating, gaining insight and addressing issues of conflict, division and communication between different generations.

This Strategic Direction encourages intergenerational dialogue and promotes the notion that children and young people's participation is everyone's responsibility, including parents, children, caregivers, government officials, religious leaders and community members. World Vision believes that facilitating children and young people's participation

is an opportunity to strengthen the natural networks of intergenerational relationships in communities, and to support interdependent relationships based on mutual trust and reciprocity. Indeed, World Vision has already taken important steps in this direction. For example, the Triennial Council of 2013 was a historic milestone which started at the national level, was built up at regional forums and resulted in new and positive engagement in rich intergenerational dialogue.

At the same time, the Strategic Direction has also placed great emphasis on children's agency, competence and the development of more autonomous spaces for children and young people. However, this approach does not encourage construing children and young people as individuals who are separate from families and communities, or pushing adults to the margins of children's lives. On the contrary, World Vision affirms the importance of intergenerational dialogue where adult-child relationships are strong and characterised by shared common interests and goals. This is consistent with CRC General Comment 12, which states that participation includes information-sharing and dialogue between children and adults based on mutual respect. In this way children can learn how their views and those of adults are taken into account and shape the outcome of such processes.

"I learned how youth's voices can be heard and accommodated. Right now, we might ask how it is possible for children and young people's voices to be heard by our government. Of course, at this event, I am reminded that all countries must want to look good and get appreciation at the international level. So, if our voices are unheard by the local or national government, there's always a way to raise it to the global level". Restanti, age 16, Indonesia



SAFE AND ETHICAL

KEY DOCUMENTS AND USEFUL RESOURCES

Child Protection Risk Assessment for Child Participation Activities, World Vision International.

Child Protection Strategy, World Vision International.

Preventing and Responding to Distress in Child Participation Activities and Consultation with Children, World Vision International.

World Vision strives to create safe places for children and to promote child protection in communities. World Vision must ensure, through establishing clear procedures, that children will not be put at risk of harm through World Vision programmes or interventions.

This Strategic Direction embraces a child protection approach to ensure the safe participation of children and young people. Based on this approach, all the World Vision offices are encouraged to conduct a “Child Protection Risk Assessment for Child Participation Activities”. This risk assessment is intended to help World Vision staff consider, prepare for, and protect children from any potential physical, social, or emotional harm that may arise due to a World Vision child participation activity or project. This assessment should be completed prior to engaging in any activities that include significant children and young people’s participation.

The key principles in ensuring safe children and young people’s participation are: (1) risk for children and young people’s participation must always be assessed in relation to context, with special attention given to fragile contexts; and (2) the principle of participation (Article 12, CRC) must be balanced with the right to life, survival and development (Article 6, CRC). It is also critical that ethical principles be applied throughout the entire process of children and young people’s participation. The key actions to ensure ethical participation throughout the entire process, from beginning to end, are:

- Ensuring that the best interest of every children and young people is the paramount and overarching principle for all engagement with them,
- Ensuring that the best interests of the child are respected and protected as the top priority,
- Making sure children and young people are given relevant information on the activities, and that this information is appropriate to their age and level of education,
- Ensuring that children make an informed decision on whether to participate or not,
- Ensuring that children, parents or caregivers give informed consent.



GENDER- TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH

KEY DOCUMENTS AND USEFUL RESOURCES

Key Gender Questions for all WV programmes
<http://www.worldvision.org/our-impact/gender>
<http://www.womenthrive.org/>

World Vision has endorsed the Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 2 of which sets forth the principle of non-discrimination, whereby all rights must be respected without discrimination of any kind, including gender-based discrimination. However, experiences from the field have shown that boys and girls continue to be treated differently as a result of social norms that define their roles and responsibilities in society.

“I am very happy today because our sisters will now continue in school rather than get married, which will help them in the future”. Boy from Tihun, Sierra Leone

World Vision affirms the inherent worth and dignity of women, men, boys and girls, who each have valuable gifts and the potential to contribute to the well-being of their families and communities. In our work in children and young people’s participation, we seek to reinforce the value of both girls’ and boys’ voices, opinions, and perspectives in decision-making processes at all levels of society.

This Strategic Direction endorses the approach of moving away from a representational concept of gender (e.g. equality of participation, equal access to school, equal numbers of boys and girls trained, etc.) to one that ensures equitable outcomes. In our work with children and young people, we strive for fair and impartial representation of both boys and girls in groups, events, and programmes. When building the capacity of children and young people structures, we seek to communicate the importance of both boys’ and girls’ abilities, and to engage both boys and girls to work for child well-being and the elimination of harmful traditional practices that affect both genders.

In order to address gender inequalities in children and young people’s participation, World Vision disaggregates data by sex and age and analyses social norms that create and reinforce gender inequalities and vulnerabilities. Reflection questions for a gender analysis that each project should ask are included in Appendix 7.5.

World Vision believes that an ‘open policy’ is not enough, as many boys and girls will need to be intentionally encouraged through specific activities and inclusive approaches. World Vision staff members are called upon to develop creative solutions to barriers to participation, in order to encourage all boys and girls to be included. World Vision’s guidance documents and project models should equip staff members to include and value the voices of both girls and boys alike.

“I belong to the school council at my school—Lufwanyama Boarding Secondary School. As a school council, we have tried our level best to engage school management in addressing issues that affect us as pupils. This has been done through meaningful dialogue in order to improve the delivery of quality services at our learning institution. This has made us participate in decision-making as pupils/children and also strengthened relationships between pupils and teachers”. Maruba, age 13, Zambia.

APPENDIXES

KEY DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

Adolescent: World Vision defines adolescents as young people aged 12 -18 years.

Advocacy: Advocacy is an approach that seeks to address the structural and systemic causes of poverty by changing policies, systems, practices and attitudes that perpetuate inequality and deny justice and human rights. Advocacy is a ministry of influence using persuasion, dialogue and reason to obtain change. It can be carried out with those affected by poverty and injustice, for those affected or by those affected.

Agency: Agency is the capacity of individuals to act independently by both shaping their own lives, and to influence their social contexts.

Child: World Vision defines child as every human being below the age of eighteen years as stated in Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Child Empowerment: Child empowerment approach is an attitudinal, structural, and cultural process whereby children and young people gain the ability, authority, and agency to make decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people, including children and adults. (Adapted from Vavrus, & Fletcher Guide to social change led by and with young people. 2006)

Child Participation: Child participation is when children under 18 years of age contribute to decisions and take action on issues that affect their lives. This is best done through empowering children and nurturing positive relationships between children, adults, and communities based on mutual respect and partnership at familial, local, national, and international levels. (WorldVision International, 2012)

Child rights-based approach: A rights-based approach sees the child in the context of family, community, the State and other social structures. The balance between protecting children's right to participate directly in decisions that affect them, and holding children accountable for their own exercise of rights, shifts by age and stages of personal development, not by status. (Here We Stand: World Vision and Child Rights. 2nd edition)

Citizenship: Citizenship represents the collection of rights and obligations that define the members of a community. All children are born with civil, political and economic rights. These rights enable them to practice their citizenship- at least to some extent. (Children as Active Citizens, Inter-Agency Working Group on Children's Participation, 2008).

Competency: Competency is when the child is mature enough to make decisions,

Consultation v/s participation: Consultation is 'seeking views' and participation is 'the direct involvement of children in decision-making'

Ethical participation: Children's participation is transparent, honest, accountable and with equality of opportunity. (Getting it Right for Children, Save the Children, 2007)

Evolving capacities: Evolving capacities are the development of children's capacity to form a view that is determined by information, experience, environment, and social and cultural expectations. (CRC General Comment 12)

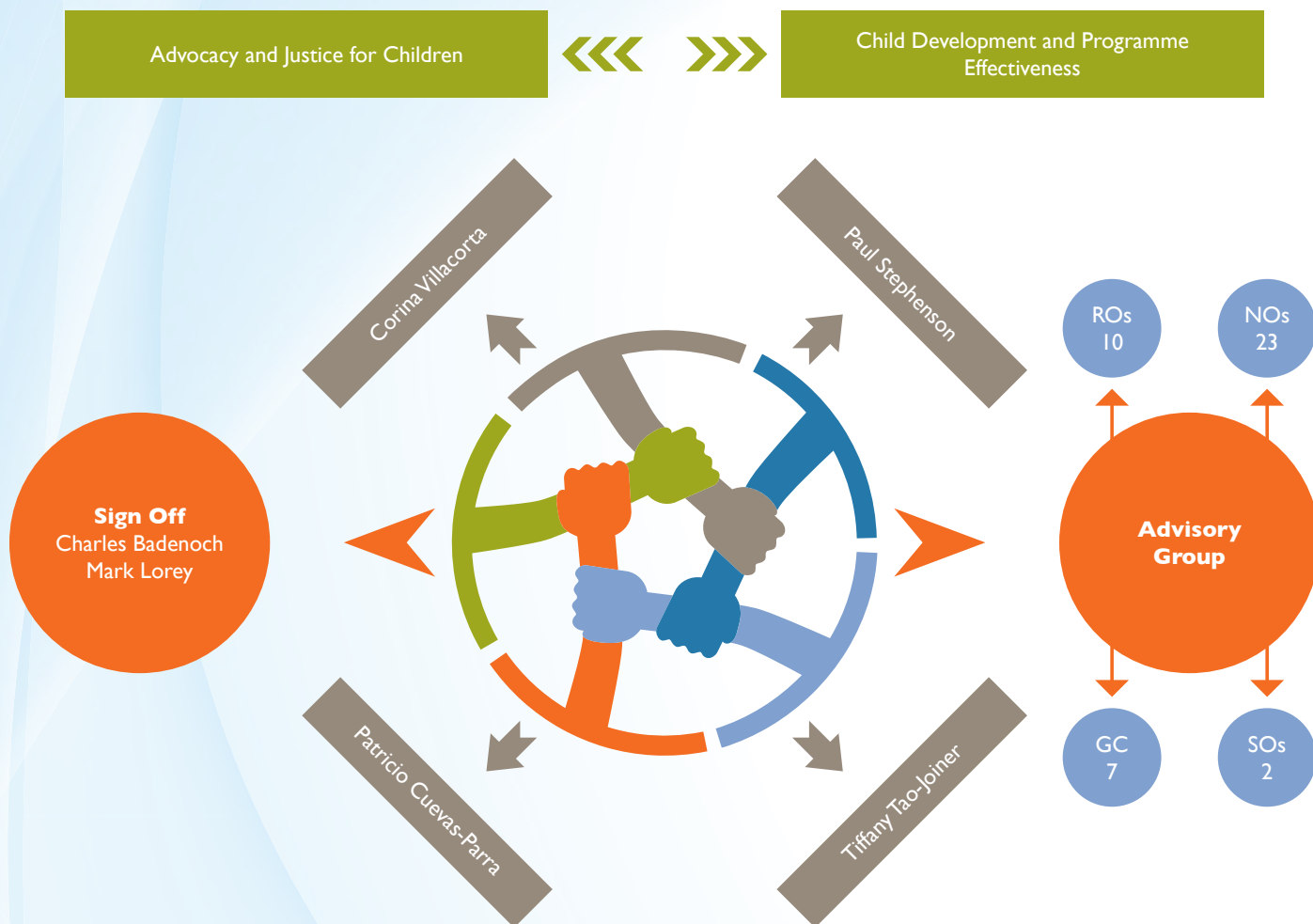
Meaningful participation: Children and young people have the opportunity to express their views, influence decision-making and achieve change in areas that affect their lives. Participation is informed, relevant and voluntary. (Getting it Right for Children, Save the Children, 2007)

Most Vulnerable Children: World Vision considers the most vulnerable children as those whose quality of life and ability to fulfil their potential is most affected by extreme deprivation and violations of their rights.

Young people: World Vision defines as young people children aged 15–18 years. This term respects the reality that many older children prefer the category 'young people' to 'children'.

Youth: World Vision defines youth as young people aged 15–24 years, recognising that WV Programmes and other agencies use varying age ranges in their definitions of youth.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION WORKING GROUP



STRATEGIC DIRECTION PROCESS



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