World Vision's Approach to
Doing Development Differently
and What We Have Learned So Far

World Vision

Executive Summary

This paper shares World Vision's experiences in applying the principles of the Doing Development Differently (DDD) Manifesto. It is a contribution to the efforts of development agencies to embed these principles into standard practice.

Part 1 outlines how World Vision supports field staff to work with communities in a transformational way. It demonstrates how World Vision's approach to development, described as our Development Programme Approach, aligns with each of the principles in the DDD Manifesto. For each DDD principle, key achievements and challenges from World Vision's experience are called out.

Part 2 highlights key aspects of World Vision's organisational architecture that incentivise and build staff capacity to put our Development Programme Approach into practice. This section reflects on internal enablers and barriers that World Vision faces in moving the DDD principles from aspiration to reality.

Part 3 reflects on the extent to which our efforts to embed good practices are producing sustainable improvements in the lives of children and their communities and societies. Where field staff are able to apply our Development Programme Approach well and consistently, evidence suggests that we can achieve sustainable results.

Part 4 covers priority areas for further learning and collaboration. World Vision is seeking to engage with and learn from peer agencies on pressing challenges to uphold DDD principles in fragile contexts, shorter-term funding arrangements, and standardised evidence-based project models.

World Vision is convinced that applying the principles of DDD to our work will produce deeper and more lasting results. Through our approach to transformational development, we have been engaging in this challenge for many years. World Vision, like many other International Non-Government Organisations (INGOs), is optimistic about the momentum that is gathering around the DDD movement. We hope to work with others to influence and strengthen this movement so that it leads to real change in the way planners, implementers and donors "do" development.

Contents

In Bolivia, teenagers share their opinions on issues that affect children and young people in their communities.

THE DDD MANIFESTO
ON DOING DEVELOPMENT DIFFERENTLY

Statement from the October 2014 'Doing Development Differently' Workshop*

Too many development initiatives have limited impact. Schools are built but children do not learn. Clinics are built but sickness persists. Governments adopt reforms but too little changes for their citizens.

This is because genuine development progress is complex: solutions are not simple or obvious, those who would benefit most lack power, those who can make a difference are disengaged and political barriers are too often overlooked. Many development initiatives fail to address this complexity, promoting irrelevant interventions that have little impact.

Some development initiatives, however, have real results. Some are driven domestically, while others receive external support. They usually involve many players – governments, civil society, international agencies and the private sector – working together to deliver real progress in complex situations and despite strong resistance. In practice, successful initiatives reflect common principles.

- They focus on solving local problems that are debated, defined and refined by local people in an ongoing process

- They are legitimised at all levels (political, managerial and social), building ownership and momentum throughout the process to be "locally owned" in reality (not just on paper)

- They work through local conveners who mobilise all those with a state in progress (in both formal and informal coalitions and teams) to tackle common problems and introduce relevant change

- They blend design and implementation through rapid cycles of planning, action, reflection and revision (drawing on local knowledge, feedback and energy) to foster learning from both success and failure

- They manage risks by making "small bets": pursuing activities with promise and dropping others

- They foster real results – real solutions to real problems that have real impact: they build trust, empower people and promote sustainability

As an emerging community of development practitioners and observers, we believe that development initiatives can – and must – have greater impact.

We pledge to apply these principles in our own efforts to pursue, promote and facilitate development progress, to document new approaches, to spell out their practical implications and to foster their refinement and wider adoption.

We want to expand our community to include those already working in this way.

We call on international development organisations of all kinds to embrace these principles as the best way to address complex challenges and foster impact. We recognise the difficulties, but believe that more effective strategies and approaches can generate higher and lasting impact.

Background

Purpose of this paper

In 2014, the emerging Doing Development Differently (DDD) movement endorsed a manifesto containing common principles present in successful development activities, emphasising the imperative that development initiatives can – and must – have greater impact. The manifesto notes that too many initiatives have limited impact as they fail to recognise complexity where "solutions are not simple or obvious, those who would benefit most lack power, those who can make a difference are disengaged and political barriers are too often overlooked."

This paper has been written in the spirit of the DDD Manifesto Community, which has committed to document new approaches, to spell out their practical implications and to foster their refinement and wider adoption.[*] In sharing World Vision's approach to implementing DDD principles, we aim to contribute to the growing evidence base of how DDD can support sustained change.

We are mindful that:

> **One of the criticisms of the big-picture discussion on governance that's been going on in networks such as Doing Development Differently and Thinking and Working Politically, is that it's all very helicopter-ish. 'What do I do differently on Monday morning?' comes the frustrated cry of the practitioner.[**]**

We know that doing development differently requires more than just consensus in support of the principles. It requires more than a new set of tools and guidelines. What we need to "do differently on Monday morning" is to focus on the attitudes and actions that will create an organisational environment where DDD principles can truly flourish. This is a shift World Vision is determined to realise.

In sharing our practices at field and organisational levels – with critical reflection on achievements and challenges – our aim is to contribute to deeper learning and exchanges with peer agencies and other interested stakeholders.

Why now?

The DDD community is one of many networks committed to working in new ways for greater impact.[†] While there is nuanced terminology and areas of focus between these networks, they share a common recognition of complexity and the need for local, reflective and adaptive programming. In many respects, these ideas are not new.

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[*]The DDD Manifesto Community, *Doing Development Differently* website, accessed 13 October 2017. http://doingdevelopmentdifferently.com/

[**]Green, D. (24 February 2016) 'Doing Problem Driven Work, great new guide for governance reformers and activists', *Poverty to Power: How active citizens and effective states can change the world*, accessed 13 October 2017. https://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/?s=problem+driven+work

[†]Green, D., (9 June 2016) 'Where have we got to on adaptive learning, thinking and working politically, doing development differently etc.? Getting beyond the People's Front of Judea', *Poverty to Power: How active citizens and effective states can change the world*, accessed 13 October 2017 http://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/where-have-we-got-to-on-adaptive-learning-thinking-and-working-politically-doing-development-differently-etc-getting-beyond-the-peoples-front-of-judea/

The challenge persists in moving from aspirations and discussions on "how things should be" to a fundamental shift in practice. And putting DDD into practice requires careful navigation of areas of tension, relating to the transactional cost of change, trade-offs and, increasingly, expectations of a "development product" that is easy to sell, replicate and quantify in its impact.

The context in which World Vision works is changing, with a greater focus on the most vulnerable children, and on fragile contexts. This presents us with new challenges in applying DDD principles. We seek to share with and learn from our peers as we grapple to uphold DDD principles in fragile contexts, face shorter-term funding environments, and work out how to manage expectations of "standardised" evidence-based development products.

Who is World Vision?

World Vision is a global Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation that works in more than 90 countries for the sustained well-being of children, especially the most vulnerable.

Our interventions are tailored to each context and can include education, health, nutrition, child protection, economic development, disaster risk reduction and response, microfinance, agriculture, water and sanitation.

World Vision's approach to transformational development seeks to enable children, their families, local communities and their governments to address the underlying causes of poverty. Our aim is to work towards outcomes that are *sustainable*, which we see as "the ability to maintain and improve upon the outcomes and goals achieved with external support after that support has ended."

Inspired by Christian values, World Vision is dedicated to working with the world's most vulnerable people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender.

What role does our faith play in our work?

Our faith leads us to believe that every person is created in God's image and is intended to live life in all its fullness. We believe in upholding, restoring and honouring the dignity, value and identity of every human being. In a world of broken relationships, we see that so many children are kept from reaching their full potential. We see how injustice, inequality, corruption, conflict and disasters affect the lives of children in every context. We have a role, with others, in ensuring that every child thrives – their futures filled with hope, well-being and promise.

Because Christ loved us, we show our experience of His unconditional love in our work and seek the transformation and restoration of relationships as an expression of this love. We seek to collaborate with others to transform the lives of children, families, their communities and societies. We see that most people share common values of compassion, love and mercy, and are willing to partner in improving children's lives. We are well positioned to work with faith leaders of all traditions, and to build trust between faith communities. We ignite and join movements for child well-being, mobilising all people, including donors and supporters, Christians and the Church, as well as other faith leaders, secular institutions and government actors.

PART 1:
Doing Development Differently – our approach and resources

Transformational development

As an expression of our faith, World Vision is committed to a transformational approach to development. For World Vision, transformational development is a process where children, families and communities move towards fullness of life with dignity, justice, peace and hope – especially for the most vulnerable. It is concerned with changing systems, structures and relationships that perpetuate poverty and injustice.

Our approach is strongly related to the principles of the DDD Manifesto. World Vision contributes to the process of transformational development by:

- **Empowering the community** and all of its members to envision, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate their own development processes

- Working in every context to build equitable, just, peaceful, productive and inclusive **relationships** within households, communities and societies

- Enabling girls and boys to participate, becoming **agents of transformation** in their own families, communities and societies, both in the present and in the future

- Addressing the **social and spiritual causes** of poverty among the most vulnerable children

- Ensuring **systems and government services work for children** and empowering communities to engage in dialogue, hold governments accountable, and work with duty-bearers in identifying and implementing shared development solutions

- Creating the conditions where projects and interventions can produce **results that are sustainable**

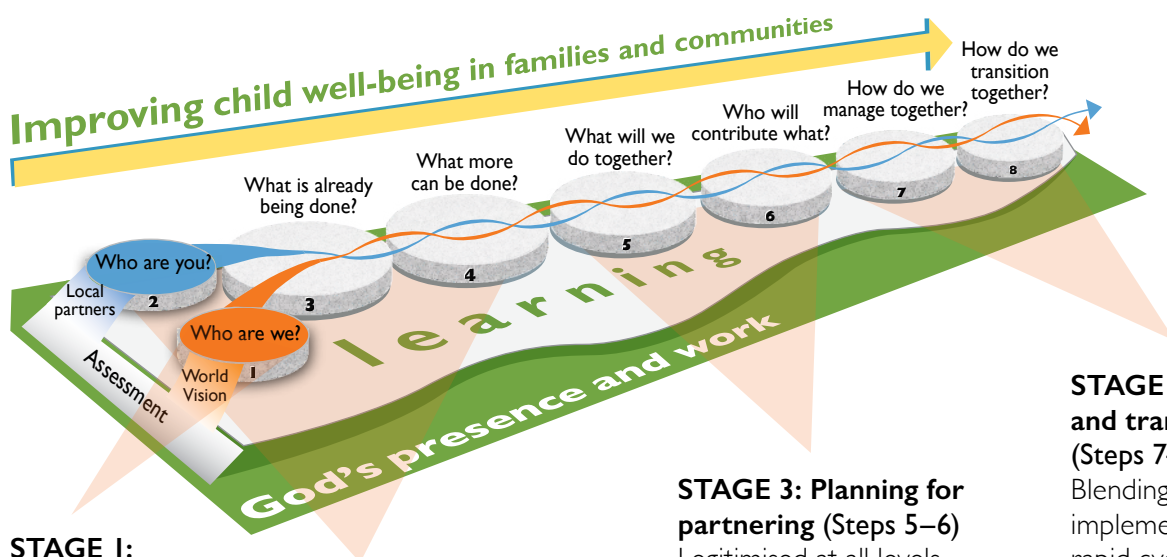# Transformational development in longer-term area programmes

Transformational development is at the heart of our work in humanitarian response, short-term and longer-term development programming, and advocacy. This paper shares our approach to transformational development (and DDD) in our longer-term programmes. World Vision is privileged to be able to work alongside communities for up to 15 years through a funding mix of grants and child sponsorship. The geographic area of our longer-term programming, in the order of 50,000 people, is called an "area programme".

Our Development Programme Approach[1] guides *how* we work with communities in area programmes. It is how we put transformational development into practice and ensure our transparency and accountability to communities. Our approach is based on good practices we have learned from decades of our own work, as well as the success of other organisations.

The Critical Path for longer-term area programmes

The Critical Path is at the heart of our approach. It is designed to build an enabling environment for sustained child well-being by creating space for ownership, multi-stakeholder partnerships, transformed relationships and social accountability. The Critical Path is iterative rather than linear and plans can be revisited when the context changes.

For the purpose of this paper, we describe the Critical Path in relation to DDD principles, to frame our reflection on the challenges World Vision faces and the achievements we have made in moving the principles from aspiration to practice.

Improving child well-being in families and communities

How do we transition together?
How do we manage together?
Who will contribute what?
What will we do together?
What more can be done?
What is already being done?
Who are you? — Local partners
Who are we? — World Vision

learning

God's presence and work

Assessment

STAGE 1: Preparing (Assessment and Step 1)

STAGE 2: Engaging and visioning (Steps 2–4)
Solving local problems that are debated, defined and refined by local people in an ongoing process.

Working through local conveners who mobilise all those with a stake in progress to tackle common problems and introduce relevant change.

STAGE 3: Planning for partnering (Steps 5–6)
Legitimised at all levels (political, managerial and social), building ownership and momentum throughout the process to be "locally owned" in reality (not just on paper).

Managing risks by making "small bets": pursuing activities with promise and dropping others.

STAGE 4: Managing and transitioning (Steps 7–8)
Blending design and implementation through rapid cycles of planning, action, reflection and revision (drawing on local knowledge, feedback and energy) to foster learning from both success and failure.

Fostering real results – real solutions to real problems that have real impact: Building trust, empower people and promote sustainability.

The Critical Path in four stages

1.1 | STAGE 1: Preparing

World Vision prepares to engage a community by reviewing secondary data and conducting a rapid assessment to identify the key potentials and constraints of the general geographic area. Our interaction with communities is limited in this phase.

1.2 | STAGE 2: Engaging and visioning together

Staff engage with communities and local stakeholders to find out who they are and what is currently being done to improve child well-being. Building on this engagement, communities identify their vision and priorities for child well-being. Our intention is that local duty-bearers own and lead this process. World Vision works to achieve this by facilitating dialogue, capacity building and coaching.

This stage is particularly aligned with the following DDD principles:

> **They work through local conveners who mobilise all those with a stake in progress (in both formal and informal coalitions and teams) to tackle common problems and introduce relevant change.**

> **They focus on solving problems that are debated, defined and refined by local people in an ongoing basis.**

We recognise the importance of working through **local conveners** and, wherever possible, we recruit local development facilitators. Development facilitators look for existing networks, coalitions or other entities that can help **mobilise those with a stake in progress** for child well-being.

If an appropriate entity does not exist, or would not be appropriate, an **informal coalition**, known as a "starter group", is formed. The development facilitator meets with government representatives and other key stakeholders to explain the purpose of the starter group, and they discuss and agree on criteria for selecting members. A starter group often includes government staff, representatives from local civil society organisations and community leaders.

Members commit to designing and conducting an empowering dialogue with community groups to identify **common problems** and to help the community create a vision for the **change they want to see** for their children. This video[2] gives an example of how this process works in Myanmar.

The starter group begins with a social mapping[3] process to identify key stakeholders who are contributing to child well-being in their area. The process may include engaging with local and national government departments[4] to find out about the laws, policies, plans and budgets that relate to child well-being.

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*Starter groups are local stakeholders who perform the short-term role of catalysing community engagement and planning around child well-being.

These local conveners also play a role in defining "vulnerability" in their context and in identifying the most vulnerable groups in their community. Their findings help to inform whom they will meet with as part of their stakeholder engagement and community conversations. This engagement is an early foundation for **tackling common problems and introducing relevant change** (Stage 3 of the Critical Path).

In Doti district, Nepal, children from a child starter group work with their peers to identify child well-being issues in their communities. From the beginning, children are oriented and trained to identify key child well-being issues, prioritise them and seek possible practical solutions.

PRINCIPLE: They work through local conveners who mobilise all those with a stake in progress (in both formal and informal coalitions and teams) to tackle common problems and introduce relevant change.

5 KEY LEARNINGS

1. **A good understanding of the strength of civil society in each specific context** is a vital starting point. World Vision's role in supporting local conveners is determined by the presence and capacity of those conveners.

2. **The timeframes and work pace of local conveners can be vastly different to those of World Vision.** Working through local conveners works well when World Vision is able to work at the conveners' pace, and adjust timetables to fit with the reality of community commitments and capacities. This is not just a challenge for local World Vision staff. It also challenges the wider culture and structure of the organisation, which tends to push for short-term measurable results, in favour of a longer-term accompanying and capacity-building approach.

3. **Well-trained and supported local development facilitators can bring together representatives from diverse parts of the community**, who would not normally connect at all, to work together on issues affecting their children. These broad coalitions can be powerful and dynamic, and can lead to solutions that address the deep, hidden root causes of child vulnerability. In one example from Lebanon, religious leaders from Muslim, Catholic and protestant groups admitted that this was the first time they had ever worked together on any project, yet they were able to coalesce around shared concerns for their children.

4. **It can be difficult to engage the right stakeholders at the beginning of the process.** Building coalitions of the right people takes a consistent effort from our staff over time, constantly asking the challenging question: "Who else should be here?" For example, in Malawi, a World Vision team leader struggled to engage the powerful traditional leaders of a community. He persisted and, over a five-year period, was able to earn their trust. When they saw how momentum was building and small gains had been made, they were willing to join in. The leadership they then provided rapidly deepened the work and made it more sustainable.

5. **The attitude of the development facilitator is critical in two ways.** First, they need to be confident that they have the ability to bring local leaders together. Second, they need to be confident that they can hold their and World Vision's role *lightly*, so that local leaders can take ownership. Informal coaching of local leaders has been valuable to that passing on of ownership. For example, in Uganda, a development facilitator realised that World Vision was dominating the NGO forum he had helped to galvanise. Others were waiting for World Vision to speak, giving us "the final word". He realised that he had been neglecting his brokering role (coordinating and facilitating), so he decided to withdraw. The forum began to stall. He suggested that the group select a chairperson to champion the process instead. He sat with the new appointee and shared his knowledge of what it takes to facilitate a partnership process. He outlined the principles and offered advice on how to respect them. Now, meetings go on with or without the World Vision representative present, and he feels freed up to focus on other things.

> **We are hungry for results, but we need patience; this is a process. We need to build a conducive environment for them to do well. Sometimes it takes a while just to get [community members] to regularly attend meetings. You need to do a lot of engagement, a lot of capacity building. Empowerment takes time.**
> **– Area Programme Manager, Malawi**

During stakeholder engagement and community conversations, starter groups[*] (or existing conveners) lead processes for **debating and refining problems**. They are supported by World Vision development facilitators, who may, for example, raise awareness about improving child well-being[5], assist plans for a community engagement process[6] and provide training in community conversations[7] and exploring the problems, capacities and resilience[8] of the most vulnerable children and their families.

To support the **refinement of problems**, development facilitators help communities to start to understand issues, to build consensus[9] and to work out what steps they need to take to solve a problem.

In Uganda, child leaders are supported by World Vision to hold active discussions with their peers and come up with issues that affect their education, health and livelihoods. Children then map out the issues on a problem-and-objective tree. This influences the design of projects. To help the mobilisation process, children also present their findings to local government representatives through drawings, drama and songs.

After gathering community input on child well-being from a variety of groups, the starter group organises a local community summit[10] where community members **agree on an overarching vision for children and select the child well-being priorities** that they will work on over the next few years.

In Bangladesh, a community creates a shared vision for child well-being and agrees on key child well-being priorities: to reduce hygiene-related illnesses and to end cultural norms that perpetuate child marriage. In reflecting on the process, a staff member explains, ''World Vision's role was mainly asking questions that would challenge community mindsets, to get them to jump into action.''

After the summit, where the community selects their child well-being priorities, World Vision staff catalyse the formation of working groups around each priority. The working groups start as **informal coalitions** and members can come from any sector – government, local businesses, faith communities, other NGOs and community groups – including groups of vulnerable people.

> **" Target communities, respective government agencies and representatives of the non-government and private sectors are united in this group, and the people sit together and discuss the issues, what can be done, so that the problems I listed are more or less solved. "**
> **– NGO Partner, Georgia**

Each working group thoroughly investigates its child well-being priority and **further debates and defines the problem**. This often involves a review of the area programme assessment data and other information gathered through stakeholder engagement, community conversations and any additional information that members can share. Tools such as problem trees and mind mapping can help working groups analyse the root causes of their problems.

For example, in Shkodra area programme, Albania, children were involved in analysing problems in the local child protection system. These children identified three key issues:

• Institutions do not respect confidentiality policies

• Insufficient staff in the Child Protection Unit

• Lack of collaboration among child protection actors

A problem tree created by children in Albania

Debating and refining problems helps working groups to develop an action plan. This informs the design of collaborative projects to **bring about change**, which is described in Stage 3 of the Critical Path. Stage 4 covers how problems and collaborative projects are **refined on an ongoing basis**.

PRINCIPLE: They focus on solving problems that are debated, defined and refined by local people in an on-going basis.

4 KEY LEARNINGS

1. **Where this process is facilitated well, the community shows high levels of ownership and commitment because it is *their* vision and *their* priorities, not World Vision's**. This lays the foundation for sustainable results because the community is more likely to mobilise its own resources to fulfil its plans. For example, in Ethiopia, one team leader shared how the water working group mobilised the community to combine their resources (labour and materials) with World Vision's, so that a planned water pipe could be extended far beyond original plans to include more households and agricultural land.

2. **Building community and staff capacity to conduct deeper root-cause analysis has led to solutions that address the real, underlying problems**. Before this, we saw that the deep social issues that prevent child well-being were often not addressed. For example, even when projects result in increased and diversified household income, deep social issues such as alcoholism or early marriage persisted and families did not progress out of poverty. Deeper root-cause analysis has created a shift, from projects that focus on transfer of technology and infrastructure to projects that focus on changing attitudes, values and social norms.

3. **It is a fine art to balance "outsider" knowledge with "insider" perspectives**. For example, in Cambodia, national statistics show that malnutrition is a critical issue in all districts where World Vision works. Yet, this issue was often not identified as a priority by the community, probably because "small" children were seen as normal. World Vision staff had to carefully raise awareness of the issue so that communities could recognise and respond to it, rather than just telling them what to do.

4. **The process takes time, because getting to root causes requires relationships and trust to be built**, both between World Vision and the community, and also within the community. It often takes years, rather than months, before trust reaches a level where taboos are uncovered, and traditional beliefs or world-views can be identified and openly discussed.

1.3 | **STAGE 3: Planning for partnering together**

Working groups begin to develop detailed project plans and to solve problems relating to the child well-being priorities they have committed to address.

This stage is particularly aligned with the following DDD principles:

They are legitimised at all levels (political, managerial and social), building ownership and momentum throughout the process to be "locally owned" in reality (not just on paper).

They manage risks by making "small bets": pursuing activities with promise and dropping others.

To **build ownership and momentum**, each working group plans what will be done, what each partner (including World Vision) will contribute, and how they will collaborate. World Vision supports working groups to lead the planning process so that **plans are locally owned**. For example, in Zambia, staff trained and coached local respected leaders to co-create working group plans. By doing this, staff were able to increase legitimacy and ensure that there was a deepened understanding of the expected process. World Vision staff bring technical expertise to the planning process when needed, and development facilitators encourage a focus on vulnerable children.

> **❝ The response to our new approach (to partnering) has been overwhelming … people were saying, 'I can provide this', 'I can provide that' … even when it came down to stationery! That wasn't happening before. ❞**
> **– Grant Manager, Malawi**

The diversity of working group members helps to **bring legitimacy to plans at different levels**. Some working groups go to extra lengths to build legitimacy and gain wider buy-in.

For example, in Seik Phyu township, Myanmar, every village presents their action plan to the district government. Children present their own perspectives, too. The government then makes specific commitments to support the village plans. In doing so, the plans are legitimised at a political level, building further momentum for actions to be locally owned.
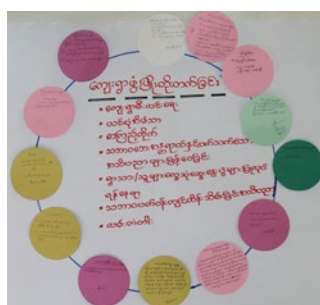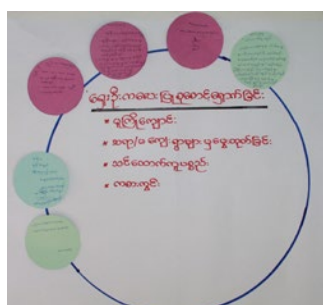
Each small circle in these photos is a commitment from the Seik Phyu township government. Before the action planning process, there was no relationship between the district government and village. Now, the district government actively supports child-focused village development.

Mrs Aye Win (yellow shirt), a working group leader from Gon Kone, Myanmar, stands in front of her village action plan. Every village in the area programme has an action plan, which they display in a public place. The plan belongs to the local people – it is their ideas and they are taking responsibility to make it happen.

> **❝ There were some NGOs here before and, in those days, we just used to do what the NGO asked us to do. But after the working group started, we all see that it's our responsibility to improve our village, and our development activities are successful. ❞**
> **– Mrs Aye Win, working group leader, Myanmar**

Typically, World Vision partners in projects where the working group's goals reflect our interests and expertise. These shared projects will be those within the scope of World Vision's national strategy and, often, our areas of technical capacity. Our internal planning uses a programme logframe, which represents World Vision's contribution to the shared projects and shows the contribution partners are making to the outcomes.

Community shared vision for child well-being

Shared projects

■ Community and partner contributions   ■ World Vision's contributions   World Vision programme logframe
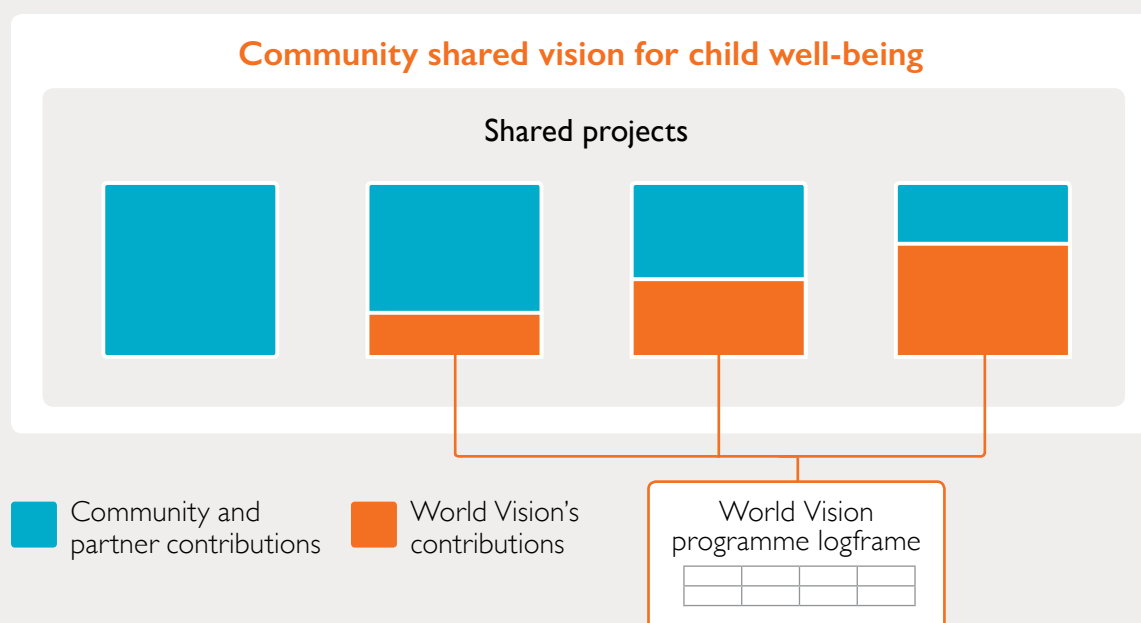
> **When [World Vision staff] were coming to the village and posing some issue, they were implementing this in a correct manner. It was about what the village really needed and what the village requested; they were not doing anything against the people's will so that, for instance, the majority had one idea and they did something else – not like this. They were doing what was the majority's idea and will, and with a better attitude, so obviously more warmth was coming from this.**
> **– Community Member, Georgia**

By partnering this way, World Vision, the community and local partners have the flexibility to co-create projects so they really are locally owned. For example, in Ghana, our flexible approach allowed the community to co-create a larger shared plan:

> **The area programme planned to support the primary health post to deworm 2,000 children in the primary focus area. After meeting with the primary healthcare coordinator, she expressed the desire of her outfit to conduct the activity in the entire district. We therefore held meetings with other stakeholders, including Ghana Health Service, which supported the activity and, through that, all the children in the Asante Akim North District were dewormed.** **– Area Programme Staff Member, Ghana**

World Vision's Local Partnering for Development Programmes[11] training supports staff to work with partners and networks. Staff have access to a suite of tools to help them form good partnerships, from scoping and managing to measuring, learning and transitioning. All partnering is guided by the principles of equity, transparency and mutual benefit.

6 KEY LEARNINGS

1. **Even when good momentum and ownership are built during the initial design phase of an area programme (6 to 12 months), this can dissipate rapidly** if World Vision staff do not proactively foster community participation and ownership during implementation. This is a real challenge for staff, who are under pressure to implement projects and are not being supported to maintain the community engagement processes. Annual community review and planning meetings (see pages 20–21) are designed to keep this focus alive throughout implementation.

2. **When World Vision works through a limited number of small groups at the community level, it can be a barrier to participation for the wider community**. This can lead to good ownership from the participating groups but from not the wider community or the community leadership. We now focus more on the idea of a *collaboration space*. Through this process, local teams identify what relationships exist between individuals and groups in the community – both the strength of links and the nature of the collaborations. It also enables local teams to think beyond the "usual suspects" when planning future collaborations.

3. **In partnering, our two biggest challenges have been misunderstanding and distrust**. The question that comes up from communities most frequently is around the motivation for our work, and fears around a hidden agenda. We have learned that transparency is much more than just being open; it requires a proactive and intentional set of communications to partners. When we have done this well it has built trust and credibility.

4. **Local partners are willing to continue their involvement in collaborations when they see there is clear mutual benefit**. If one partner is deriving significantly more benefit than others, or if one partner perceives they are deriving very little benefit, then the collaboration is unlikely to succeed in the longer term. We now design partnerships in ways that ensure mutual benefit. And this aspect of the relationship is measured and openly discussed.

5. There are many examples of World Vision's area programmes working hard to empower communities and encouraging them to mobilise community resources to solve their problems. Then, in the same location, due to a different funding mechanism, World Vision or other NGOs are operating in a more "service delivery" mode. These two approaches can be counter-productive and are based on different understandings of our role as an NGO. **Some staff report having to work hard to avoid other units operating in ways that could undermine months of their work**.

6. **Reductions in area programme budgets can result in reduced time for staff to engage with communities and build relationships**. Paradoxically, reduced budgets can also lead to renewed interest in promoting ownership and strengthening partners, because of the need to do more with less. This demonstrates that we must not treat community engagement as a luxury that can be sacrificed when budgets are tight, but rather as an essential investment that is crucial for long-term impact.

World Vision **pursues activities with promise** through project models[12]. These models are endorsed for roll-out at scale because they have been tried and tested, and evidence indicates a greater chance of success. Communities can use project models to help them achieve their locally identified child well-being priorities.

In addition to project models, World Vision also support micro-projects. These are small scale, short-term projects, planned and implemented by local groups, which contribute to their agreed child well-being priorities. These initiatives come from the community themselves and are a way of building local capacity for planning and implementation. They allow area programmes to be more flexible and responsive to initiatives that arise from the community. Up to 10 per cent of the area programme's budget can support these initiatives. Area programme staff can make quick and easy approval decisions, without referring to higher levels. This helps to create space for more **"small bets", which can be pursued further or dropped if necessary**.

In Bangladesh, following training, a group of children wrote a micro-project proposal for life skills.
The children themselves, along with the relevant working group, are now leading the project implementation.

5 KEY LEARNINGS

1. **Adopting a standard approach for addressing key outcomes across a country context means that it is easier to make sense of data generated across that country's portfolio of programmes**. This has enabled World Vision to have more powerful engagement and influence with national-level partners and government ministries.

2. **Communities do not view their children's well-being in terms of sectors**. This means area programmes that only address single sectors, or address different sectors in isolation, will fail to address the complex root causes of child vulnerability. One of World Vision's distinctives is our ability to work across multiple sectors in a single geographic location. However, it takes good planning and commitment to do this in a connected way.

3. **World Vision is trying to carefully mange a risk of applying standard project models with a cookie-cutter mentality across area programmes**, without appropriately adapting them for context. Each project model now has clear guidance around which aspects can be contextualised and which aspects need to be consistent with the design. We are learning that field staff need continual assurances and reminders that communities and partners can influence *which* technical programmes are introduced and *how* they are contextualised. Without intentional communication, field staff perceive rigidity and do not have the confidence to adapt in response to local realities.

4. **When we do contextualisation well, national offices report good examples of how technical programme adaptation is revealing deeper issues and is resulting in better, more relevant designs**. For example, in Burundi, every community identified and adapted the technical programmes that were relevant to their priorities. In this process, many communities identified that the programmes were unlikely to be successful because they were not designed to work in a context where alcoholism and witchcraft undermine any progress made. As a result, the technical programmes were re-designed to address these issues. World Vision also revised the curriculum for training field staff on how to do local partnering well, so that it includes the competencies to manage this adaptation process collaboratively with local partners.

5. **World Vision has established infrastructure for area programmes to support micro-projects that are deliberately designed to respond to local initiatives**, and to build the capacity of local groups to plan, implement and monitor their own small projects. However, area programmes have been slow to adopt this new way of working and we need to understand the internal and external constraints that are preventing take-up. We believe one constraint may be a lack of staff awareness of this funding modality and we are planning more intentional communications so field staff know this option is available.

Stage 4: Managing and transitioning together

The final stage of the Critical Path is the implementation of shared projects and eventual transition of World Vision's presence in the community.

This stage is particularly aligned with the following DDD principles:

> **They blend design and implementation through rapid cycles of planning, action, reflection and revision (drawing on local knowledge, feedback and energy) to foster learning from both success and failure.**

> **They foster real results – real solutions to real problems that have real impact: they build trust, empower people and promote sustainability.**

Once working groups have designed projects, each group selects indicators for monitoring and evaluating their activities. These are aligned with their own monitoring needs and with government indicators wherever possible. When relevant to the project design, World Vision's indicators for measuring child well-being targets are included, as well as indicators to monitor the health and maturity of our working relationships.

> **❝Knowledge is power, but it is only power if it is owned and used by the community. Collect data that can be used. ❞ – Staff Member, Bangladesh**

Working groups regularly collect and analyse information on the achievements of their activities and outputs. This is to foster **rapid cycles of planning, action, reflection and revision**. The development facilitator encourages and coaches working groups to reflect regularly on what is going well, as well as what challenges are emerging, so that they can **learn from success and failure**. Working groups can use these reflections to adjust their shared plans.

A report from a water, sanitation and hygiene working group in Myanmar shows use of latrines and access to clean water. The working group plans its activities, monitors progress, has monthly reflection meetings and reports to a village meeting every six months.

To **draw on local knowledge, feedback and energy**, World Vision piloted annual community review and planning meetings[13], which are now being adopted across many countries. The process connects stakeholders and working groups together to reflect on the extent to which they are collectively contributing to the community's vision for child well-being. The community organises the review. World Vision provides training and support to facilitate it.

The annual community review is also a way for stakeholders, working groups and World Vision to remain accountable to the communities they serve. It is a time to celebrate success, but also an opportunity for community members to provide feedback to working groups on their performance and make recommendations for changes to next year's plans. In this way, it fosters learning from both success and failure, and as highlighted in the following case study from Cambodia, it is a way to **blend design and implementation** through annual cycles of planning, action, reflection and revision.

CASE STUDY Cambodia: Annual community review and planning meeting

In Cambodia's Sa'ang area programme, the agriculture cooperative was nominated to lead the annual community review and planning meeting. They hosted and chaired the meeting and sent out the invitations. A broader leading group was established and World Vision provided capacity building and coaching to facilitate the meeting.

During the meeting, World Vision staff participated as a development partner and, like other partners and working groups, presented the progress of their projects.

Before the meeting, children made a video showing aspects of work done in the community that they either greatly appreciated, or that they wanted to raise concerns about. During the meeting, children actively participated and shared their own perspectives on the progress made and any adjustments required.

Each working group then presented their summary of achievements, which were celebrated. They also shared summaries of the challenges they faced and recommended adjustments to their plans moving forwards.

Drawing **on local knowledge, feedback and energy from the process**, leaders took immediate action to approach local businesses and suppliers, and raised more than US$1,000 in cash and in-kind donations for educational resources.

Additional key **planning and revisions** for the year ahead included:

- Strengthening links between the community plan and the government's local community investment plan

- Improving monitoring of government contributions to village development plans

- Changes to local government budgets, with a 14 per cent increase to health root causes (i.e. domestic violence, school drop-out, malnutrition) and a 7 per cent increase to education and child protection

- Changes to World Vision's plans, with improved targets for "access to clean water", a budget increase for community-initiated micro-projects, and community capacity building for project planning and monitoring
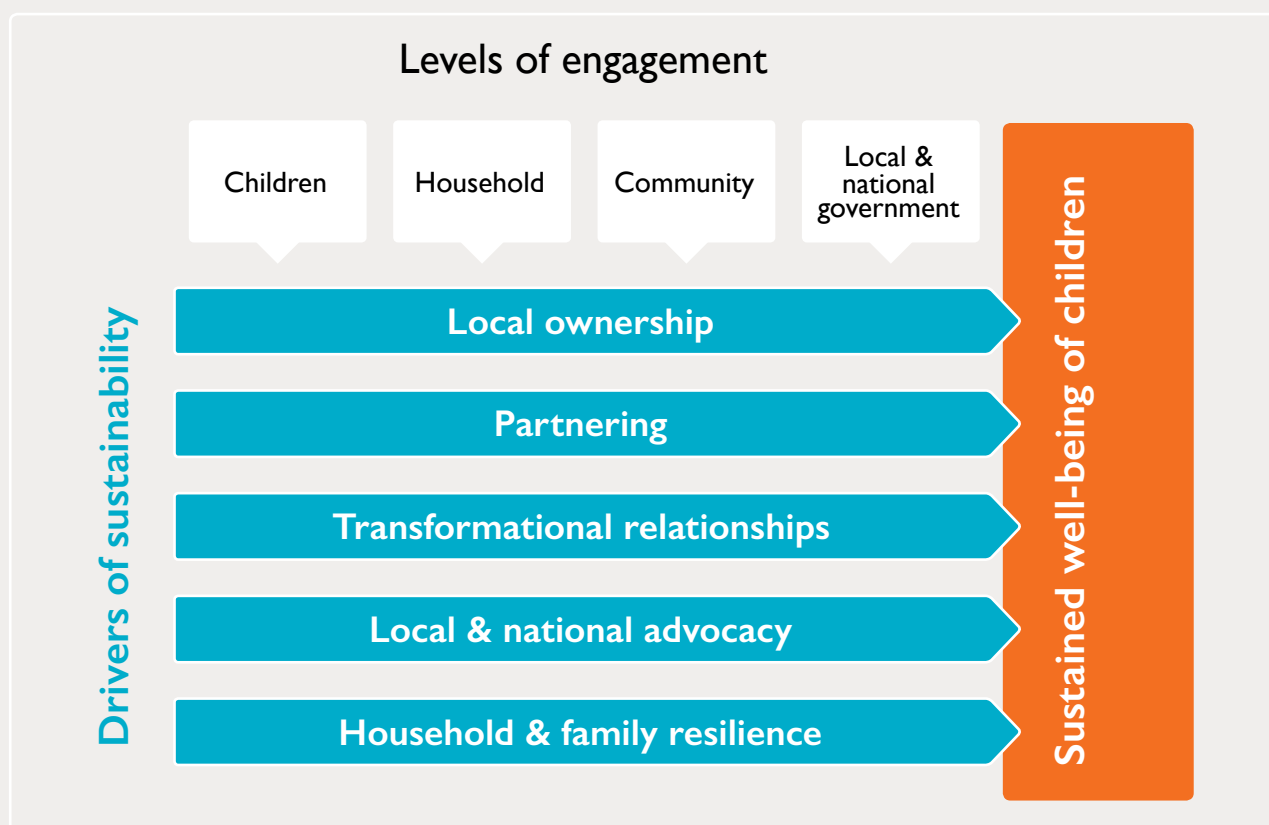
4 KEY LEARNINGS

1. **Drawing on experience from humanitarian programmes, World Vision is progressing the roll-out of <u>community feedback and response systems</u>**[14]. These allow communities to provide feedback through mechanisms that they feel comfortable with, and at an appropriate time. The systems prompt programme staff, partners and our national offices to agree on referral pathways for feedback, timelines and levels of authority for responding. We are learning that, when we show we are taking feedback seriously by informing communities about how we have responded, communities are more likely to participate. We anticipate that this will improve our capacity for rapid cycles of planning, action, reflection and revision. The CDA Collaborative Learning Projects has documented our learnings from introducing feedback systems in area programmes in <u>Nepal</u>[15], <u>Pakistan</u>[16] and <u>Ethiopia</u>[17].

2. **Local planning processes created a lot of initial energy and commitment from local stakeholders. However, this can dissipate over time**. In order to sustain community ownership, it is essential that the responsible community members stay motivated and engaged. Annual community review and planning meetings, and efforts to support working groups to monitor and manage their own action plans, are helping to maintain local energy and commitment.

3. **Where rapid cycles of iteration are working well, there is clear evidence that communities, governments and NGOs (including World Vision) will adjust their plans and budgets** to increase the possibility that projects will achieve their desired results.

4. **Within World Vision, improvements to our flexibility and adaptability have been incremental rather than revolutionary**. Staff have shared that organisational systems can still constrain responsiveness, with approval processes being too far from the point of decision making.

In Vietnam, members of a village development board learn facilitation skills for community project planning.

World Vision's Development Programme Approach came from a **commitment to sustainability**, which we understand simply as increasing the likelihood that children's well-being will continue to improve beyond World Vision's presence in a community. We have identified five key drivers that promote sustainability. These drivers are built into our national office strategies and the design of all programmes.

Levels of engagement

Children	Household	Community	Local & national government

Drivers of sustainability

- Local ownership
- Partnering
- Transformational relationships
- Local & national advocacy
- Household & family resilience

Sustained well-being of children

Processes for the first two drivers of sustainability – **local ownership and partnering** – are outlined in relation to the DDD principles previously described. World Vision's programming is also intended to achieve our third driver – **transformed relationships** – so that men, women, girls and boys care for each other, their community, their environment and the wider world.

> ❝ **Unity and cooperation in the community will sustain development work.** ❞
> **– Focus group discussion with children in Tripura, India**

In addition to transforming relationships through a shared vision and collaborative working groups, our programming includes training and awareness building on topics such as social ethics, harmful practices, domestic violence, child rights and child protection. Our intention is to improve how community members relate to one another. For example, in Albania, entrenched gender and ethnic discrimination is being challenged in education projects. Teachers and school leaders now actively include girls and boys from a minority ethnic group, who were previously ostracised from school. Approaches such as Channels of Hope[18], covered in the case study that follows, allow World Vision to engage with both the spiritual and social root causes of poverty.

CASE STUDY Transforming relationships: Channels of Hope (CoH)

Faith leaders are often among the most influential members in a community. Their beliefs and values can inspire entire communities to care for and love one another. Without proper information and insight, the misunderstandings of faith leaders can also inadvertently promote stigma and discrimination. Channels of Hope (CoH) is the way World Vision mobilises community leaders – especially faith leaders – to respond to core issues affecting their communities, such as HIV and AIDS, maternal and child health, gender equity and child protection.

For example, in the Solomon Islands and South Africa, our use of CoH for gender issues led to a reduction of traditions fuelling gender-based violence. A 2015 evaluation by the Australian National University revealed a 13 per cent increase in men who believe a woman can accuse her husband of rape, and a 17 per cent decrease in men who believe that the Bible says "the man is the boss". The study also showed a 30 per cent increase in women who believe they are entitled to make decisions.

In Niumarere village, Solomon Islands, CoH groups discuss gender issues.

In Sierra Leone, as part of the Ebola response, close to 500 Christian and Muslim faith leaders were trained through CoH to raise awareness in communities regarding safe and dignified burials. The training and subsequent promoting of key messages helped to change attitudes towards how Ebola victims were buried. Working together in this way has strengthened the trust and understanding among faith groups and faith leaders.

> **"Involving religious leaders made a huge difference to our Ebola emergency response. Interestingly, 100 per cent of all bereaved families agreed that the involvement of religious leaders and women in the burial process was very important. The mobilisation of priests and imams to spread prevention messages saw infection rates plummet. " – Emergency Programme Officer, Sierra Leone**

Reverend Peter Kainwo works hand-in-hand with other faith leaders to deliver Ebola sensitisation messages at the Bo Central Mosque, Sierra Leone.

Transformed relationships are also linked to the fourth driver of sustainability – **local and national advocacy**. For example, in Malawi, child journalists are trained to document, analyse and share issues with local authorities. This is improving children's confidence and changing the way local leaders view children. World Vision supports local and national advocacy initiatives to empower communities to engage in dialogue, hold governments accountable and work with duty-bearers to identify and implement shared development solutions.

Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) is World Vision's primary approach to community-level advocacy. Through CVA, governments are held accountable for service delivery against their own standards. These existing government standards might include, for example, classroom sizes or staffing levels at a clinic. Using a community scorecard, communities rate the performance of services against the standards, as well as their own indicators for what is important to them. This leads to dialogue and action planning with service providers to improve the service. World Vision supports the process but a local non-government community group (i.e. an NGO, union, church or community group) or a working group leads it.

In India, community members form groups to initiate the CVA process and assess the gap of any services in their community. The groups make improvement action plans with service providers and monitor progress of that action plan.

World Vision reinforces local, community-driven advocacy with national- and regional-level advocacy to hold government service providers accountable to their commitments, and to press for wider systemic changes with impacts and reach beyond the borders of our area programmes. As communities begin to work more effectively together, they also tend to identify patterns of government failure that require systemic solutions. For example, in Kenya, communities came together to reform the law governing how local governments could use discretionary funds. In Uganda, communities came together to acquire more teachers for an entire district. In Armenia, communities worked together to reform doctors' pay structure in order to incentivise visits to rural clinics. To help foster these local–national links, all area programmes include an advocacy component that focuses on ensuring the accountability of local and national duty-bearers.

To protect development gains, World Vision's fifth sustainability driver is strengthening **household and family resilience** to shocks and stresses, including natural and manmade disasters. Depending on the context, this may include homestead gardens, crop diversification, savings groups and income-generation activities, or supporting communities to develop disaster risk reduction and management plans in collaboration with government. For example, in Somalia, communities collected early-warning data on droughts, which alerted donors to an emerging crisis and resulted in US$500,000 of donations to take early action. In Malawi, children in disaster risk reduction clubs planted 55,000 trees to aid reforestation efforts. In Senegal, World Vision partnered with a community to install gabions (stone walls) in five villages, which addressed the threat of flooding for approximately 3,000 people.

PRINCIPLE: They foster real results – real solutions to real problems that have real impact: they build trust, empower people and promote sustainability.

4 KEY LEARNINGS

1. Ultimately, the best way to measure sustainability is through post-project evaluations that are done after our presence in an area has ended. However, this is too late to take corrective action. **World Vision's five drivers provide a way to monitor, reflect and improve the likelihood of sustainability while projects are being implemented**. We have developed a small number of priority indicators that measure different aspects of the five drivers of sustainability, which can be used for monitoring and mid-term evaluations. However, there seems to be less value attached to measuring *soft* process indicators compared to *hard* outcome indicators, both from World Vision and from many major donors.

2. **To help support linkages between local- and national-level advocacy, World Vision has developed a Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) database**. This web-based solution offers a local, national, regional and global system to capture the volume of valuable information generated through CVA. Recording sheets capture data from community scorecards and community monitoring of standards and action plans. The database is in the early stages of roll-out and will provide a system for aggregating and analysing data, revealing informative trends and patterns across communities, districts and other geographic categories. The database will reflect the voices of a large number of citizens on public services and link local realities to national-level action.

3. **When communities and partners are involved in the planning of monitoring, as well as the collection, analysis and use of monitoring information, they become much more invested in the reliability and usefulness of the information**. Monitoring that shows progress towards results generates much more energy than information that shows completed activities or budget spent.

4. **Disasters and conflicts result in devastating situations for millions of people every year. Paradoxically, these disruptive events also provide opportunities for positive transformational change in families and communities**. Community members increase their capacity to cope through the experience of disaster and there is strong impetus to work together to resolve a common problem. Community members also value specific resources more than they did before the disaster; for example, savings.

PART 2:
Drivers for embedding good practice

This section reflects on how World Vision supports and encourages field staff to work in a transformative way – the internal enablers that encourage Doing Development Differently (DDD) to flourish. It also identifies key internal constraints that tend to discourage such good practice.

2.1 Positioning staff as agents of change

> **❝ For all the guidance and key performance indicators we could introduce, I think the Sa'ang [best practice] example re-affirms the importance of having the right people engaged together. ❞** – Strategy and Evidence Director, Cambodia

Communities' day-to-day lives and problems are complex, interrelated and rarely experienced along sector lines. Recognising this, World Vision's longer-term area programmes have **dedicated development facilitators** who work with communities on holistic child development.

With dedicated staff, we have learned that field guidance still only translates to good practice if staff have the skills, attitudes and beliefs that allow them to work in this way. Field guidance is not a script, and can in no way predict the intricacies of any one community context, nor the power relations, incentives, dividers and connectors that will have a bearing on collaborative action. The ability of field staff to improvise, think on their feet and navigate complexity depends heavily on their own capacity and confidence.

To strengthen field operations, World Vision has identified a [set of competencies for specific job roles at field level](#)[19]. These outline the expected behaviours necessary for transformational development, and the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will get us there. For example:

Behaviour: Leads community consultations

Knowledge: Understands community empowerment principles and approaches

Skills: Asks questions and actively listens

Attitude: Believes that the community has the solutions

> **I heard … that the community is like a big university and origin of knowledge and wisdom … An individual who studies a community can be an expert compared to learning through training or joining a university. It does not mean that it is not necessary. To be stronger on competencies, both ways of learning are required.**
> **– Development Facilitator, reflecting on the value of competencies**

World Vision designed these competencies through an extensive internal collaboration process and they are refined and improved based on learning and feedback from programmes. The competencies assist in **selection and recruitment of the right people**, as they help managers to match their needs with people's abilities and focus more on behaviours than on qualifications only. The competencies can then inform plans for **staff development**, helping managers to assess strengths and needs across teams so that they can prioritise blended capacity-building activities. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, leaders saw the need to build field staff capacity in partnering skills. They invested heavily in local partnering training and, two years later, their ability to promote transformation has increased dramatically.

We have also found that staff value competencies for career development – competencies help staff to better understand their jobs and what is expected of them, and aid conversations between staff and managers.

> **My prior thinking and expectation was that I am fully competent for this position and the [higher] area programme manager position … The competency session made me rethink my competencies for my personal development and professional career.** **– Development Facilitator, Nepal**

The competency framework is not mandated. National offices can access and use it according to their priorities. World Vision encourages them to adapt the competencies to be more meaningful in their context.

Field staff are at the forefront of working with communities in a transformative way – but this space can be impacted positively or adversely by those who *support* field operations. To create an enabling environment for field staff, World Vision aims to build shared ownership for transformative practices at all levels of the organisation.

National Directors are tasked with strategically leading transformational development. They play a crucial role in creating vision, energy and commitment. They also play a key role in building long-term cooperative relationships at a national level, which create more space and opportunities at the field level.

In the broader leadership team, positions such as the Operations Director are accountable for community participation and ownership of all programmes, and for supporting field teams to work effectively with partners and government. As part of the shared responsibility of the senior leadership team, the Operations Director leads meaningful community engagement in the national strategy planning process, as demonstrated in the following case study from Sierra Leone.

CASE STUDY Sierra Leone: Community engagement drives national plans

In November 2016, World Vision Sierra Leone held a workshop to design their technical approaches – strategic plans to tackle issues. Local and national government representatives, community representatives, partner leaders and World Vision national- and field-level staff attended the workshop.

The Operations Director shared findings from community consultations, where community members identified key issues that affect them, their root causes, their own capacities to address the issue and areas requiring support. The community representatives at the workshop had facilitated these consultations and were able to validate, clarify and elaborate on key points.

Participants were divided into groups according to expertise. Each group started with a review of the root-cause analysis, which informed a theory of change for each of the key issues. The group then selected key interventions to support the drivers of change and highlighted critical local and national advocacy issues. Finally, participants discussed the areas where World Vision had capabilities to contribute effectively, and the areas where the government and other partners, including communities, were better positioned to contribute.

World Vision staff work together with community and government representatives to plan technical approaches.

DRIVER: Positioning staff as agents of change

4 KEY LEARNINGS

1. **Competing priorities of the organisation, particularly those that support areas of governance, can detract from the time staff have available to build community relationships**. Staff shared that they still spend too much time in the office on administration tasks, reporting and finance. World Vision is continually trying to find ways to reduce these demands on time, without compromising on transparency, accountability and drivers of performance.

2. We have also heard from communities that, while staff skills and attitudes do play a role in building relationships with the community and partners, *how long staff remain with World Vision* **is equally important**. Our community relationships can be undermined by high staff turnover, no matter how competent new staff are.

3. **There are real challenges in changing staff mindsets and expectations when World Vision has been operating in a non-empowering way in longer-term area programmes**. While we do see positive results from competency-based approaches and capacity building, we observe more significant changes in new area programmes than in established area programmes. Peer-to-peer mentoring has also proven to be powerful.

> **"I have had to work with my colleagues to help them understand that the partner contributions have value – even if they are not financial; that we need our partners if the work is to get done; that we are stronger with partners than with consultants, who we might otherwise pay to play their role. "**
> **– Staff Member, Malawi**

4. **When national office leaders prioritise and resource transformational development, it is more likely to happen at a greater pace**.

2.2 Fostering an organisational culture for transformational development

For World Vision, the journey along the Critical Path is more than building a shared vision and effective collaboration. It is recognising – in humility – that God is already at work in a community. It is a process of seeking to discern how to join in God's work. Prayer and reflection, based on a study of scripture and listening to children, communities and partners, are key parts of this discernment and of our organisational culture.

Our Learning and Discernment Resource[20] includes scripture-based devotions, spiritual reflections and prayer ideas for World Vision area programme staff to use as they move along the Critical Path.

To further support a culture of working in a transformative way, we have created Communities of Practice and Facebook pages, and we are facilitating a two-year organisation-wide dialogue on transformational development (2016–2017).

Communities of Practice (CoPs) offer a more structured and formal means to bring together World Vision practitioners from across the globe. Staff use this forum to exchange practices and achievements in implementing our Development Programme Approach. The CoPs share information through digital newsletters, provide opportunities for exchange via WebEx (online meeting centres), and maintain intranet pages where peers from across World Vision can share, comment, ask and answer each other's questions.

Our Facebook pages for transformational development allow a more informal, user-driven exchange of practices. On these pages, staff share stories of what transformation looks like in their communities and what to do to stimulate transformation. Colleagues ask questions and fellow practitioners respond and share their wisdom.

As part of the process to renew our global transformational development policy, dialogues are being led at all levels of the organisation. This has not only increased buy-in and ownership of the policy, it has also helped to reignite our staff's personal convictions and passion for transformational development.

DRIVER: Fostering an organisational culture for transformational development

2 KEY LEARNINGS

1. **Our transformational development policy review has highlighted the need to ensure everyone in the organisation has a common understanding of what we want to achieve**. The policy review dialogues have started this process of bringing staff onto the same page and efforts will continue.

2. **During the policy review dialogues, many staff said they joined World Vision because of transformational development**, and are still motivated by the prospect of transformative change, as described by Bryant Myers and Jayakumar Christian in the book *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices for Transformational Development.*[*] This is an important reminder that transformational development and DDD are as much about *why* people work, as *how* they work.

2.3 Embedding good practices by planning, reflecting and adapting

> **"What gets reported on gets done. "** – Accountability Manager, Philippines

Working in a way that aligns with the DDD principles will not happen by chance. Often, planning in development focuses on *what* we will do for a community, rather than *how* we will work with a community. Both are equally important sides of the equation, and mutually dependent if we want to achieve sustained positive change.

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[*]Myers, Bryant L. *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*, Maryknoll, (New York, 2011)

World Vision has reinforced the value of our Development Programme Approach by integrating it into existing design, monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Integrating *how* we work with communities into a formal governance and accountability framework is also intended as a signal that it is valued in its own right as a measure of success. This gives staff incentives to prioritise their energy, time and resources to this end.

Now, national offices plan and report not just on sector-based activities, but also on *how* they are working with communities.

Planning paves the way for dedicated resources and effort, rather than transformative practices being an optional luxury that may happen by chance. **Monitoring** and **reporting** reaffirm the importance of these practices, that they are a valued measure of our success. Importantly, the reporting is about transparency – a picture of where we are at, compared to where we want to be. This allows us to reflect and **make changes** when there are weaknesses at the local, national or even global level. This is where we become truly **accountable for how we work**, when we are not just listening but also responding and iteratively improving based on our learning.

Planning for *how* we work with communities takes place at national and local levels. At a national level, offices develop a Community Engagement and Sponsorship Plan. The plan details the community engagement processes that will provide the foundation for sector programmes. This brings cohesion in the way World Vision works with communities. The plan is supported by a logframe, which includes indicators for monitoring at output and outcome level for sustainability, as well as community engagement and ownership.

The national plan provides a standard approach that the office can monitor and improve, on a regular basis. This also means that field teams do not need to re-invent community engagement processes for each area programme; they simply adapt the standard national process to local contexts.

The agreed local community engagement process is captured in the area programme plan. The area programme provides an up-to-date record of community engagement, including key stakeholders involved in the process and conclusions. It is also a plan for ongoing dialogue on child well-being, with a particular focus on strengthening child voice.

Reflecting is partly prompted by monitoring whether we are working in a transformative way. To make this easier, World Vision has recommended a small number of priority indicators. Teams can select from the indicators and include these in their monitoring and evaluation plans. Consistency in the indicators means that monitoring can prompt reflection and change at a local level, and also be aggregated at a national level for wider reflection, learning and systemic change. For example, an indicator of "x % of households know that the community has a vision for child well-being and are able to recall it" helps to ascertain the extent of ownership of the community vision.

The Programme Effectiveness Self-Review Tool[21] allows area programme teams, communities and partners to reflect on World Vision's practices. Facilitated discussion leads to an assessment of the area programme as either **Emerging**, **Growing** or **Maturing**.

An example of standard assessment criteria

	Criteria	Rating E/G/M	Emerging	Growing	Maturing
Standard #6: World Vision's preferred local role is to serve as a catalyst and builder of capacity of local partners and partnerships for child well-being.					
6.1	Measuring the health of partnerships		Working groups do not regularly measure the health of their relationships.	Working groups occasionally measure the health of their relationships.	Each working group regularly measures the health of their relationships for evidence of equity, transparency and mutual benefit.
6.2	Effective collaboration		World Vision tends to work alone and collaborates with few or no local groups and organisations.	World Vision collaborates with some local groups on some projects, which are working reasonably well.	In all projects, World Vision is collaborating effectively with appropriate partners.
6.3	Partner capacity		World Vision has a limited or unclear role in addressing partner capacity issues.	World Vision supports capacity building of local partners. This support is not well planned or consistent, and the results are not well measured or reported.	World Vision has a clear role to enable partner capacity building through mentoring and appropriate support. Partners are measurably increasing their capacities.

The self-review takes place as part of the annual monitoring cycle. It feeds into **annual reports** to the community and donors, and into improvement **action plans**. World Vision also aggregates findings at national, regional and global levels. This builds a picture of areas of progress and areas where further commitment and capacity building may be required. For example, a 2014 global aggregation of results showed weaknesses in criteria for local ownership. This gave more legitimacy and increased our efforts to improve processes and staff capacity so that we build local ownership.

Adapting and changing in this way is at the heart of why we monitor and reflect on *how* we are working with communities. Without a willingness to change, monitoring is wasted energy and resources.

At a local level, area programme teams can share their progress at annual community review and planning meetings. This is a chance for communities and partners to reflect on progress and participate in joint planning for improvement. Some national offices also facilitate reflection and planning sessions based on aggregated data across their area programmes.

CASE STUDY Bangladesh: Adapting to improve community understanding of our identity

During 2016, World Vision Bangladesh undertook an assessment of the extent to which their area programmes were aligning with our Development Programme Approach. The assessment incorporated the views of communities and partners.

One gap they found related to community understanding of World Vision's identity. In response, World Vision Bangladesh has adapted its national community engagement plan.

First, it will work with local staff to build a common understanding of World Vision's identity. Then, local staff will use the Exploring Perception Tool[22] with communities. A Message Box Tool[23] will be developed in each area programme to address issues of perception in areas such as child sponsorship, core values, mission and vision. The team will pay close attention to reaching the most vulnerable community members, with a view to minimise misunderstandings.

World Vision staff take time during a local water and sanitation (WASH) committee meeting to talk about who World Vision is, how we operate and what the group can expect.

Annual area programme management reports include space to describe how the area programme will improve ways of working. There is also space to show how the previous year's recommended improvements have been implemented. This is for transparency and accountability. By including these sections in our regular reporting, we are creating a culture where adaptation is valued and expected.

DRIVER: Embedding good practices by planning, reflecting and adapting

4 KEY LEARNINGS

1. **A persistent challenge is maintaining the balance between offering staff *guidance* to support working in a transformative way, and not *overburdening* staff with too much prescriptive guidance and too many procedures**. When staff slavishly follow process steps, rather than focusing on producing the desired results, it often means they implement our Development Programme Approach in a mechanical way. This can be counter-productive, as it does not result in strengthened local capacity or ownership.

2. **World Vision gives mixed messages about our commitment to transformational change**. On the one hand, it is a core mandate of the organisation. On the other hand, staff often feel that they are rewarded and incentivised to behave in ways that do not promote transformation. Internal and external funding streams often communicate the need for long-term, sustainable results and expect significant agility in producing them. However, this can be at odds with parallel expectations to deliver projects as agreed, on plan and on budget, requiring staff to dedicate significant time to administration, risk mitigation and reporting. We need to find a way to harmonise these two competing narratives and align incentives accordingly. Until we do this internally, and bravely champion the cause to donors, staff will continue to experience this ambiguity on where our commitment really lies. As we value what we measure, part of the solution may be to continue to identify good ways of measuring the transformative elements of our work, to augment our measuring of improvements in child well-being.

3. **While efforts have helped integrate our Development Programme Approach into area programme design, monitoring and evaluation, staff have shared that financial systems have not kept pace and can still be restrictive**. Pressure on staff to reduce under-spends conflicts with our commitments to empower communities and to give them agency over their own development decisions. In the worst cases, annual budgets can be arbitrary and not linked to community plans and priorities.

4. **In many national offices, there is an organisational hierarchy where dedicated programme design, monitoring and evaluation staff own the expertise to manage design and monitoring processes, and populate logframes with indicators**. When this happens, our field-facing staff are, in effect, excluded from programme design, which means their work in community engagement has little influence on planning, reporting or adapting. One key response has been to rewrite monitoring guidance with an explicit commitment to its primary purpose as "providing useful information for local decision makers".

PART 3:
Is it working?
Is it worth it?

This section provides information on the extent to which our area programmes are aligned with our Development Programme Approach, and whether our **efforts to embed good practice are working**.

To address the question of **whether these efforts and practices are worth it**, we share information on the extent to which our Development Programme Approach contributes to sustained change. In an effort to contribute to the Doing Development Differently (DDD) evidence base, conceptual links are made between what we are measuring and the DDD Manifesto principles.

A note on data availability and quality ...

In addressing these questions, we are challenged by the lack of consistent information on *how* we are working with communities. One commissioned piece of research referred to this as the "missing middle". We have good data on project activities and on child well-being outcomes, but we have very little data on *how* those outcomes were achieved.

However, despite the limitations of the data, by drawing on a variety of information sources and research, we are beginning to see trends emerging.

Initiatives are underway to collect data more intentionally on *how* we are working with communities. Moving forwards, this will provide a more reliable evidence base on the link between *how* we work with communities, and the positive outcomes and sustained change we are working towards – including if, and to what extent, World Vision's Development Programme Approach contributes to sustainable, transformational change.

3.1 Is it working? Are we doing what we set out to do?

Over the past two years, World Vision has brought together information on the **extent to which longer-term area programmes align with our Development Programme Approach**.

In 2016, World Vision's national offices self-reported on the extent to which area programmes were applying our Development Programme Approach. Some 75 per cent of area programmes responded, from 40 national offices. Of the area programmes that responded, 73 per cent reported that they were using our Development Programme Approach. The data also showed that 53 per cent of area programmes that responded were able to promote transformational change.

While these findings were based on a subjective self-review, they were consistent with annual community reviews, where area programme staff, community members and partners discuss how well World Vision is doing in relation to its Programme Effectiveness Standards[24]. Each standard contains a number of criteria. Area programmes are rated as either:

Emerging: if they are just beginning to meet a criterion.

Growing: if they are making good progress in meeting a criterion.

Maturing: if they are consistently meeting a criterion.

In 2015, we analysed findings from all programme effectiveness reviews (more than 1,300 area programmes in total). In relation to **ownership**, 19 per cent of area programmes were rated as Maturing, where "plans and activities are mainly controlled and managed by the community and partners." This criterion resonates with the **DDD principle of building ownership and momentum throughout the process to be locally owned in reality (not just on paper)**. Sixty-three per cent rated themselves as Emerging, where "plans and activities are partly controlled and managed by the community and partners."

In regard to **partnering and collaboration**, 46 per cent of area programmes were rated as Maturing, where "programme staff have a thorough understanding of the local civil society context and are working appropriately and effectively with local groups and organisations, including faith groups and youth groups." This criterion resonates with the **DDD principle of working through local conveners who mobilise all those with a stake in progress to tackle common problems and introduce relevant change**. Forty-nine per cent were rated as Growing, where "programme staff have a thorough understanding of the local civil society context, but they are not working in an appropriate way with local groups and organisations, as catalyst, broker, mobiliser, and/or builder of capacity."

The data from the programme effectiveness reviews provides a snapshot of what is happening across our area programmes, but it is indicative only. While we expect the reviews to be completed with partners and communities, we acknowledge that they are subject to biases associated with self-reporting. However, the trend that **approximately three-quarters of our area programmes are practising our Development Programme Approach well** is also reflected in independent evaluations and research.

In 2015, a review conducted by World Vision UK of 19 long-term area programme evaluations looked for evidence of community **ownership**. They looked for evidence of in-depth community-led dialogue on child well-being, leading to a vision and priorities for child well-being that are developed with and owned by the community, and clear plans for how local people will continue to hold each other accountable for improving child well-being once World Vision's work comes to an end. Eight evaluations found positive evidence of community ownership. Nine presented mixed evidence – some positive examples where community ownership was identified but also evidence of a lack of ownership or a threat to the existing ownership.

Of the 19 area programmes evaluated, 14 mentioned **partnering** as a driver of sustainability. Eight area programmes showed good evidence of positive partnerships. Good evidence was considered to be where the area programme worked with others, including the government at different levels – village, district, state – and other bodies, such as the police, NGOs, media, financial institutions, faith-based organisations and community-based organisations. Seven area programmes showed mixed results and four showed poor or limited evidence of partnership within their respective projects.

While this observed trend, that three-quarters of our area programmes are implementing our Development Programme Approach well, is far from where World Vision wants to be, we have still made progress. Analysis suggests that our efforts to embed good practices (as outlined in Part 2) are also contributing to positive results. For instance, through the Programme Effectiveness Self-Review Tool[21], we observed that those area programmes rating most highly on the criterion for **staff competencies**, also rated highly for **partnering** and **ownership**.

Ratings for **partnering**, in particular, seemed to be higher where there were investments in staff capacity. Of the 25 national offices scoring highest in partnering, 14 have invested systematically in the accredited Local Partnering for Development Programmes[11] training. Of the 25 national offices scoring lowest in partnering, only four have invested systematically in this training. We also observed a trend where, as **ownership** increased, **partnership** increased. This suggests that building staff competency can help staff to work with communities in more transformative ways.

These findings reflect many of the lessons from a recent multi-country research project. This research was commissioned in 2013 to investigate World Vision's Development Programme Approach, including ways that sector-specific work is integrated within a community-based area programme to create a more holistic approach to improving the well-being of children. As a first step, it reviewed eight area programme evaluations – two in Sri Lanka, two in Bolivia, two in Uganda, one in Armenia and one in Cambodia. The research confirmed that our national offices need to be intentional in their approach to transformational development, and that they need good staff capacity, accountability practices, monitoring and local integration.

Less information is available on the role that strengthening World Vision's organisational culture plays in working with communities in a transformative way. We also lack information on the contribution that faith may play in contributing to our organisational culture and *how* we work with communities.
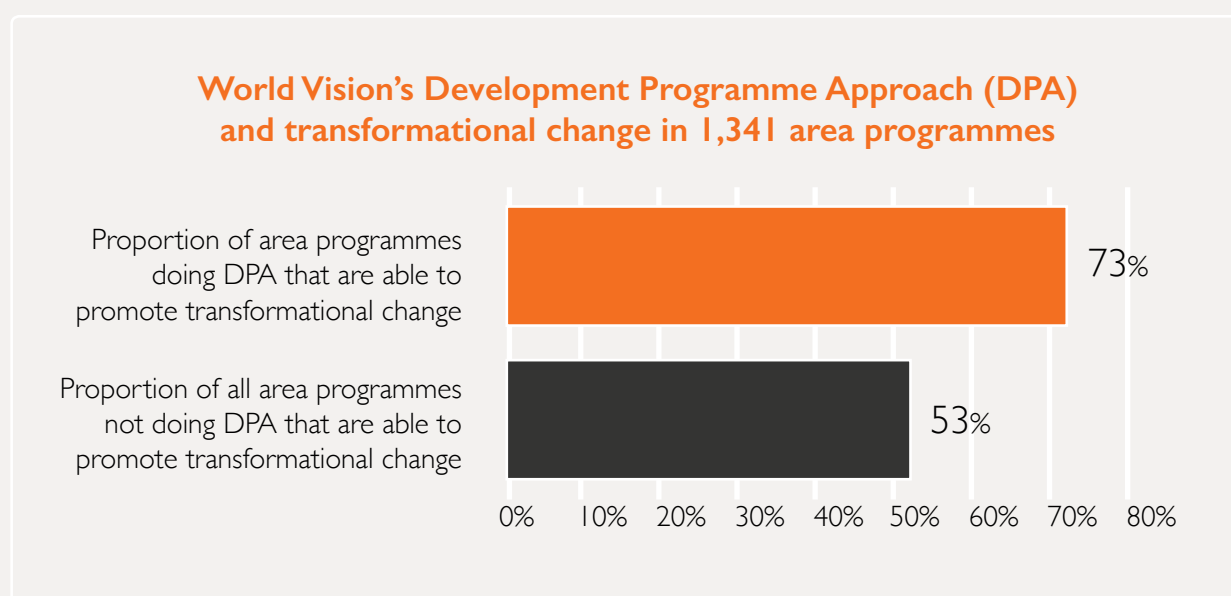

Reena (centre), a peer educator in India trains and mobilises community groups to monitor the quality of local education and health services. The groups have become the voice of the community and are empowered to engage with government service providers without further support from World Vision.

Is it worth it?

While we acknowledge the limitations of our data, we *are* seeing correlations between *how* we work with communities and the extent to which our work contributes to child well-being.

The 2016 self-reporting process indicated that, of those area programmes practising our Development Programme Approach, 73 per cent were stimulating transformational development. Of those not practising our approach, 53 per cent were stimulating transformational change. This offers us reassurance that our area programmes are more likely to contribute to transformational change when they put World Vision's Development Programme Approach into practice.

World Vision's Development Programme Approach (DPA) and transformational change in 1,341 area programmes

Proportion of area programmes doing DPA that are able to promote transformational change	73%
Proportion of all area programmes not doing DPA that are able to promote transformational change	53%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80%

We have observed similar correlations in the data from the programme effectiveness self-reviews. Where **ownership** in an area programme is high, the proportion of area programmes assessing themselves as making a tangible contribution to child well-being increases from 41 per cent to 68 per cent.

Similarly, where **partnering** is high, the proportion of area programmes assessing themselves as making a tangible contribution to child well-being increases from 41 per cent to 60 per cent.

Significantly, where **ownership and partnering** are both rated high, the proportion of area programmes making a tangible contribution to child well-being increases from 41 per cent to 76 per cent.

The correlation of *ownership* and *partnering* with an area programme's ability to produce child well-being results
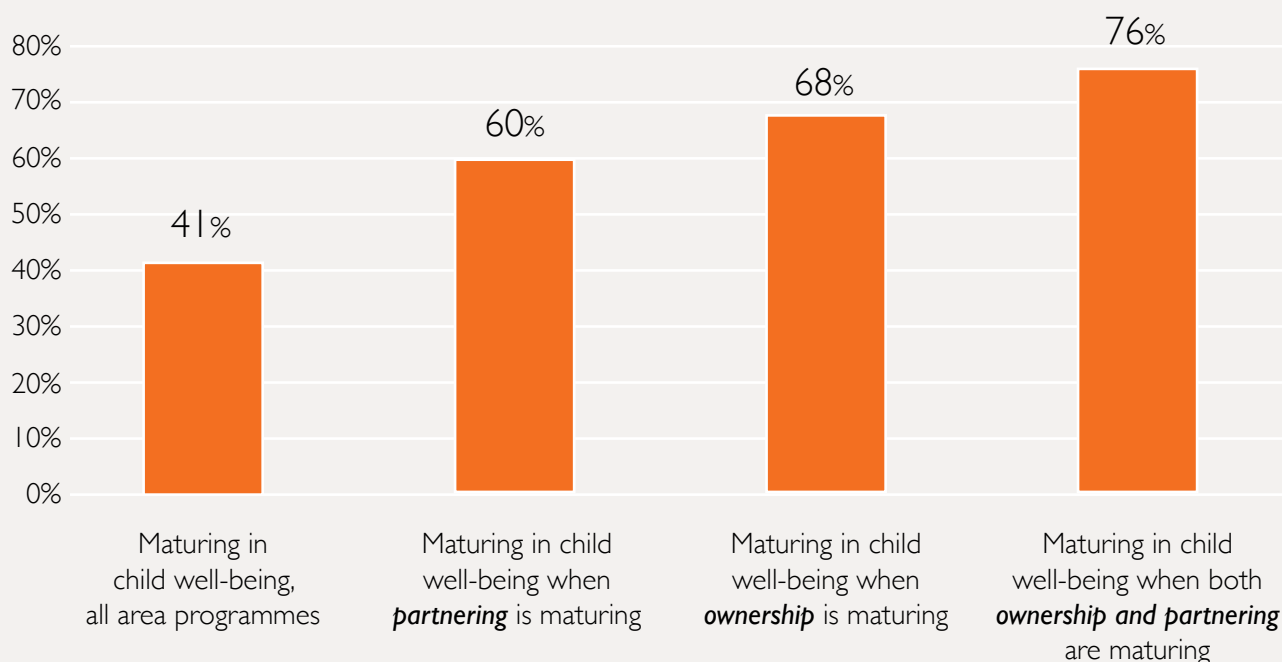
The positive correlations between increased **ownership** and **partnering** and increased **child well-being** results are striking. This data does not show that ownership and partnering *cause* improved child well-being results, just that there is a correlation. There are many factors at work within an area programme that may affect its ability to make a tangible contribution to child well-being.

Despite the limitations of this data, which we hope to strengthen in the future, this broad snapshot across our area programmes does reflect findings coming from more rigorous evaluations and in-depth research. These findings frequently credit our Development Programme Approach, as outlined in Part 1, as contributing to sustained improvements in child well-being or, conversely, note its absence as undermining such sustained positive change.

In 2015, World Vision UK conducted a study on World Vision's Development Programme Approach in Southern Africa and its regionally contextualised Greenfields model. Titled "Why Our Community-Based Approach Matters"[25], the study concludes that investing in strong community-based processes, although complex and time consuming, can be cost effective and offer higher returns on investment in the form of "increased local-level individual participation, programme relevance, community ownership and chances of long-term sustainability of programme activities." In this study, community members stated that there is clear value in processes that build ownership and communication. Further, the study emphasised the role of empowered volunteers as key to sustainability and effectiveness. World Vision's convening role was seen to be important, especially for community members and community organisations.

A review of 19 long-term area programme evaluations, "Impact Report 2015"[26], drew similar conclusions when it looked at the contribution that our Development Programme Approach was making to the sustained well-being of children. For instance:

- The evaluations indicated **the need for shared discussion of child well-being** with the community and local partners, **and that a collective vision and priorities were essential for community ownership**. For example, in one area programme in Cambodia where these practices were strong, community members became increasingly active in assessing local needs and prioritising projects. Community leaders then shaped these into development proposals, which they submitted to local government and NGOs with great success. However, in another area programme in Zimbabwe, the lack of shared vision and priorities was attributed to the lack of involvement of community leaders in project design.

- **Strong ownership of child well-being and a willingness to participate are key factors leading to effective partnering**. What appears critical is a favourable context to ensure successful partnering. The partners must be willing to work together. For example, in Cambodia, it was mentioned that the context has changed and now the government "approves of" community empowerment. In another area programme, the relationship with government was said to have been "difficult".

- On the basis of the evidence, **it seems that the relationship between community members and community groups has an impact on the sustainability of their work** – that sustainability can be threatened by a lack of understanding and trust between the two parties, caused by a lack of transparency, accountability and dialogue. In four instances where positive changes in community cohesion were observed, it was attributed to the process of working together in community groups, which were created and elected by the local community with support from World Vision. The increased cohesion was explained by the formation of these groups and the fact that the participants were meeting regularly and forming closer bonds with one another through the group.

- **Achievements in advocacy have been the result of continual strengthening and quality of collaboration** between communities, service providers and local governments, and growing partnerships with other development actors. Communities and local governments have worked together to secure by-laws, which provide a local mechanism for addressing local problems. In Zambia, Kenya and Uganda, promoting and scaling up "small bets" in the form of radio have broadened and added to avenues for dialogue and engagement. Achievements were also attributed to contextual relevance and anchoring work around current decentralisation reforms in Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and Malawi, which enabled World Vision to align citizen engagement processes within emerging supportive constitutional and regulatory frameworks.

In this way, we are continually finding that, when the process is led well and is aligned with DDD principles and our own approach for transformational development, we see promising results that are more likely to be sustained.

When there are gaps, for example in promoting conditions for dialogue and trusted working relationships, sustained positive results can be compromised.

For World Vision, this confirms that we need to continually strengthen the application of our Development Programme Approach in longer-term area programmes. It also confirms that we need to learn how to apply these principles in more challenging contexts and funding arrangements.

PART 4:
Pressing issues moving forward

World Vision continues to innovate, learn and iteratively strengthen the way in which we reflect the principles of Doing Development Differently (DDD) and transformational development in our work. This paper focuses on our journey of continuous improvement in our longer-term area programmes, where conditions are relatively stable and funding sources give us flexibility to adapt the ways we support communities over a 15-year period. Under these conditions, momentum and the scale-up of good practices continues to grow.

However, new learning priorities are emerging as the landscape in which we operate evolves. To continue to scale-up good practices, our attention is focussing on how to apply DDD and transformational development principles to new funding and programming modalities.

In advancing World Vision's approach to transformational development, we drew on our own learning along with best practices and learning from other development agencies. Alongside industry efforts to progress the DDD agenda, we seek dialogue to learn from our partners and peer agencies at local, national and international levels.

For World Vision, these are now three of our most pressing issues:

4.1   How do we best uphold DDD principles in fragile contexts?

From a commitment to reach the world's most vulnerable children, our new World Vision Partnership Strategy is leading us to increasingly concentrate our efforts in fragile contexts. We see transformational development as integral to peace building, adapting to rapidly changing contexts and building strong foundations for when conditions normalise. However, there are unique challenges in practising the principles. These challenges relate to a multitude of factors, from maintaining access to communities – often compromised by security issues and population movements – through to balancing urgent and life-saving needs alongside deeper, locally driven problem-solving that will bring positive, sustained change over the longer term.

4.2 How do we best uphold DDD principles amid pressure for evidence-based project models?

Donors face increased and legitimate pressure to fund aid initiatives that are value for money and deliver impact with minimal risk of failure. This leads to a desire to fund evidence-based models that have a greater chance of success. However, in doing so, it creates a risk of ready-made, "cookie-cutter" solutions, which crowd out deeper, locally driven problem-solving and action.

Within these funding opportunities, we are challenged by the pressure to reduce risk and implement proscribed activities in a linear mode. This works against our desire to allow for complexity, to be flexible and responsive, and to empower local stakeholders. How do we ensure that we capture data on the extent to which we are putting DDD principles into practice, and offer that as important evidence to donors to assure them that their investments are more likely to produce sustainable results?

We have made some progress in creating more agile processes for area programme design, monitoring and evaluation, which better support and embed conditions for transformational development. However, more progress is needed, including how to link more agile systems for design, monitoring and evaluation to more flexible systems of financial management and reporting. Without this, the road we have created quickly becomes blocked. We still need to learn how to manage our financial systems in a way that is rigorous and accountable, but is also flexible enough to enable us to be responsive to partner initiatives and frequent changes in the context.

4.3 How do we best uphold DDD principles in shorter-term projects with short-term funding?

World Vision has been in a unique position to work alongside communities for up to 15 years. Now, under increasingly shorter-term funding arrangements, we are grappling with how to maintain the integrity of our Development Programme Approach. Which aspects can we maintain and which do we need to adapt, given our shorter-term presence? We are also keen to explore if there is scope for development agencies to work together more cohesively in a location so that, through individual peaks in funding streams, we are contributing cohesively to a community's vision, priorities and work plans.

Conclusion

World Vision, like many other INGOs, is excited to see the Doing Development Differently movement gathering pace. We are eager to come together with other INGOs to understand the key questions they are grappling with, and to work collaboratively on finding lasting solutions. We hope in the near future that INGOs will be able to provide a significant contribution to the global discourse on DDD, adding a valuable perspective on what it really takes to *do* development differently at both sub-national and community levels.

List of Linked Resources

1. World Vision's Development Programme Approach:
   http://www.wvi.org/development/publication/handbook-development-programmes

2. Video showing transformational development in action in Myanmar: https://vimeo.com/240456696

3. Social Mapping Tool: http://www.wvi.org/development/publication/social-mapping-tool

4. Understanding Government Contributions to Child Well-Being Tool: http://www.wvi.org/development/publication/understanding-government-contributions-child-well-being-tool

5. Exploring Our Context – Part 1:
   http://www.wvi.org/development/publication/exploring-our-context-part-1

6. Exploring Our Context – Part 3:
   http://www.wvi.org/development/publication/exploring-our-context-part-3

7. Community Conversations Tool:
   http://www.wvi.org/development/publication/community-conversations-tool

8. Identification of and Listening to the Most Vulnerable Children:
   http://www.wvi.org/development/publication/identification-and-listening-most-vulnerable-children

9. Building Consensus: http://www.wvi.org/development/publication/building-consensus

10. Community Summit: http://www.wvi.org/development/publication/community-summit

11. Local Partnering for Development Programmes: http://www.wvi.org/local-partnering-essentials

12. Project Models and ADAPTs: http://www.wvi.org/development/project-models-and-adapts

13. Annual Community Review and Planning:
    http://www.wvi.org/development/publication/annual-community-review-and-planning

14. Community Feedback and Response Systems: http://feedbackmechanisms.org/

15. "For them, with them." Building Accountability Systems in Post-Earthquake Nepal:
    http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/for-them-with-them/

16. "Accountability starts with me." Opening Inclusive Feedback Channels in Pakistan:
    http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/accountability-starts-with-me/

17. "Accountability is a mirror that shows not only your face, but also your back." World Vision Ethiopia's Accountability Learning Initiative: http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/accountability-mirror-shows-not-face-also-back/

18. Channels of Hope: http://www.wvi.org/health/publication/channels-hope

19. Field Staff Competency Framework:
    http://www.wvi.org/development/publication/introduction-icd-competencies

20. Learning and Discernment Resource:
http://www.wvi.org/development/publication/learning-and-discernment-resource

21. Programme Effectiveness Self-review Tool:
http://www.wvi.org/development/publication/programme-effectiveness-self-review-tool

22. Exploring Perceptions Tool: http://www.wvi.org/development/publication/exploring-perceptions

23. Message Box Tool: http://www.wvi.org/development/publication/message-box

24. Programme Effectiveness Standards:
http://www.wvi.org/development/publication/programme-effectiveness-standards

25. "Why Our Community-Based Approach Matters" research paper: https://www.alnap.org/help-library/learning-and-reflection-from-world-vision-southern-africa-region's-greenfield-and

26. "Impact Report 2015" – review of 19 long-term area programme evaluations:
https://www.worldvision.org.uk/files/8314/6663/8476/2015_Impact_Report_World_Vision_UK.pdf