



World Vision Education Strategy

Summary Statement

I Operational Focus

I.1 Goals for the Education and Life Skills Strategy

Broadly stated, World Vision's education strategy seeks to assure that children attain the core skills and abilities they need to go on to lead a productive and fulfilling life. It aligns with the shared global commitment to the Education-for-All Dakar goal that calls for all children receiving, at a minimum, 'recognized' and 'measurable' levels of reading, basic mathematics, and the most essential life skills. At the same time, it aligns with World Vision's internal Educated-for-Life target (2012-2016) of increasing the percentage of children in WV program impact areas who are functionally literate by age 11.

I.2 Tracking Basic Skills Development:

World Vision's Education and Life Skills sector seeks to integrate a child's acquisition of basic reading and mathematics skills with their acquisition of essential life skills where essential life skills follow UNICEF's categorization of cognitive skills, personal skills, and interpersonal skills. Since the process of acquiring these essential skills and abilities spans all phases of the child development cycle, indicators, tools, and guidance have been developed to monitor progress toward attaining skill levels appropriate to each stage of that development. Indeed, the acquisition of this set of skills and abilities, reading and basic mathematics included, should be monitored at each of four stages; early childhood, early primary, upper primary, and adolescence.

While the strategy seeks to assure that child learning outcomes are attained incrementally across the various stages of a child's development, it also seeks to provide remedial support to older second chance learners who lacked opportunity to reach the recommended benchmarks at the appropriate age.

I.3 Target Groups

World Vision's Education Strategy covers children 3-18, focusing especially on those in educationally deprived areas with high levels of functional illiteracy. The minimum threshold for triggering intervention is wherever 30% or more of the children at about 11 years of age remain functionally illiterate. Bench-marks for functional literacy are those recommended by the EFA/FTI secretariat. World Vision is concerned about how few of the countries involved in the early grade reading assessments to date have scored anywhere near the recommended standards so it is taking steps to develop baselines and intervention for children most at risk in many of the countries where it is working.

Children in emergency or fragile contexts are particularly vulnerable. World Vision maintains the same education strategy in these contexts, although specific implementing modalities are modified to accommodate specific emergency situations.

I.4 Defining Features of the Strategy

The Education Strategy at World Vision is child focused in that it goes beyond assuring a child friendly learning environment to assuring that all children in given geographies experience learning gains consistent with minimum global standards. The Dakar goals set the bar in terms of the minimum standards, but they in no way limit the range of learning specific World Vision national offices or area development programs will support once the minimum standards are essentially being met. On the contrary, each WV national office completes its own

assessment and then works alongside parent associations and School Management Committees, usually at sub-district levels, to establish action plans for improving learning outcomes that are specific to that context. .

It is World Vision's community focus that, when narrowed to poor and educationally-deprived geographies, defines the sub-set of the world's children that the strategy prioritizes. To assure long-term impact in these settings, World Vision engages at the community level, listening and learning from local stakeholders, and then supporting local action plans aimed at improving reading, mathematics, and life skills learning outcomes. A key objective of the strategy, then, is to foster community ownership from the outset in order to sustain impact beyond the intervention period.

As part of that community focus, WV's strategy calls for developing vibrant working relationships between parent groups and district offices of Ministries of Education as well as their headmasters and teachers at the local level. And, because the School Management Committee is the formal mechanism for linking community action to the delivery of quality, inclusive education to all the children of a given school catchment area, building the capacity of the School Management Committee is seen as critical to the success of any local action plan.

Also as part of that community focus, the strategy calls for integrating reading content to any other development learning that may be taking place in the community, including HIV & AIDs prevention, peace building, citizenship, and/or disaster risk reduction. Engaging children in relevant aspects of other community development activities creates practical opportunities for children to develop the key critical thinking, personal, and interpersonal life skills at the same time. Parent engagement in community conversations around development themes that are integrated into reading material links home and community to the school, ensures the relevance of reading content, and improves reading outcomes as a result. Led by School Management Committees and supported by community involvement, classroom learning extends into the community and community life permeates the classroom. This, as Integrated Learning Theory affirms, links reading and life skills instruction to community life and accelerates child learning gains as a result.

Perhaps the most important element of the community focus, however, is direct community involvement in improving teaching and learning. In more and more settings all across the globe, responsibility for a child's education is being shared between the school, the community, and the home. World Vision's education strategy therefore calls for active community involvement in localizing supplementary reading materials in ways that complement and reinforce classroom learning. It calls for mobilizing community volunteers to 1) support the classroom teacher, 2) to manage school and/or village libraries, and 3) to facilitate and support extracurricular action learning activities that include reading. It also calls for engaging parents in supporting improved reading outcomes through guided activities that can be carried out in the home.

1.5 Flexible Project Models

World Vision's Education Strategy looks to the evidence-based best practices of global, national, and local partners experienced in improving the teaching and learning of reading, mathematics, and essential life skills in order to fast track significant impact in its primary program areas over the immediate 2012-2016 period.

To help streamline that process, World Vision has developed three frameworks or project models for moving these evidence-based best practices forward; one for early childhood, one for primary education, and one for adolescents. Each framework combines the defining features of World Vision's approach with a range of partner-led best practices for local stakeholders to consider. The impact of this mix of programming is then monitored, using recognized indicators, tools, and guidance, to track progress toward the goal of assuring that all children in World Vision program impact areas receive, at a minimum, functional levels of reading, basic mathematics, and the most essential life skills.

2.0 Building Internal Capacity

The capacity required at each level of the organization to support implementation of World Vision's Education Strategy focuses on, but is not limited to, four core areas:

- 1) Informing the participation of local stakeholders
- 2) Building the capacity of teachers and volunteers,
- 3) Developing abundant locally relevant learning materials, and
- 4) Monitoring and evaluating improved reading, basic math, and essential life skills outcomes.

To build internal capacity to effectively support these core areas of the strategy, several crucial positions and programmatic guidance needed to support their role are being instituted across the organization. A key organizing principle in placing any technical support that is being shared across WV entities is to position them as close to relevant field activities as possible. The capacity currently being put in place includes:

2.1 At the Country Level

- National Education Coordinators being positioned in all WV national offices that have prioritized education in their strategies with an additional Associate Education Coordinator in WV national offices with more than 15 World Vision program areas spread across the country.
- Area Education Coordinators with backgrounds in education development to facilitate and support learning improvement by providing hub of learning support services made available to clusters of World Vision program areas that are in relatively close proximity to one another
- Programmatic guidance on implementing reading/life skills improvement options being made available on demand to NOs who are establishing and rapidly expanding reading improvement activities

2.2 At the Regional Level

- Regional Education Advisors being located in each of the regions to coordinate implementation of the strategic frameworks and best practices in their respective regions and then to monitor their impact on child learning outcomes.
- Regional Capacity Building Trainers being located close to relevant field activities who support action learning capacity building on key components on the best practices being introduced to the local Area Education Coordinators of their region. These regional Capacity Building Trainers are first mentored by the external partner consultants introducing best practices in pilot project areas but then support the replication of those practices in other World Vision national offices of that region.
- Additionally, three Resource/M&E Trainers focused specifically on contextualizing the resources and M&E instruments needed to support those best practices are shared by the regions; one for Africa, one for Asia, and one for Latin America.
- Also distributed throughout the regions but concurrently serving as technical leads for the partnership at-large is one expert for each of the following areas: Reading, Early Childhood Education, Peer Education, Youth Empowerment, Child Finance/Livelihoods, Health Education, Education in Emergencies, and Education Data Analysis. These shared experts function both as our link to the external partner organizations helping us reach our strategy goals and as internal leads to community of practice working groups relevant to a particular technical area.

2.3 At the Global Level

- Staffing at the global level covers executive oversight, strategic guidance, community of practice coordination, education sector integration with other WV sectors, global partner liaison, minimum monitoring and evaluation standards, global resource access and contextualization systems, global practitioner professionalization and accreditation systems, and global communications supporting the strategy.

Building internal capacity to deliver on the three overarching frameworks is, of course, much more than placing people with the right qualifications at each level of the organization. World Vision's approach to building a talented and committed cadre of education development professionals draws on reputable systems of self-directed action learning to professionalize and recognize the attainment of the competencies particular positions need to exhibit. At each level, beginning with local volunteers, staff identify mentors, engage with cohorts of peers, participate in narrowly focused training events, journal on progress toward self-identified goals, and report on their progress through their up-line.

3 External Engagement

World Vision's Education Strategy is built around partnering; partnering to collectively achieve inter-agency commitments to improving child learning, partnering to support Ministry of Education impact on child learning, and

then programmatic partnering with other global, national, and local organizations to support community level improvement of child learning outcomes.

The strategy specifically calls for collaboration with UNICEF and INEE around elevating the globally recognized minimum standards for education. And the strategy also calls for collaboration with nongovernment organizations that have developed proven and effective interventions for improving the teaching and learning of reading and mathematics.

In addition, the Strategy calls for expanding WV's own capacity and influence as a global institution focused on improving essential life skills learning outcomes, particularly for children in poor and educationally-deprived contexts.

Finally, World Vision's Education Strategy calls for creating coalitions with other community-focused organizations who share a common commitment to journeying with the poor, including the most vulnerable, in order to collectively influence public policy, programming options, and the level of resources available globally to improve basic child learning outcomes.