

4th Impact Report

World Vision Germany Child Protection Approaches:
What Have We Learned?



Abbreviations

AAC	Area Advisory Council	GFFO	German Federal Foreign Office
AP	Area Programme	IEP	Institute for Economics and Peace
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development	ITAW	It Takes A World Campaign
CBCPG	Community Based Child Protection Groups	JWG	Jerusalem-Westbank-Gaza
CBI	Child Welfare Committees (Spanish: Comisión de Bienestar Infantil)	KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
CF	Celebrating Families	LEAP	Learning through Evaluation with Accountability and Planning
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standard	LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
CoH	Channels of Hope	M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
CoH CP	Channels of Hope Child Protection	MVC	Most Vulnerable Children
COLRED	Local Coordinators for Disaster Reduction (Spanish: Coordinadoras Locales para la Reducción de Desastres)	OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
COVER	World Vision's COVID-19 Emergency Response	PFA	Psychological First Aid
CP	Child Protection	PNC	National Civil Police (Spanish: Policía Nacional Civil)
CP&A	World Vision's Child Protection and Advocacy	PSS	Psychosocial Support
CP&P	Child Protection and Participation	RR	Reporting and Referral
CPC	Community Protection Committees	SCO	Sub-County Children's Officers
CSO	Civil Society Organizations	SDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
CVA	Citizen Voice and Action	SGBV	Sexual Gender-Based Violence
DAC	Development Assistance Committee	ToC	Theory of Change
ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations	ToT	Training of Trainers
EU	European Union	UN	United Nations
EWV	Empowered World View	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
FBOs	Faith Based Organizations	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
FGD	Focus Group Discussion	VCOs	Volunteer Children Officers
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation	WHO	World Health Organization
GBV	Gender Based Violence	WV	World Vision
GEDSI	Gender Equality Disability Inclusion	WVG	World Vision Germany
		WVI	World Vision International

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Dear readers,

Violence against children casts its dark shadow across every country and society, leaving a trail of devastation with immediate and lifelong consequences for the innocent and their communities. This undeniable truth demands action, and it is in response to this call that [World Vision Germany \(WVG\)](#) has dedicated over four decades to safeguarding the most vulnerable children globally.

In the ever-persistent face of challenges such as poverty, exploitation, inequality, conflict, climate change, and the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, the need to shield our children from harm remains a critical challenge. According to a survey by the United Nations Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)), approximately five million children under the age of five lost their lives in 2021 alone. This grim reality is compounded by intersecting crises, magnifying children’s vulnerability to violence, mental health disorders, and the loss of education and familial bonds.

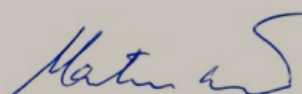
[World Vision \(WV\)](#) stands firm in its commitment to protect the most vulnerable children worldwide. With a presence in around 50 countries, World Vision Germany, in collaboration with local partners, strives to prevent children from peril and to intervene swiftly through humanitarian efforts when acute dangers arise. Through rehabilitative support for those who have already fallen victim to exploitation, abuse, and violence, World Vision creates a ripple effect that positively transforms the lives of children, their families, and communities.

The core of World Vision’s impact lies in its dedication to achieving the United Nations [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#). These 17 goals, with their universal scope and commitment to leaving no one behind, place the world’s most vulnerable and marginalized, especially children, at the forefront of the agenda.

I would like to extend special thanks to [World Vision Guatemala](#), [World Vision Kenya](#), [World Vision Mongolia](#), [World Vision Democratic Republic of Congo](#), [World Vision Jerusalem – West Bank – Gaza](#); and the authorised consultants: the [Centro de Estudios y Proyectos Sociales ONG ceypros](#) (Guatemala), the [University of Nairobi, Department of Anthropology, Gender and African Studies](#) (Kenya), the Professional Sociologists Association NGO (Mongolia) and many consultants, researchers and freelancers in the Democratic Republic of Congo. I would also particularly like to thank the colleagues at World Vision Germany, who have tirelessly spearheaded our impact monitoring, including the impact report series and all the other persons who have contributed to the preparation of this report.

As you delve into the pages of this report, we invite you to explore the depth of World Vision’s dedication and the transformative power of its initiatives. The 4th impact report serves not only as a testament to the necessity of World Vision’s work but also as a commitment to learning, reflection, and the unwavering pursuit of a better and more just world for all children.

Together, let us nurture hope, protect innocence, and strive for a world where every child can flourish.



Martin van de Locht
Head of International Programmes,
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Introduction: Framing the Landscape for Child Protection

In our 4th impact report, World Vision Germany delves into the realm of our Child Protection (CP) initiatives. We aim not only to highlight the effectiveness and indispensability of our work but also to go beyond mere result reporting. In our understanding, Child Protection refers to the preventive and responsive measures taken in order to ensure the safety, well-being, and rights of children, protecting them from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and other forms of harm. It involves creating a secure environment and implementing policies and actions to safeguard children's physical, emotional, and social development. This report delves deeper into exploring the sustainability of our impact, underscoring the organization's unwavering commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. The primary objectives of this publication are threefold:

1) Explain World Vision's Child Protection Models and Approaches:

Provide an explanation and description of World Vision's Child Protection models and approaches, offering insights into the methodologies employed to address and mitigate the risks faced by children.

2) Offer Evidence, Information and Examples of Child Protection Programmes and Projects:

Furnish compelling evidence, data, and information whenever available and practical examples of programmes and projects undertaken by World Vision within Child Protection programming, showcasing tangible outcomes, and illustrating the organization's dedication to making a lasting impact.

3) Document Impact and Lessons Learned:

Document the impact, or the contribution to impact when evidence is not available, and lessons learned from World Vision's Child Protection projects, going beyond mere statistics in order to provide an understanding of the challenges faced, successes achieved, and areas for improvement. This approach aligns with our commitment to continuous learning and enhancement of the evidence within the broader effort to improve the quality of our projects.

This report builds on content from examples and results of background evaluations and final reports from five projects implemented by World Vision. We selected the projects according to content, field of work and project duration. The full reports with the case studies are also published on our [website](#).



↓ Figure 1: Background studies and evaluations



¹Area Programme (AP) is a World Vision geographic definition of a project implementation area. Area Programme also refers to WV project funding. AP and projects are used in these instances interchangeably.

↓ **Table 1: Background studies without specific geographic focus used as background data sources for this analysis**

<p>Longitudinal Survey² “Contribution of faith communities to ending violence against children”</p>	<p>This study tests how faith communities can be effectively engaged to strengthen the projective environment supporting child well-being. A cross-sectional, longitudinal research study was conducted in collaboration with the Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, over a five-year period. Data was collected from communities in Guatemala (Christian-majority), Senegal (Muslim-majority) and Uganda (with a mix of Christians and Muslims).</p> <p>The aim of the research was to understand how the World Vision Project Model “Channels of Hope in Child Protection” empowers faith leaders and faith communities to take action to reduce violence in their local communities and at higher levels of society (Queen Margaret University, 2021).</p>
<p>Child Protection Desk Study and Generic Evaluation Framework</p>	<p>World Vision Germany commissioned the Technical Service Organization (TSO) to conduct a horizontal evaluation of a purposely selected sample of its Child Protection programming in six different contexts. The aim of the study was to contribute to organizational learning and to assess results, effects, impact, and sustainability of its fieldwork. The report describes findings, based on a comprehensive desk study, which will contribute to internal learning by identifying good practices and challenges (TSO, 2021).</p>
<p>World Vision “It Takes A World” campaign</p>	<p>In order to improve significantly the well-being of children, World Vision launched the global campaign “It Takes a World to End Violence Against Children” in March 2017 to impact the lives of millions of the most vulnerable boys and girls in a positive way and also within the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Through over 2 million actions, we have been able to give a voice to over 804,000 children and young people and mobilize them to act. Driven by children’s voices, we influenced 265 policy changes that resulted in new government laws, increased funding, and improved local systems and structures to protect children (World Vision International, 2021).</p>
<p>COVER – World Vision’s Emergency Response to the COVID-19 pandemic</p>	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic was a crisis unprecedented in scale. Children are the most affected by the indirect impacts. Many children and young people were exposed to increased violence and risk to their well-being. World Vision and its staff responded immediately. Since the pandemic was declared in March 2020, our global COVID-19 response (COVER) has reached more than 81 million people on the ground, as well as an additional 15 million people in other countries where we work (World Vision International, 2022).</p>

² In longitudinal evaluations the baseline situation is assessed at the beginning of a project and further surveys are conducted at a later stage. At least one before and after survey is carried out. Indicators are defined for the individual levels of an impact sequence. They are used to assess whether the impact hypothesis applies or whether adjustments need to be made depending on the project duration. For example, a five-year study of children learning to read would be a longitudinal study. Outcome is measured over time.

Introduction: Framing the Landscape for Child Protection

This edition of the report is tailored to resonate with a diverse audience, including development and humanitarian professionals, as well as those concerned institutions and citizens who share an interest in understanding and supporting our work. Through engaging narratives and informative content, we aim to foster a deeper understanding of our Child Protection endeavours and encourage collaboration in our collective pursuit of a safer and more secure environment for children worldwide. This study does not explain all the technical details regarding the quantitative and qualitative data and other technical aspects of the background documents. These details can be found in the case studies.

The introductory chapter **“Framing the Landscape for Child Protection”** provides an overview of our vision and impact at World Vision. This is done by observing the global context and Child Protection as the theme of this report.

In the second chapter **“Observing the World Vision Child Protection Approach within Global Trends and Local Contexts”** we delve into the challenges surrounding vulnerability and violence against children, analyzing

experiences within our project approaches. This includes an exploration of related fields, such as gender-based violence, as part of our holistic effort to address various factors of discrimination and intersectionality.

The third chapter **“Child Protection Theory of Change”** conducts a comprehensive analysis of World Vision’s Child Protection Theory of Change, exploring both emerging opportunities and challenges that shape our approach.

Subsequently, **“Thematic Analysis: Impact and Lessons Learned”** unfolds in this chapter, examining the impact and lessons learned within the Child Protection approaches. This exploration spans four domains: i) Resilience, Life Skills and the Voice of Girls and Boys, ii) Attitude and Behaviour Change, iii) Services and Support Mechanisms and iv) Laws and Accountability.

The concluding chapter **“Conclusion: Upholding the Future of Child Protection”** aims to analyze the key takeaways and lessons learned within our Child Protection approaches, providing a synthesis of the insights gained throughout the report.



Our Vision: Sustainable Well-Being and Child Protection for all Children

[World Vision International \(WVI\)](#) is an international, inter-denominational Christian children's aid organization. We are dedicated to tackling poverty and injustice around the world by providing a better future for the world's most vulnerable children, their families, and communities. This is done within the framework of development cooperation, humanitarian aid, and political advocacy work. The primary goal of World Vision is to protect and improve in a sustainable manner the well-being of children. We work on three levels: The individual level of the child, the immediate living environment, such as the family or village community, and the wider living environment at both local and national levels that includes services for children. While we do not provide traditional protection services like security or law enforcement, we do incorporate various protection mechanisms into our programmes, from child-friendly spaces to gender-based violence support and prevention, alongside disaster preparedness and inter-faith dialogue as part of reconciliation processes to reduce violence and promote sustainable peace.

World Vision operates through a decentralized structure that emphasizes localization and community-driven development. It comprises international headquarters, regional offices, national offices, and field offices, all working collaboratively to implement programmes tailored to local contexts. In instances where World Vision is mentioned, the entire World Vision partnership including World Vision Germany is referred to. As such, by prioritising partnerships with governments, NGOs, and grassroots organizations, World Vision ensures that interventions are responsive to the unique needs and priorities of communities. This approach has recognized and supported locally led efforts in fostering ownership, empowerment and sustainability, enabling World Vision to address effectively poverty and injustice on a global scale while respecting local cultures and identities.

[World Vision Germany](#) is part of the global World Vision partnership, which has been active in 100 countries as of 2022. A total of 3.2 million sponsored children received comprehensive support, which is aimed at meeting their basic needs³. This can include medical care, adequate nutrition, education, or access to clean drinking water. In the same year, World Vision Germany supported 276 projects in 49 countries in Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe, the Near/Middle East, and Asia.

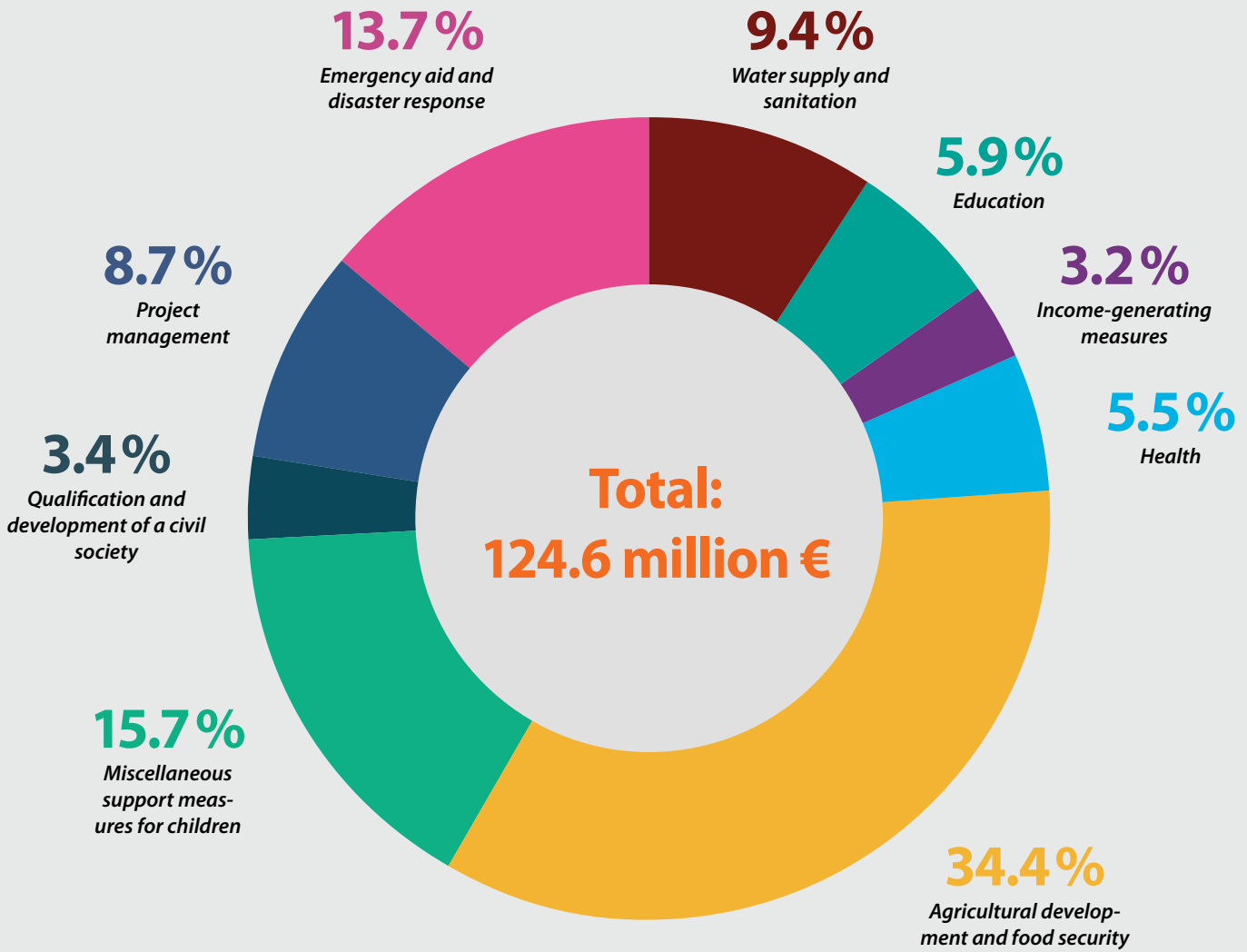
We are funded in various ways. We distinguish between three funding sources at World Vision:

- sponsorship-funded, long-term (approx. ten to twelve years) regional development projects,
- projects financed by private funds and/or companies and
- projects financed by public donors (such as the [European Union](#), the [German Federal Foreign Office \(GFFO\)](#), the [German Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation \(BMZ\)](#) and the [Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau \(KfW\)](#)).

In 2022, World Vision Germany funded projects with a total of 124.6 million Euro. This made it possible to reach 147,837 sponsored children (World Vision Germany, 2022)⁴. In order to achieve our goals for child well-being, World Vision Germany integrates cross-sectoral Child Protection, and issues of gender equity and inclusion within main sectors like Education, Health and Nutrition, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), including Livelihoods in terms of agricultural and economic development, and the environment in order to address the issues of climate change. The following overview shows the allocation of both government and non-government resources in 2022 according to the sectors in question:

³ More information at www.worldvision.de/patenschaft/informieren (German) and www.wvi.org/child-sponsorship (English)

⁴ More information at World Vision Germany's Annual Report 2022 www.worldvision.de/sites/worldvision.de/files/pdf/WorldVision_Jahresbericht_2022.pdf (currently only available in German)



↑ Figure 2: Project funding by sector in 2022. Source: World Vision Deutschland, 2023

For each of the sectors, we have further developed several systematic approaches that have proven their worth in international development cooperation and humanitarian aid. This enables us to achieve short-, medium- and long-term impact in the project regions through targeted measures.

We work with those who are often invisible due to gender inequality, social exclusion, or disability. We put these children first. Through a deliberate focus, we are expanding our work in order to reduce extreme vulnerabilities and risk factors like the climate crisis. To do this, we develop effective, relevant projects and deploy the right leadership, attitude, and skills. Furthermore, World Vision

Germany allocates resources to achieve the greatest impact. The provision of Child Protection and children's rights as well as the participation of children and adolescents are our explicit focus in this respect.

Utilizing the inter-religious dialogues and by focusing on the following political/technical demands, our programming is guided by:

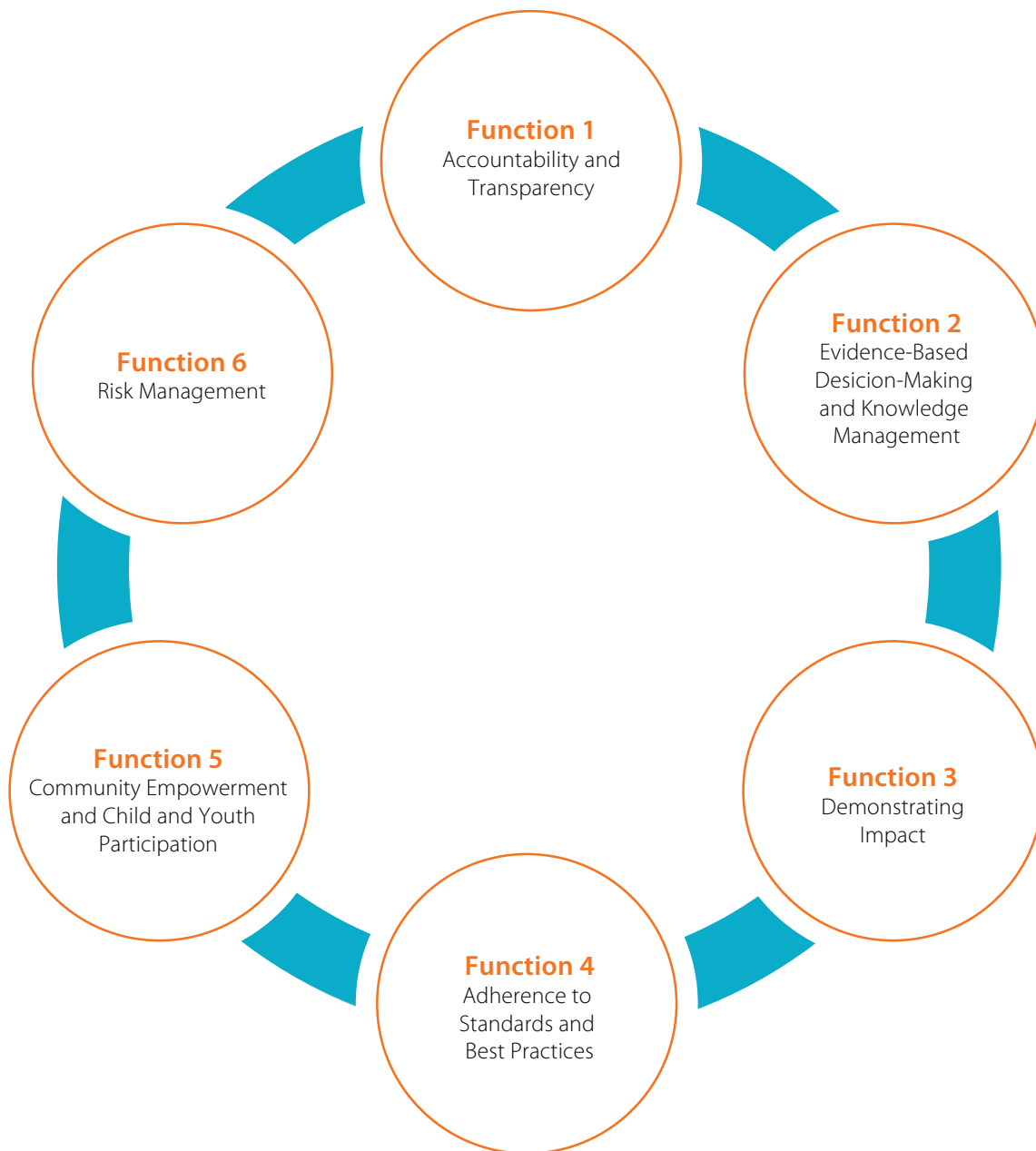
- recognizing the increased effectiveness of measures through the involvement of religious actors,
- diversifying funding for faith-based organizations,
- including religious actors in strategic and operational plans and implementation.

Understanding of Impact in World Vision

World Vision understands impact to be a combination of effects triggered by aid and project measures, which may be intended or unintended, tangible or intangible, positive or negative, and medium or long-term. For example, the establishment of Child Protection committees in a community is not an impact. However, their ability to prevent and respond to incidents which lead in turn to the reduction in violence and abuse against children is. Therefore, we can speak about a positive impact only when the committee is engaged and active in address-

ing harmful practices and behaviour, for example in the form of it carrying out awareness raising and sensitization activities, logging and reporting child welfare risks to authorities for further investigation, cooperating with other institutions like referring survivors to adequate medical care – to name a few. Thus, in the long term, physical violence and abuse against children decreases.

With this understanding, our impact monitoring has several functions, which interact and complement each other:



↑ **Figure 3: Functions of World Vision's impact monitoring**

Function 1 – Accountability and Transparency:

Impact monitoring provides a transparent and accountable framework which showcases the outcomes and effectiveness of the projects to various stakeholders, including donors, participants, and the wider community. We, together with our project stakeholders, are accountable to our development partners such as donors, World Vision colleagues, World Vision partner offices and, most importantly, the participants in our projects.

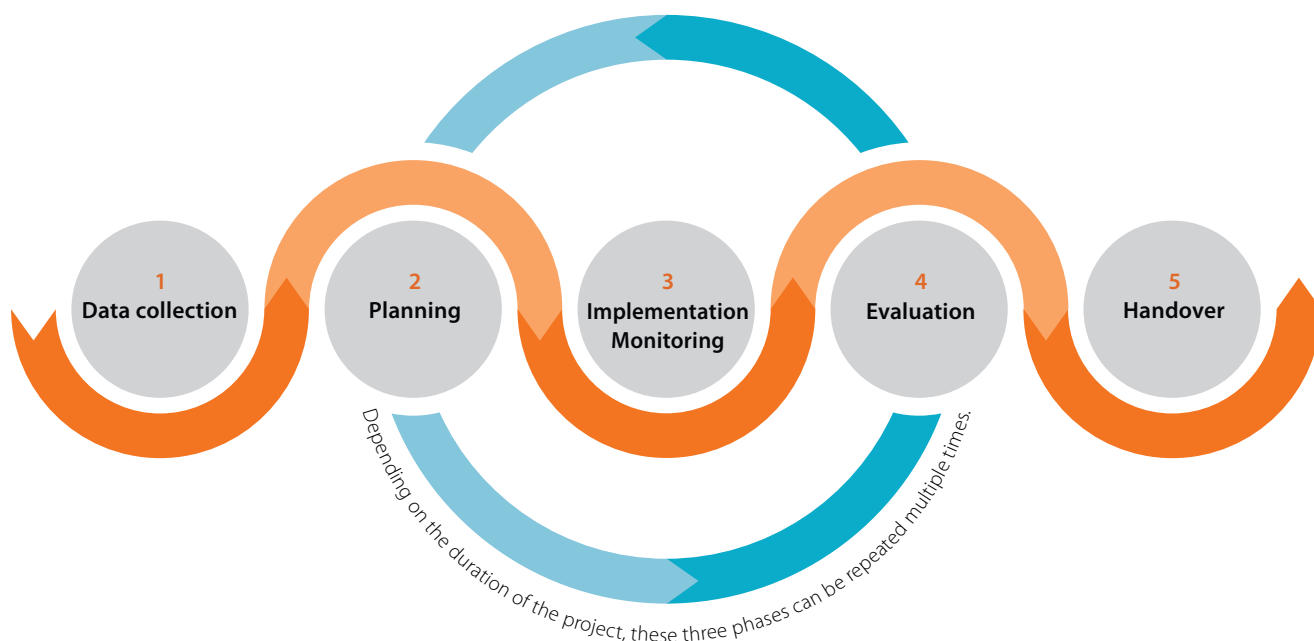
All our projects and programmes follow a set of agreed principles under the project management cycle “LEAP – Learning through Evaluation with Accountability and Planning”⁵ (Figure 4). This customized tool has been tested over many years and is applied to all World Vision projects worldwide and ensures accountability and transparency in our undertakings. LEAP is applied both in development cooperation and, in an adapted form, in humanitarian aid.

Our projects take place in a complex environment and increasingly in fragile contexts. Many stakeholders with different interests are involved. External factors such as natural disasters, conflicts and domestic political factors can influence project outcomes.

World Vision’s own structures and staff in the project areas on the ground implement or facilitate the work. We always work together with local and international organizations, governments, groups, institutions, and the target groups. This involvement and targeted technical support are intended not only to help achieve the desired goals and impact but also to empower people to contribute independently to maintain and develop the results, even after our assignment in the region has ended. As an organization, it is important for us to be driven by local resources, knowledge and skills in order to promote and initiate change processes.

In order to be able to make statements about the achievement of changes, goals and impacts, the World Vision partnership including World Vision Germany uses indicators that show changes. We have selected standard indicators for the respective sectors in which World Vision works. In a “Compendium of Indicators”, definitions and notes on the contextualization and measurement of the indicators can be found. These are also available for the Child Protection sector (Table 2, p. 13).

A LEAP project cycle consists of five phases



↑ **Figure 4: World Vision LEAP Project Cycle**

⁵More information at <https://www.worldvision.de/informieren/unsere-themen/entwicklung/partnerschaft> (German) and in the 3rd Impact Report at p. 14, 15 https://www.worldvision.de/sites/worldvision.de/files/pdf/WorldVision_Germany_Impact_Report.pdf (English)

Localization

There is no uniform understanding of localization. In 2016 in the [Grand Bargain](#) agreement some of the largest humanitarian donors and agencies committed to “making principled humanitarian action as local as possible and as international as necessary” (The Grand Bargain, 2016, p. 5) and thus laid the foundation. There are some goals of localization:

- Equitable Partnerships,
- Increase direct investment in local actors,
- Involvement of local actors and support for local mechanism,
- Capacity Strengthening,

- Understanding the humanitarian situation from the perspective of those affected, identifying their own solutions and supporting them in implementing them and learning from them,
- The transfer of decision-making power, resources and responsibilities to local actors.

Localization is central to World Vision’s approach. Project participants take an active role, ideally drive the agenda and assume responsibility and building capabilities. We recognise that local actors have a better understand of the local circumstances, politics and culture.

↓ **Table 2: Examples of Child Protection standard indicators used in World Vision**

Indicator	Proportion of users who are satisfied with the Child Protection services they have received	# of communities that have established Child Protection committee with a clear function and role	% of targeted communities with a functioning community-level referral system for children affected by injuries or impairments.
Level	Child	Community	Community
Description	Children are protected, free from violence and harmful practices	Communities provide safe, enabling and inclusive environment	Communities provide safe, enabling and inclusive environment
Theme	Access to Child Protection Services	Community Child Protection Structures and Mechanisms	Community Child Protection Structures and Mechanisms

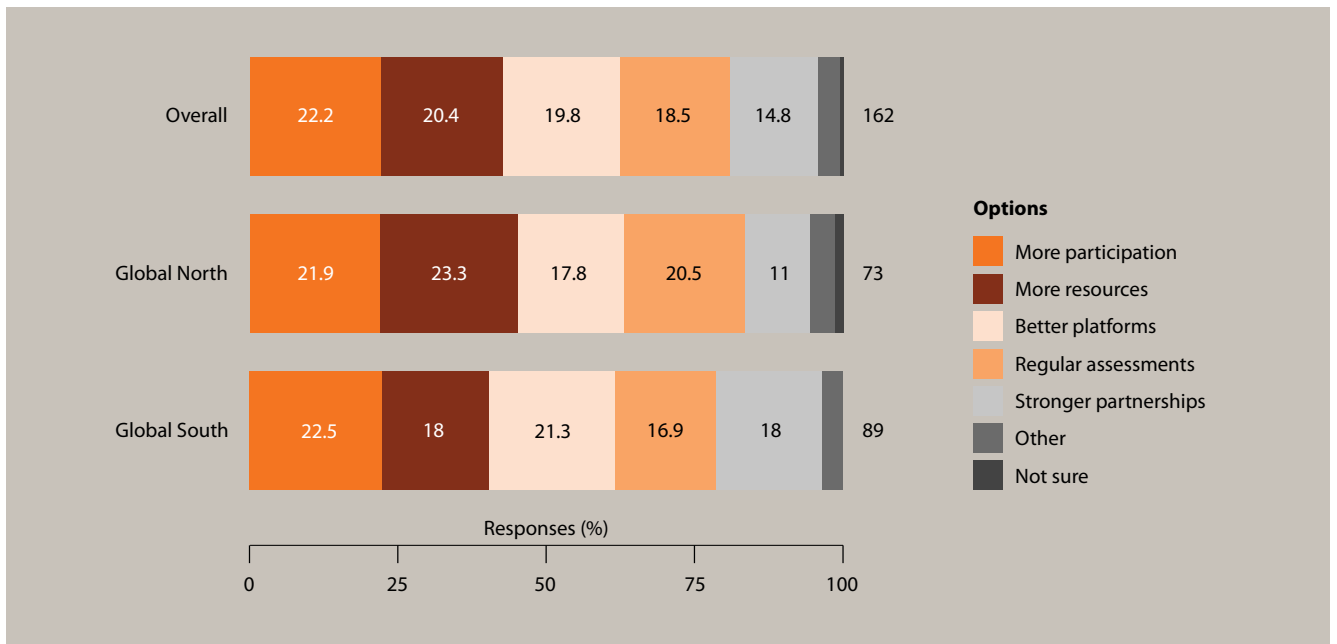
Function 2 – Evidence-Based Decision-Making and Knowledge Management:

Impact monitoring generates information, data and evidence that can be used for informed decision-making. This evidence is valuable in making strategic choices, allocating resources efficiently, and prioritizing interventions based on demonstrated effectiveness. We make every effort so that our evaluations bring an objective and independent viewpoint, ensuring that decision-making is not biased and is rooted in reliable data.

Humanitarian and development organizations are known for their decentralised, often global, federated, and disparate operations which make knowledge sharing a daunting task. Organizations need to negotiate distribution battles for funding and the conflicting voices within the organization that can hinder the smooth flow of knowledge (Guretzky, 2001). World Vision is no exception to this challenge.

Utilizing information harvested from monitoring and evaluations is of the utmost importance to us and our partners. In the World Vision Germany commissioned research report *“How can humanitarian and development organisations learn, grow, and evolve in fast-changing, fragile, and complex environments?”*, most development and humanitarian partners, including World Vision offices,

acknowledge limited capacity for translating learning into practice, followed by limited resources. For example, recommendations of evaluations prove difficult to be addressed in a systemic way. In general resistance to change hampers integrating conclusions and learning from monitoring and evaluation into programme and project implementation. Our research indicates that staff capacity at all levels is needed to be able to follow up on evidence-based decision-making, followed by more staff time to be able to reflect on knowledge findings. Our management responses agree with our partners the recommendations which need to be followed to ensure continuous learning from evaluations (Movimantar/World Vision Germany, 2023.) When examining the ability to share and implement knowledge effectively amongst a sample of development and humanitarian organizations including World Vision partners, 24% of organizations rated their ability to share knowledge and learning as ‘good’, whereas a considerable percentage replied ‘poor’ (24%) and ‘very poor’ (18%). When asked about options for improved knowledge management and learning processes, the most widely selected options were ‘more participation’ (22.2%), ‘more resources’ (20.4%), and ‘better platforms’ (19.8%). The increasing involvement of World Vision and our project implementation partners in partnerships and networks adds another layer of complexity to the meaningful exchange of information and data.



↑ **Figure 5: Optimal approaches to improve learning and KM practices, Source: Movimantar/World Vision Germany, 2023**

Management and staff are confronted with the need for effective cross-organizational coordination and communication in order to manage knowledge across diverse and geographically dispersed areas (Movimantar/World Vision Germany, 2023).

World Vision Germany has designed several processes under the theme of Knowledge Management so as to address the utilization of our impact monitoring into project implementation. Selected projects are requested to follow up on mutually agreed actions through the “management response” template. The COVID-19 pandemic taught us valuable lessons about our ability to connect and organize global learning events. However, at the project level, development and humanitarian actors are challenged with the lack of capacity to provide the consistent utilization of findings, especially those from evaluations. The follow-up actions prove to be inconsistent and lack resources and management prioritization (Movimantar/World Vision Germany, 2023)

Function 3 – Demonstrating Impact:

By formulating impact-effect interdependencies, we can more easily understand how we can achieve the desired overall goals and vision. With the following example of a simple impact chain, we would like to illustrate that the individual steps can be assigned to four levels and that it is primarily about the processes and individual measures to achieve the long-term intended goal or impact (Figure 6).

Between individual impact steps, there are often other underlying assumptions that need to be considered. For example, our projects in Kenya assume that “Child Protection takes place within unique socio-cultural settings. For a lasting impact, there is a need to transform families, communities, and cultural practices to become supportive

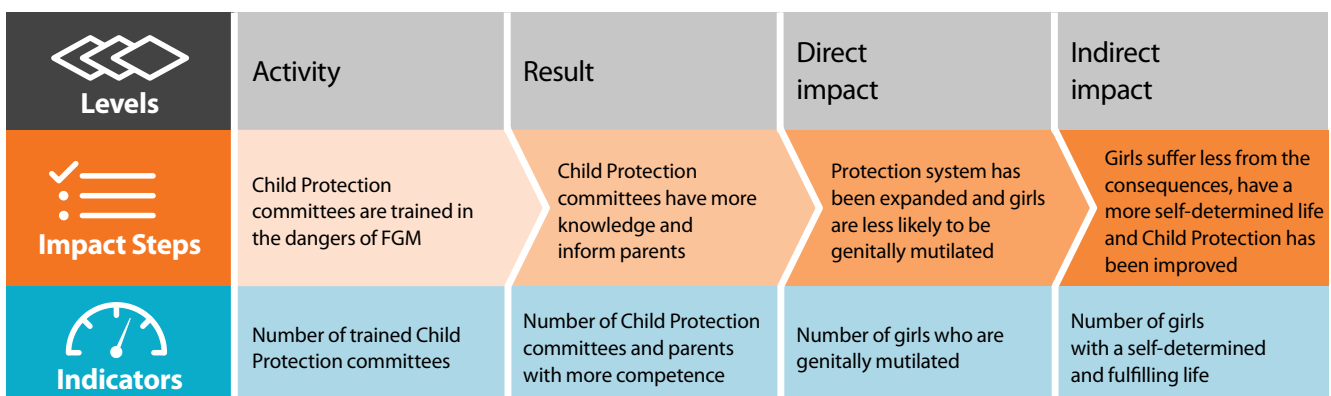
of Child Protection” (World Vision Kenya, 2023). Whether participants on a training course can learn something depends on many factors, e.g. the quality of the training, the motivation of the participants, and the overall framework conditions.

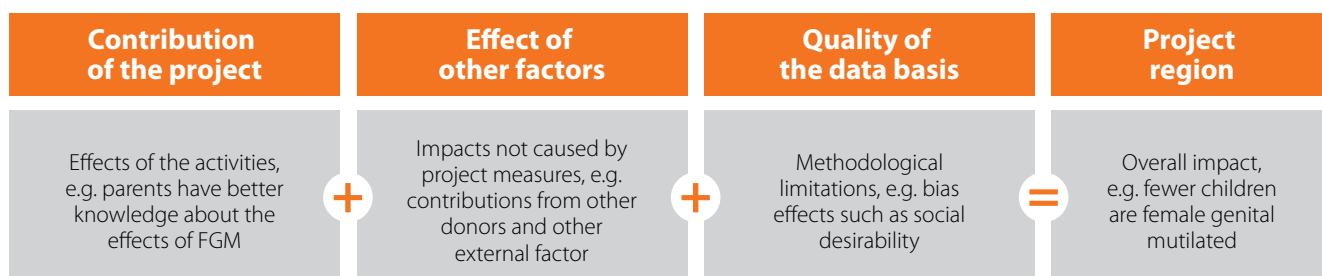
Moreover, as already mentioned, our work takes place in a complex environment, with many different interests. Other components and factors must also be considered in every project measure. For example, beside the cultural context, these other factors such as behavioural patterns and lack of education can also have an influence on FGM and make it more difficult to eliminate this practice. Within the framework of project planning, an attempt is made to anticipate any possible negative effects and to counteract or mitigate them (the “Do No Harm” approach).

We also need to reflect on the extent to which the noticeable changes can be attributed to the project’s activities. If fewer girls are genitally mutilated at the end of the project than at the beginning, then there is a positive effect. However, it says nothing about whether World Vision’s activities have contributed to this impact, or whether, for example, state laws punishing the practices have led to it. For example, in Kenya, in 2011 the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act was introduced at county and national level (World Vision Kenya, 2023; Figure 7, p. 16).

In addition, we need to reflect on, for instance, whether we have implemented our activities effectively, whether the training courses have led to better implementation of Child Protection, which other stakeholders have contributed, and what other factors in the environment have changed and influenced the overall impact. This chain of factors is observed under the key function of demonstrating the impact with the M&E systems that are in place.

↓ **Figure 6: Interdependencies of impact**





↑ Figure 7: Consideration of the effects of other factors in addition to the effects of our measures

Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) – the nine commitments:

People and communities in situations of crisis and vulnerability

1. can exercise their rights and participate in actions and decisions that affect them,
2. can access timely and effective support in accordance with their specific needs and priorities,
3. are better prepared and more resilient to potential crises,
4. can access support that does not cause harm to people or the environment,
5. can safely report concerns and complaints and get them addressed,
6. can access coordinated and complementary support,
7. can access support that is continually adapted and improved based on feedback and learning,
8. can interact with staff and volunteers who are respectful, competent and well-managed,
9. can expect that resources are managed ethically and responsibly (CHS Alliance, Group URD and the Sphere Project, 2024).

Function 4 – Adherence to Standards and Best Practices:

For most projects, World Vision conducts evaluations with a so-called longitudinal design to assess the impact of the measures. In other projects, we conduct larger-scale evaluations by external consultants. For development cooperation projects, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) – relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability – are used as a standard basis for evaluation.⁶ For humanitarian aid projects, these are supplemented by the criteria of appropriateness, connectedness, and reach.⁷

As an organization, we are committed to the nine voluntary commitments of the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS). Among others, the 7th CHS standard underlines that actions for local communities and target groups should be improved through continuous reflection (CHS, 2024).

Many projects are technically complex and interdependent. For example, Child Protection measures and gender approaches show many unintended project results. Standard application of the OECD-DAC criteria in our evaluations and monitoring have still limited explicit focus on gender equality even though gender is covered under the criterium of relevance, especially when considering the guidelines and policies of development partners. Our lessons learned overlap with experiences by our partners and show that gender-blind project designs, the lack of reliable data, the limited understanding of gender dynamics, and the complexity of gender indicators in combination with subjectivity in evaluations limit our ability to address gender aspects adequately within our M&E systems. In order to overcome these

⁶More information at https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/applying-evaluation-criteria-thoughtfully_543e84ed-en

⁷More about the Evaluation criteria in Humanitarian Aid (EHA) in the 3rd Impact Report on p. 19 https://www.worldvision.de/sites/worldvision.de/files/pdf/WorldVision_Germany_Impact_Report.pdf

challenges, World Vision Germany has started the roll-out of an adapted Gender Equality Disability Inclusion Strategy (GEDSI), which is partly informed by the adapted OECD-DAC guidance on Gender Equality and the

Empowerment of Women and Girls (OECD, 2023). Yet, capturing the complexity of the impact on gender, disability, and other vulnerable groups has been challenging in our projects and programmes.

Mix of data collection methods

Evaluations often include a mix of qualitative data collection (e.g. group or expert interviews, ranking methods), quantitative methods (e.g. surveys of families) and document analysis. Such a mix of methods helps to compensate for the weaknesses of individual methods and to illuminate the project from different perspectives.

Some of the most used data collection methods include:

- **Survey** – A survey comprises a structured series of questions that respondents are asked according to a standard protocol. A survey tends to include mostly closed-ended questions.
- **In-depth Interview** – An in-depth interview is usually conducted one-on-one by an interviewer who asks an interviewee about their knowledge, experiences, feelings, perceptions, and preferences on a certain topic.
- **Focus Group Discussion (FGD)** – A focus group discussion involves a skilled moderator who stimulates discussion among a group of individuals to elicit experiences, feelings, per-

ceptions, and preferences about a topic. The moderator uses a list of topics to be discussed, ensures all voices are represented, and keeps the discussion on track. Focus group data may include information about body language, group dynamics, and tone, in addition to what is said.

- **Observation** – Direct observation entails a trained (human) observer who records data based on what they see, hear, or touch, often based on a guided protocol. Examples include observation of skills-based performance and observations of a physical environment or setting of an intervention.
- **Recording Data Through Administrative Actions** – Recording data through administrative actions in the course of implementing activities is one of the most common methods of data collection, particularly for our implementing partners. Examples include recording attendance at training courses, or deliveries of food aid.

Function 5 – Community Empowerment and Child and Youth Participation:

World Vision's partnership impact monitoring encourages community engagement and participation by involving participants in the evaluation process. This ensures that the perspectives and experiences of those directly affected by the projects are considered. Partnering and capacity building of local organizations have become outcomes of many of our projects.

The principles underpinning World Vision's work emphasize active child and youth participation, with a central focus on granting children a voice. This 4th impact report

reveals successful child participation at various levels, which extend beyond mere involvement and encompass political and social spheres. To name some examples, the El Tumbador programme in Guatemala exemplifies successful child and youth participation throughout the project implementation cycle. Children, adolescents, and youth actively contribute to family decisions, and initiatives have increased the participation of young people with disabilities (World Vision Guatemala, 2022). Notably, community-level impacts are evident, particularly in the enhanced access to education for girls and the increased involvement in the decision-making processes, as acknowledged by 72% of interviewees (World Vision Guatemala, 2022).

World Vision's partnership strategy includes creating platforms at the community level, providing wider spaces for children and young people to participate and collaborate on issues affecting them. In Guatemala, the establishment of child protagonist networks has facilitated active participation, granting children and adolescents a significant role in community decision-making and transformation (World Vision Guatemala, 2022).

Involving children and youth in project activities and evaluations has an empowering effect. The focus on reflecting diverse opinions and perspectives, especially in evaluations, underscores the importance of understanding the success and impact of measures from the perspective of those directly affected. This approach not only ensures a comprehensive assessment but also promotes the devel-

Ethical consideration in Child and Youth Participation:

- Participation must be transparent, voluntary, and respectful,
- A safe and trusting environment must be provided,
- Pedagogical elements should be included,
- Power imbalances need to be addressed,
- A special emphasis on avoiding re-traumatisation in projects dealing with sensitive issues such as violence and abuse,
- Thinking and working in an intersectional and culturally sensitive way,
- Being inclusive (for example include children with disabilities),
- The best interests of the child should be given top priority in all activities,
- Participation is only possible with the full information and consent of the children and their guardians.

opment of critical skills in children and young people, such as forming independent opinions and expressing dissent in a constructive manner.

Ethical considerations, particularly in Child Protection, are highlighted as crucial. World Vision's commitment to ethical standards is evident in the existence of partnership guidelines, mandatory for all employees, emphasizing the "Do No Harm" principle, and prioritizing the welfare of children. The inclusion of a dedicated chapter on safe child participation and an "Ethic Quick Reference Guide" underscores the organization's commitment to ethical practices in projects involving children and youth.

The analysis of the programmes in Kenya, conducted by evaluators from the Department of Anthropology, Gender and African Studies, University of Nairobi⁸, highlights the importance of children and young people being the "agents of their lives". The utilization of child-centred methods, such as pictures and drawings, and the incorporation of young people in evaluative discussions, demonstrate a nuanced approach to participation. The acknowledgment that child and youth participation is a process, coupled with criticism of those consultants lacking familiarity with the topic, underscores the need for sensitivity and expertise in this realm (World Vision Kenya, 2023).

While positive outcomes are reported in the adherence to Child Protection guidelines in the Kenyan programmes, challenges persist in ensuring high-quality standards across the board. The limitations in monitoring and evaluation systems, reliance on untrained staff for data collection, and variable practices in data protection underscore the practical challenges in maintaining consistent ethical protocols. Moreover, some challenges are shaped by the context. For example, our partners in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are limited by the ongoing conflict in engaging with certain communities in general, including for evaluation learning. Even systematic monitoring data collection is, in this environment, very challenging in terms of security and safety for our staff and our partners. Project experience from Mongolia shows that vast geographic distances impact the ability to enable the participation and empowerment of the rural population. Other challenges are linked to operational and strategic considerations. For example, many project implementation

⁸ More Information at the University of Nairobi, Department of Anthropology, Gender and African Studies <https://african-studies.uonbi.ac.ke/>

units lack the resources to enable sufficient participation of all the required groups of participants and partners (World Vision Mongolia, 2021).

World Vision’s commitment to child and youth participation is substantiated through successful initiatives in Guatemala and Kenya, demonstrating positive impacts on individual lives and community development. The organization’s adherence to ethical standards is commendable, with clear guidelines and comprehensive training for employees. However, challenges persist in implementing high-quality requirements consistently, revealing a need for standardized practices, improved monitoring and evaluation systems, and heightened awareness among subcontractors (World Vision Guatemala, 2022; World Vision Kenya, 2023).

Function 6 – Risk Management:

In the realm of our projects, the mandatory practice of identifying and formulating a functional risk register serves as a critical component for ensuring an effective programme and project implementation. Beyond its immediate utility, the compiled risk register also functions as a valuable reference source for subsequent projects, fostering a culture of organizational learning and adaptive change management.

The necessity to monitor identified risks periodically is underscored by the dynamic nature of project environments and this requires a continuous alignment with evolving

circumstances. This ongoing monitoring process is intrinsic to proactively addressing potential challenges, thereby safeguarding the project’s trajectory and outcomes.

A comprehensive approach to risk identification is emphasized, spanning various dimensions including contextual, financial, compliance, Child Protection, strategic, operational, sustainability, and project design considerations. The explicit recognition of risks across these diverse categories is pivotal, as it enables a nuanced understanding of their potential impact on critical project parameters such as time, scope, and budget.

The overarching objective in this risk management framework does not involve risk elimination, but rather the systematic identification and risk mitigation measures. This strategic perspective aligns with the recognition that risks are inherent to project undertakings. Therefore, the emphasis is on fostering a proactive and adaptive stance rather than seeking complete risk avoidance.

In essence, the obligation to delineate project risks and construct a functional risk register transcends mere compliance; it emerges as a strategic imperative for those organizations engaged in grant projects. This approach not only enhances the project’s resilience in the face of uncertainties but also contributes to the cumulative knowledge base, facilitating continuous improvement, and informed decision-making across the organizational landscape.

↓ **Table 3: Example of World Vision GFFO Project Risk Analysis**

Risks	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Strategies
Insecurity (resurgence of violent or armed conflict/ crossfires) in certain areas that might affect target locations	High	High	Impose World Vision security policy and protocols
Occurrence of natural disasters and other climate hazards	Medium	High	Ensure the disaster preparedness plans are in place and ready to be activated when emergency strikes

Introduction: Framing the Landscape for Child Protection

Risks	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Strategies
High turnover of government officials or local authorities that could lead to change of priority	Medium	High	Engage key stakeholders from the early stage (planning stage) and develop good documentation that could be passed on to their successor
Using mobile money transfer for cash transfer to the participants due to limited coverage and cash out agent	High	Medium	Suitable methods (including direct cash transfer) would be used where applicable, and the availability of sim cards and money transfer agents will be ensured



Observing the World Vision Child Protection Approach within Global Trends and Local Contexts

In this section, we examine the trends that influence our approach to Child Protection programming. Our efforts align with the SDG 2030 agenda, and we strive to align our protocols and guidelines with the recognition of the vulnerability of children and the occurrence of Violence Against Children. This includes addressing gender-based violence and child abuse, emphasizing the importance of avoiding any unintended negative consequences and ensuring do-no-harm responses.

World Vision’s Child Protection approaches are evolving to address interconnected challenges, with a growing focus on cross-cutting issues such as climate change and fragile contexts. The subsequent chapter delves into these factors, illustrating how they impact our work in Child Protection.

Child Protection within the Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs)

Approximately 570 million children live in extreme poverty. 230 million children have no administrative record due to the non-existence of their birth certificates. Up to 1 billion children are subject to physical, sexual, or psychological violence (WHO, 2020). In 2021, roughly 13,800

under-five deaths occurred every day (UNICEF, 2023c). These are some underlining realities that inform us and our partners where our contribution to the global effort within the Child Protection domain is most acute and must be invested.

With our sector approaches and project approaches we contribute to the [SDGs](#). We also monitor the SDG progress within the scope of our interventions. By 2030, the global community has committed to achieving the 17 SDGs. In doing so, it wants to advance economic, social, and ecological development and create a more just and sustainable world for all people as well as ending violence against children. The central guiding principle is encompassed in the agreed principle by the global community “[Leave No One Behind](#)”, indicating that nobody, including children, should be left behind the global development agenda.

Within the goals, children and their well-being have numerous meanings. In the areas of Child Protection and child rights, World Vision supports primarily the following SDGs:



For instance, the evaluation report from our programmes in Kenya highlights that aligning county and area programming with the SDGs reinforces the interventions at all levels. The Area Programme El Tumbadore in Guatemala addresses the following topics, which are aligned with the priorities of the SDGs: Children, Adolescents, and Youth free of violence, Health, Food Security and Nutrition, Education and Life Skills, Economic Development, and Disaster Risk Reduction (World Vision Guatemala, 2022). SDG 2 ‘Zero Hunger’ is linked to our work with our project approaches contributing to the SDG 2 to end hunger by 2030. Yet, in

2022, an estimated 45 million children under the age of five suffered from wasting, 148 million had stunted growth and 37 million were overweight.

In our analysis, the evidence points at the following examples of the SDG alignment:

- SDG monitoring framework includes child-focused indicators at the level of national strategies (e.g. World Vision Kenya) or at the specific project level (as in Mongolia, Guatemala),

- Strengthening the capacity to improve the collection, dissemination and use of high-quality, comprehensive and up-to-date disaggregated data under SDG-related indicators,
- Our projects leverage existing national monitoring and reporting mechanisms for reporting on the SDGs to the extent possible, despite the lack of available data at the sub-national and project-level,
- Usage of statistical data from a variety of sources in assessing SDG progress including the World Visions compendium of indicators, which is aligned with SDGs to the extent possible,
- The measurement of Child Protection through specific and partly standardized monitoring and evaluation data collection tools.

Vulnerability of and Violence against Children and its Relation to Child Protection

Children have rights! In 1989, the United Nations laid down these special rights in a joint agreement, the so-called [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), with three associated additional protocols. The rights are applied universally worldwide to all children and young people up to the age of 18 – regardless of gender, origin, religion, or social status. Children’s rights include protection from violence, abuse, and neglect (Article 19), the right to the protection of life and integrity (Article 6), and protection from sexual abuse (Article 34).

The concept of vulnerability is defined by the extent to which individuals can be disproportionately affected by disruptions to their environment and social support systems. According to the World Vision partnership, the most vulnerable children are those whose quality of life and potential fulfilment is compromised by extreme restrictions and rights violations. These vulnerabilities manifest themselves in various elements, such as extreme deprivation (e.g. poverty, neglect), abusive or exploitative relationships (e.g. abuse, trafficking), serious discrimination (e.g. gender, disability), and exposure to catastrophes or disasters.

Children facing multiple challenges because of these factors, bear a heavier burden, limiting their opportunities for self-fulfilment. Violence against children is a critical aspect of vulnerability. According to a joint study by the [WHO](#), [UNICEF](#), [UNESCO](#), the [UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children](#), and the [Global Partnership to End Violence against Children](#) around one billion children (one out of every two children worldwide) suffer some form of violence each year (WHO, 2020). This violence can take various forms, occur in different settings, and be perpetrated by different individuals. Numerous factors contribute to children being exposed to violence, including poverty, hunger, precari-

ous living conditions, lack of education at the micro level, and discrimination, socio-cultural and political aspects, state failure, and climate change at the macro level. Violence can take many different forms, be perpetrated by different people, and take place in different settings. Despite children’s inherent rights, national protection systems vary widely from country to country, ranging from weak to non-existent enforcement and legal frameworks.

Approximately 10% of the world’s children lack legal protection from physical punishment within the family. In specific cases, such as Kenya, where half of adolescents reportedly experienced violence during childhood, the consequences of violence are severe (World Vision Kenya, 2023). These consequences include injuries, disabilities, trauma, mental illness, educational underachievement, high-risk behaviours, chronic diseases, infectious diseases, and even death. Girls and women are disproportionately affected by less visible forms of violence, such as sexual and domestic violence.

The interplay or intersection of multiple socially constructed characteristics (e.g. gender, class, disability, immigration status, geographical location, education level, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and age) increases vulnerability and inequality. Discriminatory factors cannot be considered separately. Acknowledging intersectionality also means acknowledging privilege and power. Deeply structural and usually interconnected systems such as patriarchy, racism, sexism, ableism, and classism create and sustain power inequalities within societies. In some of our partner countries, these power inequalities are also linked to European colonialism and persistent racist patterns of thought and post-colonial behaviour (BMZ, 2023).

Efforts to protect children must address the intersecting factors and roots that contribute to their vulnerability.

World Vision Germany addresses Child Protection and closely linked Gender-Based Violence (GBV) through following entry points:

- Vulnerability of Children,
- Intersectionality,
- Prevalence of GBV,
- Impact on Child Development,
- Legal and Policy Frameworks, and
- Prevention and Intervention.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Child Protection

As mentioned above, factors such as gender lead to increased violence against certain groups. It is beyond debate that girls and women often experience violence disproportionately to boys and men. Child Protection involves measures and interventions aimed at ensuring both girls' and boys' safety and well-being. The report delves into specific forms of GBV addressed by various projects.

Sexual violence is one of the worst and most serious forms of children's rights violations. Acts of sexual violence often occur in conjunction with other forms of abuse, ranging from unwanted contact to direct physical abuse. Statistics from the WHO and UNICEF underscore the prevalence of sexual violence against girls, emphasizing the urgent need for intervention. According to the WHO, an estimated 120 million women (1 in every 10 girls) experienced some form of forced sexual contact before

they turned 20 (WHO, 2020). According to UNICEF, approximately "15 million girls aged 15-19 have been forced into sexual intercourse in their lifetime" (UNICEF, 2020).

Our case study in Mongolia aimed to end sexual violence against children, revealing a decrease in crimes against sexual freedom and inviolability of children by 12.1%.

"I was often nervous about uttering the words 'sexual' and 'abuse'. I no longer do. This matter needs to be discussed. People need to know about this. I understood that it is correct to talk about this matter regularly"

Focus Group Discussion: SP Civil Society Organizations (World Vision Mongolia, 2021).



The evaluation results from the Mongolian project show an improvement in the protection and services with respect to sexual abuse against children within the framework of domestic and international policies and programmes, strengthening the knowledge and capacity of stakeholders (World Vision Mongolia, 2021).

Child marriage, defined as a formal or informal union where one or both parties are under 18, is another form of GBV. Poverty, a patriarchal society, and hardship contribute to child marriages, impacting the development of girls and restricting their opportunities. Evaluation reports from Kenya, where the prevalence rate of child marriage was about 23% in 2014 (World Vision Kenya, 2023), highlight World Vision's successful efforts in reducing child marriages through interventions such as engaging religious leaders and church platforms, promoting Christian-based values and equality for boys and girls (World Vision Kenya, 2023). This was achieved through our Channels of Hope, and Empowered World View approaches, focusing on contextual needs such as enhancing Child Protection through awareness raising, training for parents and community, child sensitization, community protection committee formation, and improved referral systems. Female genital mutilation (FGM) which is defined as the partial or complete removal of external female geni-

“FGM and early marriage has reduced in our community since World Vision has brought about education opportunities. Also, laws have been put in place to ensure that those who still practice them are arrested and punished. Girls are encouraged to go back to school even after delivery”

Focus Group Discussion
with adolescent girls
(World Vision Kenya, 2023).

tal organs without medical necessity, is discussed as a harmful practice deeply entrenched in social norms. FGM has severe physical, psychological, and social consequences, constituting a violation of human rights. UNICEF estimates that around 200 million women and girls are affected by FGM worldwide, with more than 4 million girls estimated to be at risk of FGM each year (UNICEF, 2023b). World Vision's efforts, supported by partners, have contributed to progress in addressing FGM in certain countries, with significant reductions in the percentage of women and girls undergoing FGM. For instance, the percentage of women and girls between 15 and 49 who underwent FGM has reduced from 38% in 1998 to 15% in 2022 in Kenya (World Vision Kenya, 2023).

Child Protection of Children with Disability

People with disabilities constitute one of the world's most disadvantaged groups, with over 1 billion individuals (16% of the global population) affected, and are particularly vulnerable to various forms of violence (WHO, 2023). Children with disabilities face heightened risks, including psychological, physical, and sexual violence, along with discrimination and isolation. Their vulnerability is exacerbated by difficulties in self-protection, reporting violence, and being taken seriously by protective services (FRA, 2015).

World Vision acknowledges this challenge and strives to include people with disabilities in their projects. In Guatemala's El Tumador Area Programme, interventions have improved the lives of children, adolescents, and young people with disabilities. This includes providing practical necessities like wheelchairs, walkers, and ophthalmologic consultations. The initiatives focus also on developing soft skills such as solidarity and fostering increased interaction with other community members. While positive changes are noted in how families consider their children's well-being, challenges persist, including the lack of support for improving working conditions and the need for better understanding and treatment of children, adolescents, and young people with disabilities by teachers (World Vision Guatemala, 2022).

In Mongolia, the World Vision project “Time is up for sexual violence against children” involved two Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working to protect the rights of people with disabilities and the LGBT Centre. Capacity-building training for the CSOs ensured that activities were accessible to socially vulnerable individuals, including sexual minorities and those with disabilities. The participating CSOs played a crucial role in providing intermediary and protection services, empha-



sizing inclusivity regardless of differences (World Vision Mongolia, 2021).

Child Protection after the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic, with its global repercussions, affected Child Protection and well-being significantly. In World Vision’s global emergency response, known as COVER, households reported adverse impacts such as increased child labour (16.6%), early marriage of school-age children (6.0%), and elevated incidents of parental yelling (37.3%), and physical discipline (20%) (World Vision International, 2022).

World Vision, in collaboration with its partners, has mounted an extensive disaster response globally, mobilizing \$350 million to aid 72 million people in over 70 countries. Subsequent evaluations of the response revealed worsened experiences of violence, loneliness, and grief among adults and children in the focus countries. In response, the projects swiftly adapted, emphasizing awareness-raising, positive parenting approaches (i.e. active listening, positive disciplining, quality time, modelling positive behaviour and promoting emotional regulations to name a few), and psychosocial support.

[The COVER impact evaluation](#) has shown that our projects have adapted quickly. Many emergency measures have adapted the project implementation beyond the pandemic. In line with the global trend, the projects have successfully moved their activities online to the

“Due to Covid, crimes occurring in streets and public places decreased by 30–40%. On the other hand, during the same period the number of cases of domestic violence, especially those committed against children, increased. We are not aware of abuses happening behind closed doors. Do we have to knock on their doors and go in? We do not know unless people give us information. Therefore, you can say that domestic violence increased. There are many factors that are influencing sexual abuse”

Key Informant Interview
(World Vision Mongolia, 2021).

maximum extent possible. Some key highlights of World Vision’s adapted response in Child Protection include:

- Organizing 6,000 engagements at local, national, and global levels on pandemic-specific issues,
- Collaborative advocacy efforts facilitating humanitarian access during lockdowns,
- Contributing to 431 policy changes globally related to the pandemic and its secondary effects. The examples include strengthening the oversight of Child Protection mechanisms, the re-allocation of budgets or increased media campaigns within Child Protection,
- World Vision’s Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) initiatives enhancing community access to services (World Vision International, 2022).

In Mongolia, the pandemic disrupted the referral systems for survivors of child abuse and domestic violence, who had previously relied on the confidentiality and trust provided by CSOs. Due to the mobility restrictions imposed, CSOs and non-government organizations were restricted from conducting initial assessment, first instance of medical care or timely referral to health providers, or psychological support counselling. During this period government units were the only units authorized to work outside the mobility confinements. However, the response to cases of child abuse was limited.

Responding to the new situation, CSOs organized discussions and issued recommendations, reaching over 2.5 million people through social and traditional media channels (World Vision Mongolia, 2021). Despite initial successes in reducing crimes against sexual freedom and inviolability, the pandemic and improved reporting systems led to an increase in victims in 2021, 540 victims of crimes against sexual freedom and sexual inviolability and 439 victims of rape crimes (World Vision Mongolia, 2021).

World Vision's comprehensive response showcases its commitment to adapting and addressing the evolving challenges faced by vulnerable children and communities during the pandemic, emphasizing the importance of collaborative efforts, advocacy, and community engagement.

Climate Change Exacerbates Threats to Child Protection

While not the primary focus of this report, the pervasive influence of climate change is evident across all contexts where World Vision operates. The organization aligns its efforts with the inalienable right of every child to safety, water, food, shelter, and education. Without urgent action, 132 million additional people could be pushed into extreme poverty by 2030 due to climate change, threatening to reverse the hard-won development gains achieved over the past 20 years, and putting the ambition of the United Nation's 2030 Agenda to 'Leave No One Behind' at serious risk (Jafino/Walsh/Rozenberg/Hallegatte, 2020).

The foundational premise for World Vision's adaptation and integration of climate change considerations arises from the acknowledgment that the fundamental impacts of climate change directly jeopardize children's rights. In our work, we give an agency to children and youth so that they can express their views on how to respond in their communities. Doha, a 15-year-old girl from Bangladesh, says: "We, as children and young people, have an important role in ensuring good climate policies. It is very

crucial that we can gain climate-related knowledge and equip ourselves with the skills to raise our voices to hold to account our leaders. Children can also come up with innovative solutions considering the climate crisis and environmental sustainability" (World Vision International, 2020).

The [Children's Climate Risk Index by UNICEF](#) underscores the severity of children's exposure and vulnerability to climate change globally. Over 99% of children face exposure to at least one climate or environmental hazard, with 2.2 billion children exposed to at least two climate risks, and 80 million children exposed to at least six such hazards. The most affected regions include Central America, West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa, South Asia, and South-East Asia (UNICEF, 2021, p. 14). Children's heightened vulnerability stems from physical vulnerability, lower resistance, and resilience, limited adaptive capacity, reduced access to essential services, physiological susceptibility, and the increased risk of disease-related deaths (UNICEF, 2021, p. 11, 13).

World Vision's evidence aligns with these findings, illustrating children's exposure to extreme weather events and emphasizing the intersectionality of Child Protection and climate change. This highlights the need for adaptive and responsive models in World Vision's projects in order to address the complex challenges posed by climate change and protect the well-being of children.

Child Protection in Fragile Contexts

The [Institute for Economics and Peace \(IEP\)](#) reports a significant increase in conflict-related deaths in 2022, with almost a quarter of a million people losing their lives – a 96% surge from the previous year (IEP, 2023). Wars in Ethiopia and Ukraine, along with the Sudanese civil war and Middle East have profoundly affected World Vision's work, particularly in fragile contexts. The effects of war on children will last a lifetime. Over 1 billion children bear the brunt of violence and exploitation, exacerbated by global crises like pandemics, climate change, and armed conflicts, creating complex challenges as people grapple with multiple crises simultaneously (WHO, 2020).

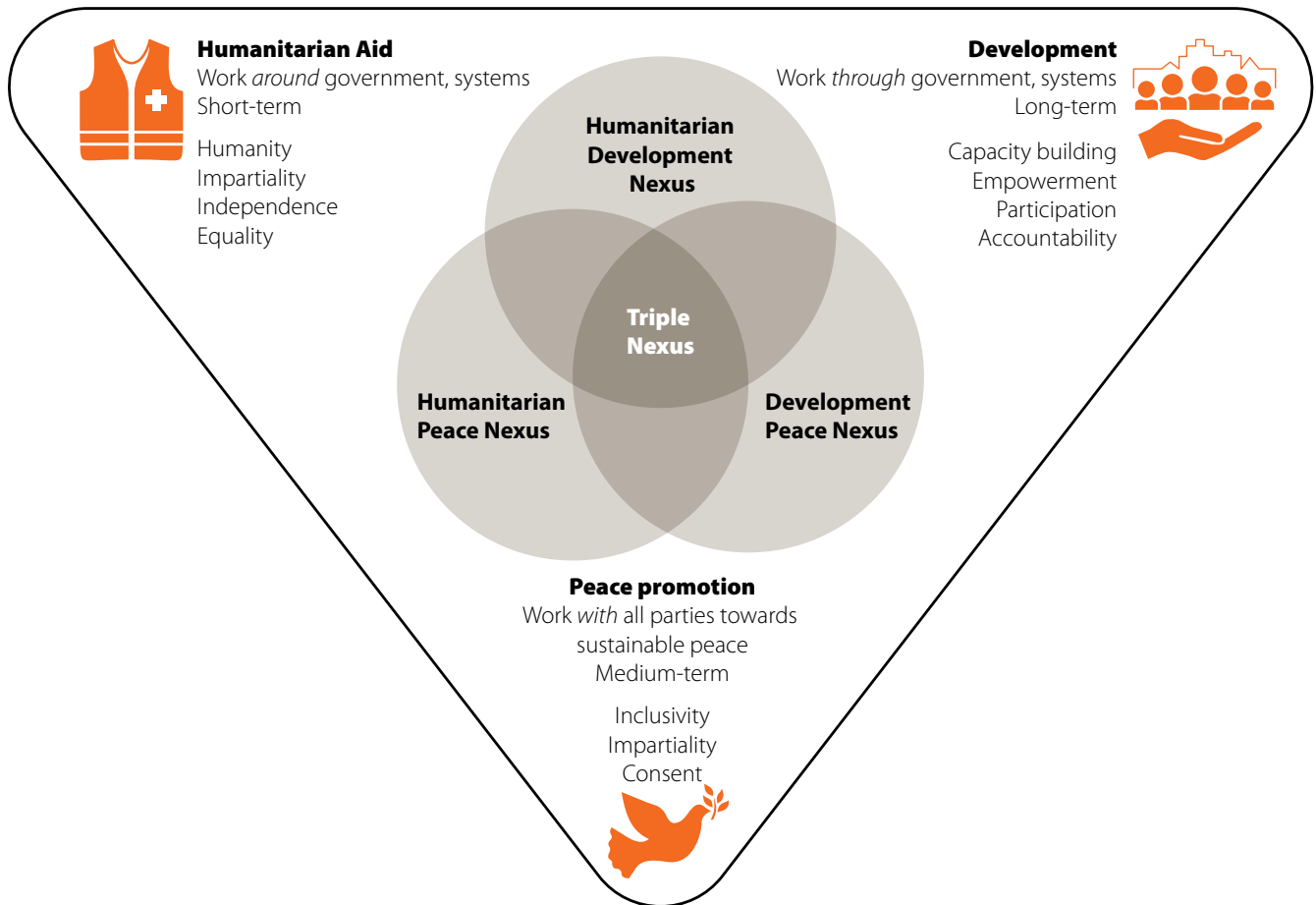
In fragile contexts, children suffer extreme levels of violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect. These are called "fragile contexts" because political and social pressure make them vulnerable to conflict and have fractured the institutions that should protect children. Fragility can cover many nations or only a few neighborhood and can change rapidly. World Vision has identified two priority groups of countries where vulnerable children are affected by fragility. For example, the WV Germany project in North

Kivu in the DRC is a typical fragility case, which illustrates the impact of Ebola, armed conflicts, and displacement on children's psychosocial well-being. Some children joined armed groups as a negative coping mechanism, exposing them to higher risks of violence. World Vision Germany and our partners' interventions in this context aim to improve the well-being, protection, and development of children affected by the conflict and Ebola, addressing nutritional gaps left by the shift in focus to Ebola. Results include the socio-economic reintegration of young people through learning trades and psychosocial support for thousands of children in child-friendly spaces. Protection assessments revealed significant gaps initially, with only 16% considering

the environment protective for children. This improved to 44.2% by the project's end (World Vision DRC, 2022).

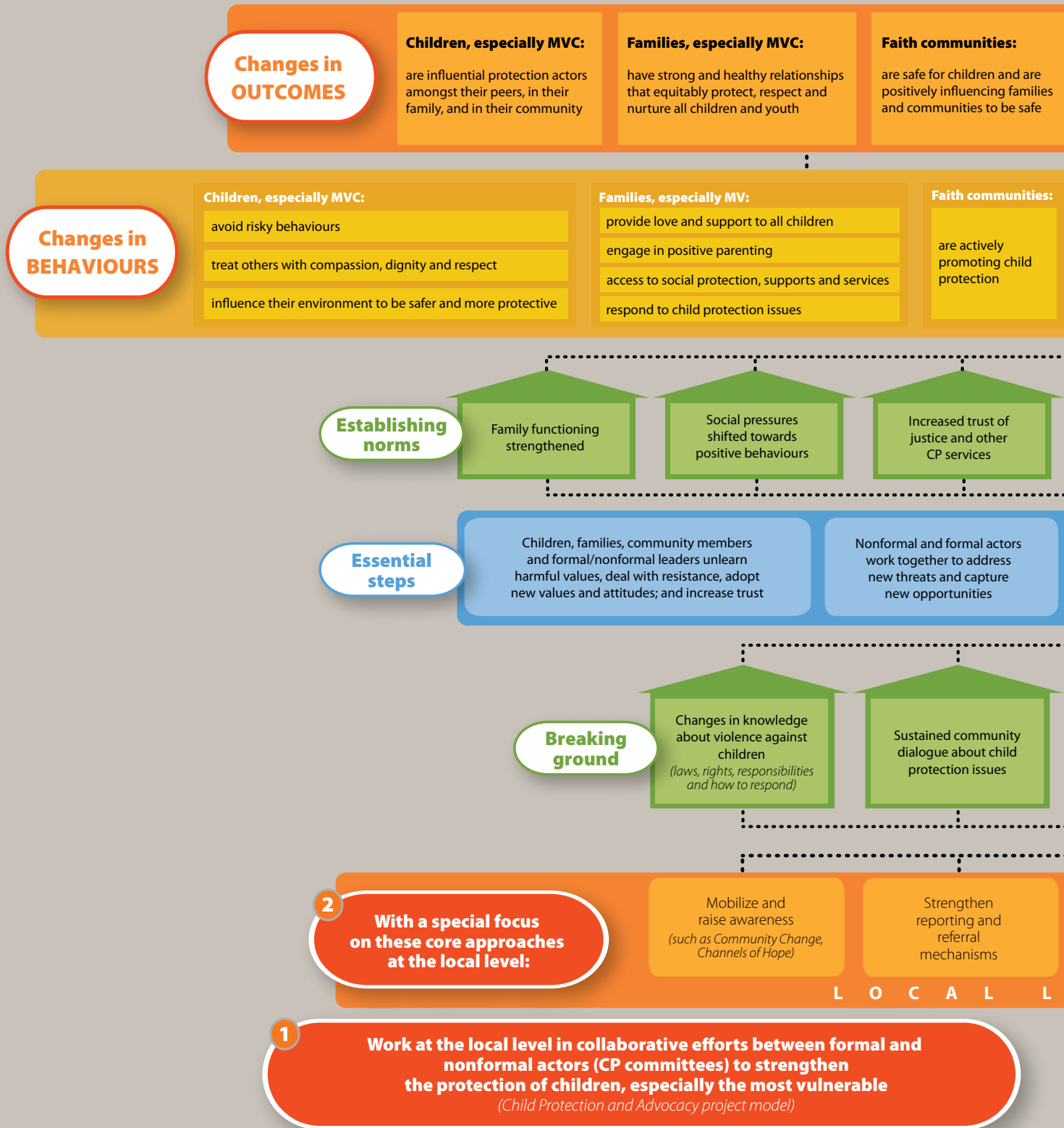
The triple nexus linking the three pillars of humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peacebuilding plays an important role in crisis-ridden regions such as North Kivu in the DRC. The instrument of BMZ transitional aid⁹ was used in this project. Among other things, this builds bridges between humanitarian aid and development cooperation from dependency to self-help and from fragility to resilience. The aim is to strengthen stabilisation, adaptation, and transformation capacities.

↓ Figure 8: Objectives and Principles of Triple Nexus, Source: Brugger/Hollinger/Mason, 2022, p. 3



⁹More information at the BMZ homepage <https://www.bmz.de/de/themen/strukturbildende-uebergangshilfe> (German)

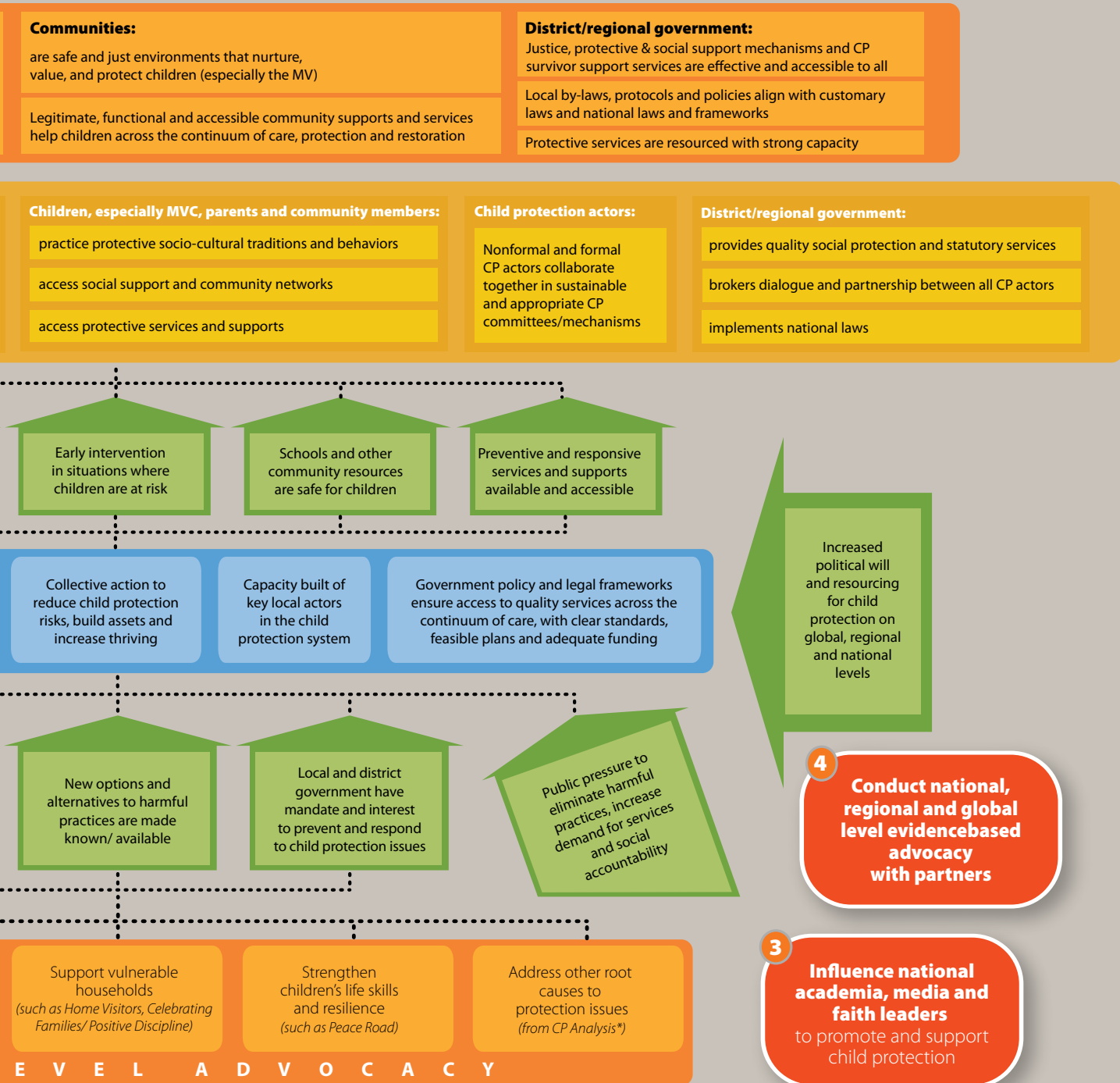
Analysis of the Child Protection Theory of Change in World Vision Programming



↑ Figure 9: World Vision Child Protection Theory of Change. Source: TSO, 2021

World Vision's Theory of Change (ToC)¹⁰ for Child Protection stands as a robust and comprehensive framework. The ToC, established for the first time in 2014, acknowledges the multifaceted nature of Child Protection issues and the need for integrated, collaborative efforts to address

them (World Vision International, 2014). The ToC aims to fortify children's protection from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence, recognizing the necessity of instigating changes at various levels and acknowledging the organization's role within these broader transformations.



* For example, access to clean water near home, inclusive education, livelihoods, social protections to address extreme poverty and food insecurity, or safe spaces to play.

¹⁰A Theory of Change is a method that explains how a given intervention, or set of interventions, can be expected to lead to a specific development change, drawing on a causal analysis based on available evidence. More information at <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/UNDG-UN-DAF-Companion-Pieces-7-Theory-of-Change.pdf>

The primary strength of World Vision's ToC lies in its recognition of the ways in which Child Protection is interconnected with various societal factors, like gender inequality and social exclusion (see the chapter above). By acknowledging these influences, the ToC seeks to address the unique vulnerabilities and protective factors associated with different children, ensuring a more tailored and effective approach.

The ToC is not merely a conceptual framework; it serves as the foundation for World Vision's Child Protection and Advocacy (CP&A) project model. This approach model, is not a single intervention but encompasses numerous approaches concentrating on enhancing collaboration and capacity among Child Protection and Advocacy groups, including faith-based partners. The incorporation of advocacy at multiple levels, especially within the "Law and Accountability" domain, showcases an understanding of the importance of systemic change for effective Child Protection.

Moreover, World Vision's commitment to evidence building and learning is evident in the ToC's role as a guiding framework for research and action in Child Protection. The emphasis on capacity building for staff underscores the organization's dedication to equipping its personnel with the tools necessary to navigate the complexities of Child Protection (Wessells, 2009).

Despite these strengths, evaluations have highlighted inconsistencies in the application of the Child Protection ToC, particularly at the project level. The focus on community-level interventions may present challenges, as evidenced by weak community ownership and modest effectiveness in certain instances. This raises questions about the scalability and sustainability of community-based Child Protection mechanisms (Cook, 2016).

On a positive note, evidence from various countries, including Bangladesh, Kenya, Guatemala, the Democratic Republic of Congo, India, and Mongolia, suggests that project interventions generally align well with the Child Protection Theory of Change. Noteworthy successes include the promotion of systematic and holistic approaches in Mongolia and the effective engagement of communities, children, and faith leaders in East Africa (Kostelny, 2020).

The ToC's implementation in Kenya is a particularly illuminating case study. The ToC serves as the basis for the World Vision Kenya National Strategic Plan, guiding national programming to improve Child Protection. The ToC's role

in identifying the primary target group and focusing on critical issues like FGM and child marriage showcases its adaptability to diverse contexts.

The alignment of project designs with the ToC, as seen in the Lokis Girls Promotion Project in Kenya, exemplifies how the ToC informs and directs activities at all levels. The logical progression from activities to outputs, outcomes, and, ultimately, impact demonstrates a strategic and coherent approach to achieving Child Protection objectives. There is evidence that the early design and consistent implementation of, and reflection on, the ToC enables the project's and programme's holistic and comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to Child Protection issues. Furthermore, the ToC involves World Vision stakeholders in the planning process. This participatory approach ensures that the perspectives of the community, participants, and other relevant actors are considered, enhancing the relevance and sustainability of interventions. Another important factor has been the adaptability emanating from ToC facilitated learning. The above gathered evidence shows that the ToC allows for adaptability and learning during the implementation phase. If certain assumptions or pathways prove to be inaccurate, the model can be adjusted to reflect better the reality on the ground (World Vision Kenya, 2023).

However, there are also gaps in the ToC implementation, for instance, the unclear articulation of partner roles, the limited documentation of any partner involvement in the project design, and staff unawareness of the ToC during the project development. Furthermore, the ToC relies on certain assumptions about the cause-and-effect relationships between different outcomes. If these assumptions are incorrect, it can undermine the effectiveness of the entire model. Some evidence of this has been detected in our programming in Kenya and Guatemala. These gaps suggest a need for clearer communication and the integration of the ToC into project-level decision-making processes. Some stakeholders have also confirmed that introducing a ToC may face resistance from stakeholders who are accustomed to traditional project planning and monitoring methods. It requires a shift in mindset and organizational culture, which is not always available. In fragile contexts, as seen in our projects in the DRC or West Bank, the World Vision ToC approaches may not sufficiently account for the dynamic and context-specific nature of Child Protection issues in a conflict-prone context. Constant adaptation in order to address evolving challenges is neither practical nor feasible in these contexts.

Thematic Analysis: Impact and Lessons Learned

In the Child Protection and Advocacy (CP&A) project models, we work within four domains of change – or four essential areas of intervention that target the elements of a Child Protection system – that are needed to strengthen the protective environment for children. In this report, we have analyzed our findings within these four critical domains. In our ToC and in the programming approach, four domains of change are observed as:

1. Resilience, Life Skills and the Voice of Girls and Boys
2. Attitude and Behaviour Change
3. Services and Support Mechanisms
4. Laws and Accountability.

In order to advocate for Child Protection issues, their families and communities, World Vision works within the projects and programmes with proven approaches. While the implementation of different project models differ widely, the ultimate objective is that all children can stand up for their rights and are protected from danger. The following table explains the project approaches mentioned in the impact report:

Domain	Domain 1 Resilience, Life Skills and the Voice of Girls and Boys	Domain 2 Attitude and Behaviour Change	Domain 3 Services and Support Mechanisms	Domain 4 Laws and Accountability			
Level of protective environment	Child	Family	Communities	Government			
Programme / Methods and Approaches	Empowered World View	Celebrating Families	Channels of Hope	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Child Protection Committees</td> <td rowspan="2">Citizen Voice and Action</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reporting and Referral Mechanisms</td> </tr> </table>	Child Protection Committees	Citizen Voice and Action	Reporting and Referral Mechanisms
Child Protection Committees	Citizen Voice and Action						
Reporting and Referral Mechanisms							

Empowered World View (EWW): The EWW Model takes a dimension of behaviour-thought change and seeks to alter people’s way of thinking and doing things. It instills elements of self-esteem, home and resilience, and sets individuals on the path to being change agents that can go beyond individuals to communities and families.

Celebrating Families (CF): The CF project model is a positive parenting intervention that creates an enabling environment for social norms and attitudinal / behavioural changes in communities. This ensures that children grow up and develop in a mentally, socially, and physically healthy way. The project model aims to ensure that all families, especially the most vulnerable, enjoy loving and caring relationships and have hope and a vision for the future. It supports families by addressing beliefs or cultural norms that contribute to harmful practices in child rearing.

Channels of Hope (CoH) is our project approach where we work with religious leaders. Religious leaders have great influ-

ence in our project areas and are therefore important actors in behaviour change projects. For example, in Uganda and Kenya, religious groups across all faiths run 40% of all health and educational facilities (BMZ, 2024). CoH curricula have been developed for several topics, including Child Protection.

Child Protection and Advocacy Committees / Groups (CP&A): Mobilizing and strengthening CP&A Groups is about empowering and building the capacity of local formal and informal Child Protection actors. Consisting of local partner organizations, CP&A groups are established and strengthened with the aim of leading, inspiring and coordinating the implementation of the CP&A interventions identified and agreed upon by the community. With competencies in local partnering, a World Vision facilitator meets regularly with the CP&A group in order to cultivate collaboration between the formal and informal Child Protection actors and build their capacity to address the root causes of local Child Protection issues.

Reporting and Referral (RR) Mechanisms process is about empowering local formal and informal actors to establish clearly defined, culturally appropriate ways for community members, including boys and girls, to make a report when a child is being abused, exploited or neglected. It ensures that, for every report, the child and his / her family are referred and followed-up accordingly, and able to access the services that they need in the best interests of the child. Through a series of workshops, Child Protection actors and community members examine the

strengths and weaknesses of current reporting and referral procedures within the community and plan to strengthen the mechanism as a whole.

Citizen Voice and Action for CP (CVA) informs citizens about their rights and empowers them to protect and exercise those rights. People in the villages can thus independently demand the promises and obligations of their governments.

Domain 1 – Resilience, Life Skills and the Voice of Girls and Boys

The concepts of resilience, life skills and voice are interrelated and essential components of comprehensive Child Protection efforts. Resilience helps children overcome adversity, life skills empower them to make informed choices, share their ideas and reassure themselves that their agency matters while communities ensure protection measures that are child-centred and effective.

Empowering Communities through Household Resilience

The Empowered World View (EWW) Model, implemented in our programmes in Kenya, emphasises learning and self-awareness through behaviour and long-term change, instilling self-esteem and resilience, and altering community mindsets. The evaluation in Kenya highlights the positive impact on family resilience, local ownership, and transformed relationships. Over 81,052 vulnerable children in Kenya participated in livelihood and resilience programmes and 59,579 in the protection and education programmes, showcasing the programme's reach and effectiveness. Within the scope of Child Protection, the Area Programme is implementing two programmes. The Child Learning and Household Resilience programme (2016–2020) supported, through improvement in the infrastructure, the raising of awareness for the community as part of advocacy interventions in partnership with the judiciary arm of Government and other partners, and child learning and household resilience so as to improve protection, access, and quality (World Vision Kenya, 2023). It is also one of the Child Protection principles, alongside Child Participation, the best interests of the child and the "Do No Harm" principle (World Vision Kenya, 2023).

The Area Programmes in Kenya focus on child learning and household resilience and offer the basic needs for the child. The child is facilitated to grow and develop spiritually, economically, and socially (World Vision Kenya, 2023). The EWW Model focuses on transforming behaviour and thought

patterns, aiming to reshape the individual's perspectives and actions. It fosters self-esteem, a sense of home, and resilience, empowering individuals to become catalysts for change within their communities and families. By challenging entrenched beliefs, practices, and approaches that contribute to poverty, EWW introduces innovative ways for participants to value their own agency. For instance, it can shift the mindset of circumcisers from reliance on traditional practices to engaging in alternative income-generating activities. Additionally, EWW aligns seamlessly with the Channels of Hope, incorporating Biblical principles to instil new identities and self-esteem. The synergy between these two models enhances their effectiveness in targeted locations (World Vision Kenya, 2023).

Fostering Resilience through Life Skills

Life skills, also known as soft skills, are essential abilities and competencies that children and adolescents need for navigating their daily lives. These skills include day to day problem-solving, decision-making, communication, leadership, empathy, self-awareness, and coping with stress and emotions. Training courses emphasising these soft skills equip children with tools to make safe and healthy choices, manage conflicts effectively, and protect themselves from various risks.

In Guatemala interventions of one-on-one training for life skills and resilience have even reported having secondary positive outcomes observed in pre-primary education outcomes and increasing school attendance. Additionally, child protagonist networks were created to involve children, adolescents and young people actively in community development. The networks provided spaces for leadership training and participation in community decision-making. The initiative influenced family dynamics significantly, increasing the participation of children, adolescents and youth in family decisions (World Vision Guatemala, 2022). Additional-

ly, children increased their sociability, improved their ability to relate to others, and developed better communication, effective listening and teamwork. This improvement in relationships, communication and active listening has also resulted beneficial in job applications (World Vision Guatemala, 2022). For youth and adolescents, as a result, mothers and female care givers have perceived the positive changes in their children's social skills and values, with 72.7% stating improvement due to World Vision's efforts.

Evidence from the evaluation in Kenya unveiled that both girls and boys in World Vision interventions are put into a mentorship programme that seeks to equip them with the necessary life skills that will better protect them and allow them to lead meaningful lives and explore their fullest potential. For instance, in the Lokis Girl Child Project, the project conducted a mentorship workshop that targeted 60 children of FGM age who were at risk. It is worth noting that none of these young girls and boys underwent any retrogressive cultural practice in the year 2020 when the project was running. Faith leaders were at the forefront of protecting children while the local administration enforced laws that protect children (World Vision Kenya, 2023).

The approach cross-sects with active citizenship and children's voices as decision-makers but also equips both boys and girls with lifelong skills for protection and meaningful lives, allowing them to explore their fullest potential. Strengthened life skills has proved relevant to children's needs, enhancing self-esteem, empowering adolescents to organize against harmful practices like FGM and early marriages, and holding duty-bearers accountable for Child Protection (World Vision Kenya, 2023).

Children's Voices: Promoting Agency and Participation in Child Protection Efforts

Interlinked with the soft skills training are efforts that contribute to children realizing their own agency to express themselves and participate in discussions about their protection. This is not only the essence of empowerment, but it also inherently ensures that interventions are tailored to the children's needs.

Soft skills training in Kenya has successfully established community-based Child Protection mechanisms, that have empowered children, and raised their voices. The interventions established informal community based functional reporting systems for child abuse and elevated children's agency through clubs and discussions about gender equality in schools and community forums (World Vision Kenya, 2023).

“Since WVK [World Vision Kenya] came in, many children have been enlightened. Children have had an awareness of their rights and how to protect themselves. WVK has gone deep into the villages and when children are at risk of FGM without their will, they are capable of looking for help from relevant institutions like WVK, the chief, and church leaders. This is because in the past, there were no places where children could find help and most of them were also ignorant. But now, with the training, World Vision has been doing in the community, the children now know that FGM is something bad that affects their bodies. Children can now say that they don't want it and when they are at risk, they now know where to run to report the case. Additionally, children with special needs have now gained recognition as opposed to the past. Today, children's rights are now recognized as human rights”

A female key informant working as a teacher in one of the locations (World Vision Kenya, 2023).

The voice on the previous page is evidence of the transformative changes that have happened in the lives of the children who have been impacted by the programmes. They are using the acquired knowledge to challenge the demands of the cultural norm by their parents for FGM and early marriage. Should they find themselves at risk, they use their agency and knowledge to report the matter to the relevant authorities (World Vision Kenya, 2023).

Moreover, there is limited evidence that adolescents can effectively express and incorporate their views into local government decision-making. In Lokis in Kenya in 2020, only 4.6% of adolescents had the opportunity to share their views, and 4.08% felt their ideas were implemented. Similar findings from other Area Programme locations indicate low percentages of adolescents reporting their

views being sought and incorporated into decision-making, with only 15.1% in the Ilaramatak Area Programme in 2020. Despite slight improvements from the baseline (9.5%), this suggests that issues affecting children are still not adequately integrated into decision-making processes by the local government. The evaluation underscores the need for enhanced efforts to address these challenges and ensure meaningful participation of children and adolescents in decision-making processes (World Vision Kenya, 2023).

In Mongolia under the Time's Up project targeting sexual violence against children, World Vision Mongolia supported a strategic network of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to enable channels for children to voice cases of abuse and hear their concerns.

Lessons Learned – Resilience, Life Skills and the Voice of Girls and Boys

- Community involvement: The evaluation in Kenya highlights the significant positive impact of programmes on family resilience, local ownership, and transformed relationships. This underscores the importance of community-based interventions tailored to local contexts.
- Role of Civil Society Networks: Strategic networks of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), as seen in Mongolia, play a vital role in enabling channels for children to voice cases of abuse and advocate for their rights. This highlights the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships in addressing complex issues like sexual violence against children.
- Promoting Children's Agency and Participation: Initiatives promoting children's agency and participation are crucial for ensuring that interventions meet their needs effectively. Empowering children to express themselves and contribute to discussions about their protection enhances the relevance and effectiveness of the programme. However, limited evidence of the participation of adolescents in local government decision-making underscores the need for enhanced efforts to ensure the meaningful inclusion of children and adolescents in governance processes.
- Interconnectedness of domains: Resilience, skills and voice is a domain of change that interplays with the other domains; hence a clear account of the influencing elements is hard to delineate or separate at times. World Vision Child Protection approaches have been proven to facilitate a child's growth and development spiritually, economically, and socially, transforming their behaviour and thought patterns and aiming to reshape the individual's perspectives and actions.

Domain 2 – Attitude and Behaviour Change

Attitudes and behaviour change are critical components of Child Protection efforts. Promoting attitudes and behaviour change for Child Protection requires a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach that addresses cultural, social, and economic factors. It involves education, awareness-raising, community engagement, and legal measures in order to protect children and create a safer environment for them to grow and thrive.

Transforming Perspectives: Children, Caregivers, and Community Attitudes

A fundamental change in this area has been achieved through training with regard to positive parenting, which has helped parents to transform the violent, authoritarian forms of parenting that had been ingrained in the communities into more loving, respect-based forms of parenting. Data shows that workshops in Guatemala for fathers and mothers have transformed traditional ways of raising their children, with the objective of breaking the authoritarian processes in parenting and adult-centeredness. As a result, the use of positive parenting is one of the most evident changes at the personal, family and community levels, translating to respect for the rights of children, adolescents and young people to a life free of violence (World Vision Guatemala, 2022).

76% of parents affirm that they use respectful parenting to treat their children. This type of parenting focuses mainly on treating children and adolescents well in 88% of them, knowing the needs of children and adolescents in 56% of them, showing affection to children and adolescents in 54.8% of them and implementing clear limits for children and adolescents in 42% of them. In some households, responsibilities are shared between men and women, as is the raising of children, which encourage better protection practices (World Vision Guatemala, 2022).

Additionally, discrimination against children, adolescents and young people with disabilities has been reduced, providing them with greater opportunities for education and participation. Even teachers noted the improved equality and empowerment of girls, as well as the inclusion of children with disabilities in classrooms. A teacher observed "(...) that the girls also feel important, they do not feel less important than the boys, they say they are equal because of the discussions and everything that World Vision has given them, they feel the same as the boys and they want to study and are willing to give everything so as not to be left without Telesecundaria" (El Triunfo teacher, World

Vision Guatemala, 2022). At the same time, children have been trained to reduce bullying. This leads to the reduction of violence.

In another case of challenging harmful attitudes, the project interventions in Kenya managed to target traditional circumcisers with a view of changing their mind set and joining anti-FGM campaigns. They were targeted with several interventions including Channels of Hope in Child Protection and an empowered worldview. They were also provided with alternative livelihood interventions since FGM is also an economic activity for them. The project reported an increase of 55 reformed circumcisers up from 33 in Finance Year 19, signifying a 40% positive change. The attitudes of women were changed, attending church, and supporting the community together with faith leaders in promoting the rights of the girl child (World Vision Kenya, 2023). During the Covid-19 pandemic, these women alongside other informal Child Protection actors and groups were instrumental in Child Protection monitoring and reporting. Here, it is evident to see that how when the mindset of key stakeholders can shift attitudes and agents of change leading community engagement efforts for the better.



Background characteristic	Percentage of woman circumcised	Number of women	Type of circumcision				Total
			Cut, no flesh removed	Cut, flesh removed	Sewn closed	Don't know	
Age							
15–19	9.1	3,125	11.9	67.3	12.6	8.1	100.0
20–24	9.9	3,063	13.9	63.3	13.0	9.9	100.0
25–29	13.2	2,916	12.0	69.5	12.0	6.4	100.0
30–34	16.1	2,364	11.3	69.8	12.7	6.2	100.0
35–39	18.7	2,288	12.3	70.1	11.6	6.0	100.0
40–44	23.8	1,615	11.1	72.9	10.9	5.1	100.0
45–49	23.1	1,346	10.9	76.6	7.9	4.5	100.0

↑ **Table 4: Prevalence of female circumcision, Source: Kenya DHS, 2022, p. 642**

Community Engagement in Shifting Perspectives and Attitudes

Community engagement can be a powerful catalyst for changing attitudes and behaviour in order to promote Child Protection. Engaging communities in behaviour change initiatives has led to a collective commitment to Child Protection. Sustainable change in attitudes and behaviour often requires a long-term commitment. Engaging the community creates a foundation for ongoing efforts and resilience against setbacks.

In Mongolia representatives of 40 CSOs led the coordination of “Protecting children during COVID-19: Providing the human-centred approach for long-term psycho-social provision services”. A total of 151 representatives from 16 Child Protection service organizations and CSOs attended the discussion, which resulted in 18 recommendations for Child Protection duty bearers. Moreover, CSOs led nationwide broadcastings of “Promise 1” and “Promise 2” campaigns on social media platforms, collaborated with the Police Authority to run the “Don’t let it overshadow you” campaign, prepared and disseminated content and book series such as “My Body Safety Rules” and “Baadii”, “Strong Girl – Strong Nation” smartphone application, and organized a nationwide “Girls’ Rights Protection Day” event (World Vision Mongolia, 2021).

In Guatemala, the presence of Child Welfare Committees (Spanish: Comisión de Bienestar Infantil, CBIs) and Local Coordinators for Disaster Reduction (Spanish: Coordinadoras Locales para la Reducción de Desastres, COLRED) was detected in six specific communities. The members of the Child Welfare Committees are a support for parents, who remain vigilant to Child Protection incidents and, in case they happen, they carry out and accompany the processes of denouncing them to the corresponding authorities. The

Child Welfare Committees have alliances and joint work processes with formal institutions that guarantee rights such as the municipality, the National Civil Police (Spanish: Policía Nacional Civil, PNC) (World Vision Guatemala, 2022). However, they represent only 23% of all the communities involved. One critical aspect pointed out by CBI members is that being able to carry out their work properly depends ultimately on the authority that holds the office of mayor, while CBI members continue to volunteer their time. Addressing this power dynamic and providing compensation or proper incentive for CBI members’ efforts warrants special attention to ensure their continued engagement, commitment and the sustainability of community-driven initiatives (World Vision Guatemala, 2022).

However, among mothers aware of the CBIs, 80% noted positive changes, suggesting broader implementation for greater impact is needed. Notably, these CBIs have led to increased protection for children (49%), better community organization for addressing Child Protection issues (45%), and heightened interest in children and youth (41%). Despite progress, only 2% of mothers mentioned having reported cases of violence against children, highlighting the need for greater awareness and the need for reporting. However, 43% of mothers observed changes in handling such cases, with community members increasingly organized (33%) and referring cases to appropriate institutions (68%). Overall, there is a perception of a safer environment due to parenting training (82%) and increased awareness among community leaders (31%) in communities with CBIs, members understand their functions, which focus on protecting children’s rights, reducing violence, ensuring child well-being, and facilitating access to emergency services. However, while the communal perception is that violence in their communities has decreased and that they feel safer, these changes are not corroborated at the

statistical level, where in general there is still an increase in violence (World Vision Guatemala, 2022).

Progress and Persistence in Challenging Cultural Norms

Cultural norms and traditions that persist have shown how deeply ingrained they are in perpetuating harmful attitudes and behaviour towards children. Changing these norms will require greater contextual sensitivity and time. In Kenya, results indicate that FGM practices and early marriage in the three communities have reduced to a small extent over the last five years. This is despite the enactment of the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act of 2011, which provides a legal framework for actors to operate to eradicate the retrogressive cultural norms. According to survey results, 86% of parents and caregivers felt that FGM and early child marriage had been reduced, while 54% of the adolescents (boys and girls) aged 13–17 years reported

that they are safe from child rights violations. These indicators are above the national average in Kenya. Findings also indicated that there was an improved safe environment for children as 65% of the adolescents said that their communities are safe from FGM and early child marriage (World Vision Kenya, 2023).

This long-term change, as evaluation participants have reported, was contributed to largely by World Vision Kenya alongside other partners like the government, the Coalition on Violence Against Women, We World and Compassion International among others. World Vision mounted interventions focused on the areas of child rights awareness, life skills training, and sensitizing and training children and the community with regard to Child Protection issues in order to discourage retrogressive cultural norms like FGM and early marriages (World Vision Kenya, 2023). The quote below underlines this change at the impact level:

“I think FGM has reduced slightly because now, contrary to before when it was done openly with public ceremonies, it is rare to hear about it and the ceremonies. This is because World Vision, the government, and the Coalition on Violence Against Women are involved in advocating against it. WVK is also partnering with the church. So, this issue has attracted so many stakeholders that have made those still practicing it do it undercover. Many watchdogs have caused the community to be fearful”

Interview with stakeholders in a stakeholders’ forum at one of the locations (World Vision Kenya, 2023).

Results indicate positive progress, interviewees were quick to point out that poverty, high dependency ratio at the family level (a function of polygamy), child negligence, the high value of dowries paid for young girls, poor parenting skills, and a boy-child preference as the main persistent drivers of early and forced marriages for the girls (World Vision Kenya, 2023).



Lessons Learned – Attitude and Behaviour Change

- Attitudes and Behaviour Change: Child Protection efforts necessitate a multifaceted approach addressing cultural, social, and economic factors. Positive parenting workshops in Guatemala transformed authoritarian parenting styles into more loving approaches, with 76% of parents adopting respectful parenting methods. Discrimination against children with disabilities decreased, enabling greater educational opportunities. In Kenya, interventions targeting traditional circumcisers and community engagement has led to shifts in mindset, reducing harmful practices like FGM and early marriage.
- Community Engagement: Engaging communities fosters collective commitment to Child Protection. In Mongolia, CSOs coordinated campaigns and disseminated educational materials, promoting children's rights. Similarly, Child Welfare Committees in Guatemala facilitated community involvement, enhancing Child Protection. However, only 23% of communities had such committees, indicating the need for broader implementation.
- Challenging Cultural Norms: Cultural norms perpetuate harmful behaviour towards children, requiring contextual sensitivity and persistence to change. In Kenya, despite legal frameworks, FGM and early marriage persist due to factors like poverty and traditional beliefs. Long-term interventions focusing on child rights awareness and life skills training contribute to gradual cultural shifts, but socio-economic factors remain the key drivers of harmful practices.

Domain 3 – Services and Support Mechanisms

The services and support to protect children from harm, abuse, and violence involve typically a combination of government agencies, non-profit organizations, and community grass-root networks. World Vision understands that the respective governments are the ultimate duty bearers in establishing these systems and institutions. However, our approaches support this effort whenever requested. By working together to address the diverse needs of children at risk and to ensure their safety and well-being forms a protection system, we observe the functionality and effectiveness of a mechanism that can be activated once an identified rights violation incident occurs in a given context. Naturally, the specific services and support available vary according to the country, its specific context and jurisdiction.

Within this impact report, we have focused on support mechanisms designed to ensure accountability among duty bearers in delivering adequate services to citizens, rather than focusing on the quality of service provision itself. While acknowledging the importance of assessing service quality, the evaluation prioritizes understanding the systems, processes, and structures in place to uphold the

responsibility of duty bearers. By examining these mechanisms, the evaluation aims to gauge the effectiveness of governance frameworks and oversight mechanisms in promoting transparency, equity, and responsiveness in service delivery. This approach underscores the significance of accountability mechanisms in fostering trust, promoting citizen engagement and participation and, ultimately, improves the outcomes for children and communities.

Our evaluations have shown convincingly that the establishment and strengthening of CBLs in Guatemala, the multi-disciplinary teams and CSOs in Mongolia and the Area Advisory Council, the Child Protection and Advocacy Committees or Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) in Kenya as informal Child Protection systems all play a vital role in the prevention of, and the response to, child abuse and neglect. With training in respect of identification, reporting and case management, various formal and informal actors are joined together to provide over-needed services and support. This protection mechanism when functional can address both prevention of and response to those Child Protection issues that arise.

Identification, Reporting and Referrals

Dependent on the knowledge, understanding and attitudes in domain 2, the provision of Child Protection services and support starts with the identification of the potential abuse, neglect, or violation of children's rights. The evaluation shows that our project approaches target mainly teachers, healthcare professionals, and concerned citizens, who report suspected cases to the known relevant authorities.

In Kenya the Community Based Child Protection Groups (CBCPG) have established functional reporting and feedback methods, connecting various actors within their locations in order to prevent and respond better to incidents of FGM and early marriages. In order to facilitate the identification and reporting by children and CBCPGs, activities have included Psychological First Aid Training of Trainers (ToT) for the front-line child caregivers who provide emergency psychosocial care, including Volunteer Children Officers, Sub-County Children's Officers, chiefs, teachers, and pastors. Additionally, Community Health Volunteers inform the community leaders and report cases of FGM, early marriages and other forms of abuse, violence, and neglect to the authorities (World Vision Kenya, 2023). Simultaneously, training of law enforcers such as the provincial administration, the Police, the Office of the District Police Protection, Children's Officers, and Magistrates are required with regard to protection and their roles (World Vision Kenya, 2023).

Children themselves have child friendly structures that encourages girls and boys to utilize the available reporting and referral systems. These include children's clubs, children's groups and child friendly desks at police stations or the chief's office. For example, the identification forms record information such as gender, age and disability that reaches beyond the socio-economic assessment of the children who are to be registered for case management support or who are to be linked to other programmes in the region. Consequently, emerging insights triggered discussions about gender equality among teenagers via school platforms and parents / caregivers via religious institutions and community awareness-raising forums (World Vision Kenya, 2023).

When adolescents were asked to indicate the structures which they considered safe for them to report any experiences or cases of abuse in their households or in the community, only 18% mentioned that the children would report to them if they experienced violence or abuse in their community. This contrasts with the views of parents /

caregivers who 42% believe their child would report to them. Instead, the community elder or chief was cited as the most prominent place to report cases of abuse. This was noted among a summative 26% of the cases. Other reporting spaces included grandparents (10%), siblings (13%), teacher or health worker (7%), aunt or uncle (2%), social worker or community worker (7%), friends or neighbors (6%) and religious leaders (6%). However, when asked only 10 % of adolescents reported physical attacks in the past 12 months.

According to the police the number of reports received per month is still far below the number of cases occurring, with FGM or early child marriage often being detected and at much later stages when health complications occur. These discrepancies warrant further investigations. Nevertheless, current findings point to the deep-seated fear of rebuke or isolation by community members or legal consequences. This development of the growing willingness to report the cases is in the right direction. Apart from the cases reported by the community members, the police through their local information networks also swing into action whenever they hear of such happenings, although they also face challenges that compromise their efficient response such as a lack of vehicles and petty cash to facilitate response among others (World Vision Kenya, 2023).

“One day a pastor called me that a girl had just been circumcised in the village. When I called the police, they informed me that they did not have vehicles or cash to hire a taxi to take them to the scene of the incident”

World Vision staff in Ilaramatak
(World Vision Kenya, 2023).

Thematic Analysis: Impact and Lessons Learned

In Mongolia one of the project goals was to decrease the crime rate by 50%, however the result shows an inverse effect, which skews the final evaluation. However, triangulation shows that due to raised awareness and knowledge, there has been an improvement in detecting and reporting incidences. As a result of the community engagement, 34.5% of the child participants responded that they would tell their parents of any incident, 25.4% responded that they would contact the child help hotline centre, 14.5% responded that they would contact the police. Fewer would

contact a school social worker (7.7%), their friends (7.7%) or a multi-disciplinary team such as a CSO (5.4%) (World Vision Mongolia, 2021). These findings underscore that children possess a discernible awareness of the appropriate channels through which to seek assistance when they understand their rights and their protection due to them. The number of referred cases was further boosted by multi-disciplinary teams, trained CSOs, and supportive caregivers who ensure ultimately that children have a safe place to live.

“Our multidisciplinary team had received a lot of capacity building training. As a result, we were able to identify number of cases, which helped us to help number of kids and their families. These capacity building activities helped us to see things that we did not see before, which for me was the most important aspect of these activities. I am very grateful for these. If the project was not implemented, we would not have known”

Focus Group Discussion
(World Vision Mongolia, 2021).



Lessons Learned – Services and Support Mechanisms

- Collaborative Approach: Child Protection efforts involve a partnership between government agencies, NGOs, and community networks. While governments bear ultimate responsibility, collaboration with external partners enhances the functionality of the Child Protection systems. Our organization's support supplements government efforts, focusing on accountability mechanisms rather than any service quality assessment.
- Identification, Reporting, and Referrals: Early detection of Child Protection issues relies on effective identification, reporting, and referral systems. Training frontline professionals and engaging children in safe reporting structures improve case identification. However, challenges persist, including underreporting due to the fear of repercussions and resource constraints within law enforcement agencies.
- Child Participation and Awareness: Empowering children to understand their rights and access support services is essential. Child-friendly reporting structures, such as children's clubs and help hotlines, facilitate reporting and contribute to a safer environment. However, efforts are needed to increase awareness and confidence in reporting, particularly among adolescents.
- Contextual Challenges: Cultural norms and resource limitations pose challenges to Child Protection efforts. In Kenya, despite legal frameworks, harmful practices like FGM persist due to socio-economic factors. Similarly, in Guatemala, low reporting rates highlight the need for strengthened prevention and response measures.

Domain 4 – Laws and Accountability

Legal and policy frameworks play a vital role in promoting Child Protection and accountability, offering structured guidelines for upholding children's rights and well-being. They establish standards by defining abuse, neglect, and exploitation and encouraging acceptable behaviour towards children. Additionally, these frameworks outline responsibilities, procedures for identifying and responding to abuse, and mechanisms for intervention and support. Accountability measures ensure that those responsible are held liable, while resource allocation ensures sufficient funding for prevention, intervention, and victim support. Emphasizing prevention and early intervention, these frameworks foster collaboration among stakeholders, including government agencies, law enforcement, health-care providers, educators, and community organizations. By codifying children's rights to safety, dignity, education, and participation, legal and policy frameworks advance child welfare effectively.

Our evaluations have highlighted some cases of World Vision Germany's effectiveness within legal framework and accountability mechanisms. In the context of Mongolia, the evaluation of Child Protection initiatives reveals a positive

correlation between the combined efforts of CSOs and the increased implementation of legal provisions. Despite progress in passing Child Protection laws and establishing dedicated organizations, there are challenges in translating these laws into practical initiatives on the ground. The existence of these laws is a great step. The implementation and enforcement were the gap that the project was bridging.

Capacity-building initiatives which enable CSO members to comprehend first of all the legal justice system have contributed to holding duty bearers accountable for addressing Child Protection issues. During the root cause analysis, the inefficient legal protection was a critical trend among some staff of the law enforcement agencies who accuse Gender-Based Violence and child-abuse victims of being 'prostitutes', not fully understanding how some of their own practices were causing further harm. In addition, child traffickers are often not prosecuted nor convicted. A survivor-centred approach was lacking, which through the interventions now provide comprehensive trauma-informed care for child survivors of trafficking incidents. The evaluation underscores the importance of empowering

CSOs to influence policy implementation and ensuring that duty bearers fulfil their obligations.

Furthermore, the outcomes of Mongolia's project showcase the tangible results of advocacy and collaborative efforts. The increase in funding for Child Protection services and multi-disciplinary teams is a testament to the impact of CSOs collaborating on the issue of sexual abuse against children. The results reflect a noteworthy improvement in the protection and services related to sexual abuse against children. Notably, the capacity-building initiatives undertaken by CSOs have yielded tangible reductions in sexual abuse against children by 12% along with other forms of physical violence and abuse (World Vision Mongolia, 2021).

Looking ahead in Mongolia, the sustainability of the CSO network's operations is crucial for maintaining and strengthening their institutional and organizational capacity. The evaluation highlights the need for project units to serve as organizing institutes, providing centralised managerial and organizational guidance to the CSO network. The collaborative efforts among organizations engaged in preventive measures, as expressed by CSOs, signal a positive trend where collective endeavours are gaining momentum (World Vision Mongolia, 2021).

In Kenya, as also seen within the community-based Child Protection mechanisms, the establishment of platforms like the Child Advisory Committees and Child Protection Committees reflects a coordinated effort to plan, address Child Protection concerns, and engage in community dialogue. The active involvement of these committees in advocating for the arrest and prosecution of perpetrators underscores their impactful role (World Vision Kenya, 2023). Through the sharing of best practices, cooperating agencies have strengthened their roles in Child Protection. For example, the police have become more proactive in spotting and responding to child abuse cases, and the adolescents, through their collectives, raise awareness of abuses while also bridging the reporting gaps to the appropriate authorities. Similar to how schools have increased discussions about children's rights, the fair treatment of children and the mentoring of females, the health sector has increased clinical responses to rape cases and the supply of medico-legal evidence (World Vision Kenya, 2023).

The system's approach to Child Protection fosters collaboration with and, amongst key actors at the county level, has had a direct impact in the development of the anti-FGM laws and gender policies, reinforcing a favourable policy environment. Legal frameworks, such as the Prohibition

“FGM and early marriage has reduced in our community since World Vision has brought about education opportunities. Also, laws have been put in place to ensure that those who still practise them are arrested and punished. Girls are encouraged to go back to school even after delivery”

Focus Group Discussion
with adolescent girls
(World Vision Kenya, 2023).

of Female Genital Mutilation Act of 2011 and the recently passed Child Act 2022, have played a crucial role in discouraging harmful practices (World Vision Kenya, 2023). Kenya's successful national advocacy efforts are evident in the promotion of child-responsive budgeting at both national and county levels. This strategic engagement with the government's budgeting processes underscores the importance of financial considerations in sustaining Child Protection initiatives (World Vision Kenya, 2023). However, while policy efforts in response to child marriage and FGM have been nationally and internationally praised, still more young girls have become more vulnerable, due to an increasingly clandestine approach. These harmful practices are now carried out in secret in order to minimise the risk of prosecution by the local authorities.

In Guatemala, the collaboration between World Vision and state institutions has contributed to amendments in laws related to Child Protection. Efforts include modifying the minimum age for marriage and working towards a comprehensive protection system for children and adolescents. However, challenges persist in community awareness and the understanding of state institutions and laws, emphasizing the need for further awareness raising and training (World Vision Guatemala, 2022). The findings conclude that people of the communities do not have knowledge

of the laws and functions of the state institutions and only in limited cases have the participation and political training that would allow them to demand their rights. In the country in general, there is a culture of little access and demand to public servants (World Vision Guatemala, 2022). This is despite the fact that awareness-raising processes have been established. This was done in order to replicate knowledge regarding the rights of children, adolescents

and young people. Projects focused on training concerning the detection and observation of any type of abuse, neglect, exploitation or child violence, explaining to them the rights violations that they are committing, and the consequences that these acts could have at the family, individual and legal level, which has encouraged more people to acquire this knowledge and change their practices (World Vision Guatemala, 2022).

Lessons Learned – Laws and Accountability

- Legal Frameworks and Accountability: Legal and policy frameworks provide guidelines for Child Protection, defining abuse and outlining responsibilities. However, implementation gaps persist, highlighting the importance of accountability measures and resource allocation beyond project implementation to bridge these gaps.
- Sustainability and Policy Impact: The sustainability of CSO networks is crucial for maintaining progress in Child Protection. Collaborative advocacy efforts contribute to favourable policy environments and legislative amendments, although challenges remain in community awareness and understanding of legal frameworks.
- Awareness and Training: Despite legal reforms in Guatemala, community awareness of laws and state institutions remains limited. Awareness-raising and training initiatives are essential to enhance the understanding of rights and the demand for accountability. Projects focusing on detecting abuse and explaining rights violations have shown promising results in changing practices and increasing knowledge.
- Financial Considerations: Strategic engagement with budgeting processes in Kenya highlights the importance of financial considerations in sustaining Child Protection initiatives. However, challenges persist, such as clandestine practices to evade prosecution, emphasizing the need for continued policy efforts and community awareness.



Conclusion: Upholding the Future of Child Protection

In the pursuit of understanding and enhancing World Vision's Germany impact on Child Protection, the 4th Impact Report illuminates a diverse range of child protection approaches, programmes, and projects. As we reflect on the comprehensive insights provided, a resounding theme emerges: the commitment to protect children's rights and well-being amidst evolving challenges. The report navigates through the landscape of child protection. It sheds light on World Vision Germany's impact monitoring from the perspective of accountability, evidence-based decision-making, social interconnectedness, adherence to standards, community empowerment, and risk management functions.

This report commissioned a range of studies and research to obtain primary data and has used a wealth of internal and external secondary data within the scope of analyzing our child protection impact across four domains. The primary data included the Child Protection Area Programme in El Tumbador, Guatemala, Child Protection area programmes focusing on FGM and child marriage in Ilaramatak in Narok, Orwa in West Pokot and Baringo in Kenya, the European Union funded project "Time is up for sexual violence against children in Mongolia", the German Foreign Office-funded project "Emergency aid for Ebola and conflict-affected children and communities in North Kivu Programme" in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the European Union-funded project "Safe access to schools and psychosocial support services in the West Bank (Areas C and H2)".

In addressing protection risks which children are exposed to or at risk to experience, our observations explore the linkages of factors contributing to the Child Protection programming. The COVID-19 pandemic emerges as a pivotal context, showcasing World Vision's adaptability and resilience. Amidst global challenges, the organization's Child Protection initiative transitioned online, engaging in advocacy, policy changes, and community empowerment to mitigate pandemic-specific issues. Equally, the observations confirm that climate change, though not the central focus of this report, emerges as a pervasive influence affecting child safety across diverse contexts. For example, forced migration because of prolonged draughts in East Africa force families to relocate and disrupt Child Protection mechanisms built over a long period of time. The same adverse Child Protection risks are observed in regions facing heightened political instability, conflict and social fragility.

Therefore, the World Vision's Theory of Change for Child Protection is crucial in mapping and connecting these complex factors. It is recognised for its systemic approach and adaptability. One of the findings in this report is that Child Protection requires practical ways of connecting the domains of building resilience, changing harmful attitudes and behavioural change, establishing services and support mechanisms and advocating for legal frameworks to underpin accountability. Theory of Change is a tool, which will achieve holistic programming across these domains. However, our data shows that our projects have unrealized potential in translating our Theory of Change into tangible activities. While acknowledging its strengths, the report identifies quite openly the gaps in its implementation and lack of local adaptation, emphasising the need for continual refinement of our Child Protection approaches in order to maximize their effectiveness.

Delving into the four specific domains in our analyzes, the report unveils valuable lessons learned. Under the domain *Resilience, Life Skills and Voice*, we observe in our sample the pivotal role of education to drive sustainability in various factors such as resilience, family support, partnerships, local ownership, transformed relationships, and advocacy at both local and national levels. The implementation of mentorship programmes emerges as a powerful strategy, promoting active citizenship, empowering children in decision-making, and imparting lifelong skills essential for protection and personal development. Our observations suggest that mobilizing youth and amplifying their voices is commendable and embraced by the individuals and the communities, yet they often fall short of yielding tangible results. A gap in our work persists between youth activism and concrete decision-making outcomes. Meaningful change in the agency of the youth requires more than awareness-raising. It necessitates effective policy implementation, resource allocation, and genuine stakeholder commitment driven by local and national authorities.

The domain *Attitude and Behaviour Change* highlights lessons learned in raising public awareness through campaigns to educate the public about Child Protection, signs of abuse, and reporting procedures. Community engagement is a vital driver in changing harmful Child Protection practices as shown in the case of FGM or child marriage. Addressing, and sometimes challenging, power dynamics between formal institutions and informal structures by

local players especially at the community level proves to be a sustainable and efficient way in inducing and sustaining Child Protection attitudes and behaviour changes. Providing compensation or proper incentives for volunteer community members to support programming can be effective if sustainability is ensured. Furthermore, media-promoted toll-free child helplines and online reporting systems have proven effective in facilitating anonymous child abuse reporting and providing a platform for counselling and support for victims of abuse or trauma. Advocacy for legislation enforcing robust laws and policies plays a crucial role in raising awareness and deterring potential abusers. Community Protection Committees at the institutional level, family level interventions, and Child Protection volunteers prove to have an impact at the structural level in bringing attitudinal and behavioural changes within communities in our projects.

Within the third observed domain of *Services and Support Mechanisms* our findings highlight the crucial element of advocacy for legislation enforcing strong Child Protection laws as a pre-condition of a sustainable and systemic Child Protection impact. The role of media and online innovations in citizen and community engagement in remote monitoring, within the pandemic context and in fragile contexts, has been an important implementation tool with significant potential in large geographic areas, fragile contexts with limited physical access or within limited budgets for physical presence.

The success of community-led reporting systems is a significant finding, demonstrating the effectiveness of empowering teachers, healthcare professionals, concerned citizens, and children in fostering a reporting culture.

Recognising diverse reporting channels, including community leaders, family members, and health workers, is crucial for a comprehensive and effective reporting mechanism. Community-led initiatives, such as Child Protection Committees and Child Advisory Committees, are recognised as valuable local mechanisms for monitoring, reporting, and referring cases of child abuse. However, the report acknowledges sustainability challenges, emphasising that despite improvements in laws and policies, duty bearers may lack the motivation or knowledge to implement and enforce Child Protection measures consistently over the long term.

The fourth observed domain *Laws and Accountability* analyzes the existence of legal frameworks and policies, its enforcement and their accountability as well as the quantity and quality of Child Protection support services. This analysis provides a foundation for targeted advocacy which can address any identified gaps and weaknesses. The evaluation of Child Protection initiatives in Mongolia highlights the positive correlation between CSO efforts and the implementation of legal provisions, although challenges persist in translating laws into practical initiatives. Likewise, our data confirms that faith leaders and NGOs like World Vision contribute to legislative and policy changes in Kenya such as the World Vision contribution to [the National Plan of Action for Children in Kenya \(2015-2022\)](#). Overall, our project evaluations underscore the importance of legal frameworks, collaborative efforts, and financial considerations in effective Child Protection. In Kenya, the NGO-supported gender-based violence and anti-child marriage legal framework has successfully challenged these practices with the help of World Vision and other NGOs' advocacy at the local level.



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