Local Partnering for Development Programmes

The Essentials

Acknowledgements

Through application and wide adoption of World Vision's Development Programme Approach, programme teams across the world have found new ways to work with partners for child well-being. These programme teams are committed to build on the best of existing practice, and to pioneer effective new approaches. They have shown that local partnering can be at the heart of programming for sustainable child well-being outcomes.

The material presented here builds on their experience as well as that of technical teams and national, regional and support offices across World Vision.

World Vision will continue to gather and share good practices through the Programme Effectiveness Community of Practice (in the Local Partnering Interest Group). We encourage programme teams and practitioners to continue to share their challenges and successes as we move forward.

Development and Programme Effectiveness Team, May 2013.

World Vision is a Christian relief, development, and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families, and communities to overcome poverty and injustice.

As followers of Jesus, World Vision is dedicated to working with the world's most vulnerable people. World Vision serves all people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender.

Contents

Acronyms

CBO . . . . community-based organisation
CVA . . . . Citizen Voice and Action
CWB . . . . child well-being
FBO . . . . faith-based organisation
M&E . . . . monitoring and evaluation
NGO . . . . non-governmental organisation
PACE . . . . process, activities, context and effects
WV . . . . World Vision

'We're made for partnerships, and God moves when we work together.'

(Dean Hirsch, President, World Vision International 2006)

WHAT IS 'LOCAL PARTNERING' FOR?

Local Partnering for Development Programmes supports programme staff working with local partners in World Vision's Development Programme Approach. It provides the basic information needed to get started. 'Section 1' explains why working with partners is so important for sustained child well-being, and looks at who possible partners are. 'Section 2' shows how partnering is built into the Approach, especially by using the Critical Path. In 'Section 3', key partnering principles and types are explained. Finally, 'Section 4' gives an overview of the processes, skills and tools for partnering.

Relevant tools and guidance that supports each section of this document can be found in the Guidance for Development Programmes on the 'Partnering tools' section of www.wvdevelopment.org. Further updates and learning will also be available on the Local Partnering Interest Group site (on WV's intranet site: wvcentral.org).

━━ LEARN MORE: ━━

Local Partnering in Practice is supplemental guidance and tools to support practical implementation of working with partners. Cross-references to relevant sections of *Local Partnering in Practice* are included throughout this document, in the 'Learn More' boxes.

WHY PARTNER FOR CHILD WELL-BEING?

This section explains why partnering is one of the four main aspects of World Vision's Development Programme Approach. World Vision (WV) has a commitment to greater and more sustained impact in the lives of children, responding to each context appropriately.

Since **World Vision's presence in a community will always be temporary,** sustained impact means building on and strengthening the community's existing resources and capacities. These capacities are represented in all relationships within social, political, economic and environmental systems. WV empowers communities, their duty-bearers and other stakeholders to negotiate, plan and manage their joint work towards achieving a shared vision of child well-being.
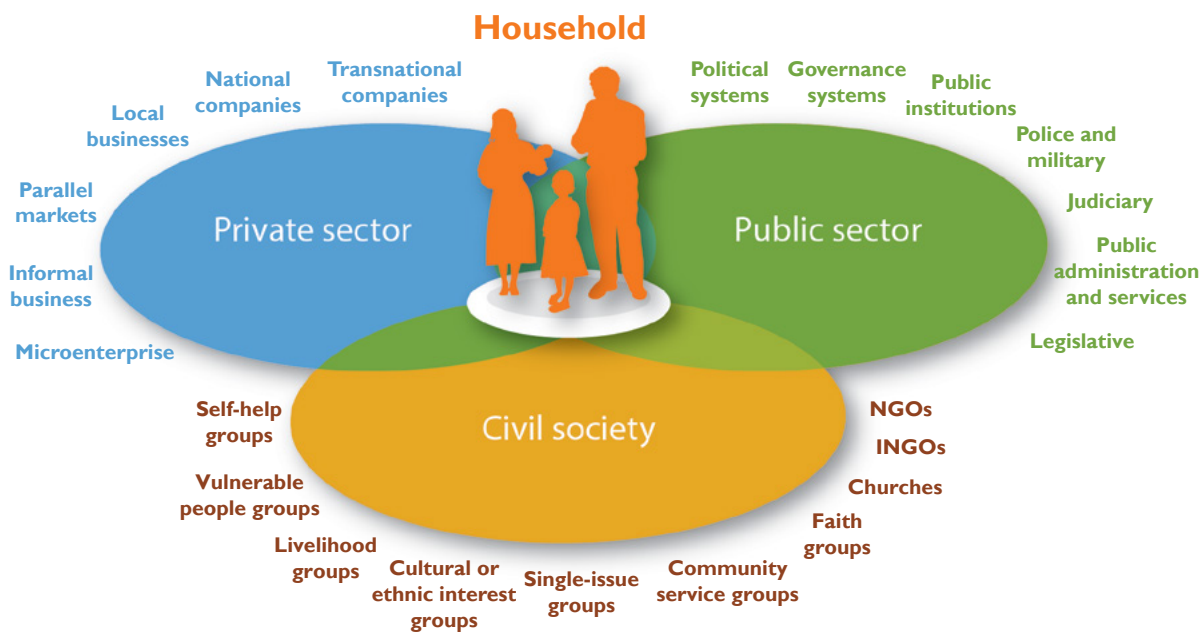
1.1 WHO ARE POSSIBLE PARTNERS?

Many stakeholders influence the well-being of children. When people from any community are asked 'who touches the life of a child at every stage from before birth to the age of 18?' they are always able to identify a long list of stakeholders. Most of these stakeholders were in the area before World Vision arrived, and will be there long after WV departs.

Children exist within a network of different relationships, institutions, and systems within a family and community, and at the national, and global levels. The stakeholders within this network provide many of the essential resources and services that children and their families need to thrive, such as access to education, health care, nutrition, shelter and protection.

Many of these stakeholders are 'duty-bearers' – they have a legitimate responsibility for child well-being. Given the number of duty-bearers and their ability to affect children's well-being, it does not make sense for WV to develop and deliver its own programmes in isolation.

Instead, WV seeks to work effectively with them. Possible partners come from within this range of groups and organisations. WV works with them in ways that strengthen and empower them, building on their own interests, mandates, strategies, roles and capacities.

Figure 1. Possible stakeholders in a programme area

World Vision's Development Programme Approach defines **partners** as:

Groups or organisations engaged in collaboration for any aspect of child well-being in any given area.

Possible partners can come from any of the four sectors shown in Figure 1 (household, public sector, private sector or civil society), and will typically include:

- ▶ **government**
- ▶ **churches, other faith communities and faith-based organisations (FBOs)**
- ▶ **non-governmental organisations (NGOs)**
- ▶ **community-based organisations (CBOs)**
- ▶ **local businesses**
- ▶ **community groups** - including groups of children and youth, and vulnerable people groups.

PARTNERING WITH CHURCHES

While recognising the role of all stakeholders, including other NGOs and the private sector, **World Vision affirms the legitimate and essential role of churches** in promoting the well-being of children. WV and local churches share a Christian calling and values about children and childhood. Churches are natural partners, serving children in their communities, regardless of those children's own faith or belief, or that of their families.[1] WV will always seek to build on the strengths and initiatives that churches already have for the sustained well-being of children. WV also values the moral leadership and practical action that other faith communities provide in promoting child well-being, and will work with them for that purpose.

PARTNERING WITH GOVERNMENT

WV recognises that **working with the government at all levels is essential** in all contexts where there is a legitimate, functioning state. Programming should align with and leverage government policy, planning and capacity. It must not take over or undermine the role of the government.

PARTNERING WITH BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

Businesses are also a legitimate stakeholder. For example, they can provide youth employment and family livelihoods.

Working with **household and community groups, especially those representing the most vulnerable** is critical, making sure that their voices are heard and respected, and their strengths are used appropriately.

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[1] *World Vision's Strategic Intent for World Vision in Multi-/Other Faith Contexts,* September 2012

1.2 THE VALUE OF PARTNERING

The Benefits of Partnering
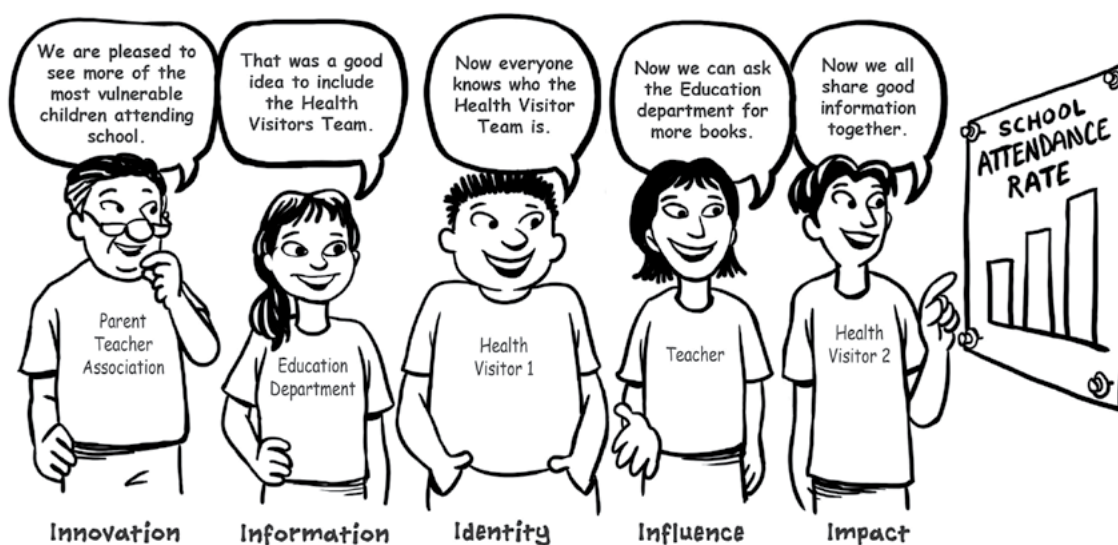
"Reporting back at the education review meeting"

Five benefits of partnering:

Five 'I's	Definition
Innovation	• Working with new or less obvious partners often generates new, possibly unexpected, solutions or imaginative problem-solving. • Ideas generated with local partners are more likely to genuinely connect with the needs of the local area and capitalise on the abilities and resources of the community. • Helping organisations to learn together and from each other can bring new solutions.
Information	• Sharing information between partners allows quicker distribution of news and ideas, and better learning and adaptation of good practices.
Identity	• As groups collaborate, they grow in their own identity, their legitimacy and in their capacities to fulfil their distinct roles. • Individual groups are able to see their work as a vital part of something bigger and far-reaching.
Influence	• When resources and efforts are combined, influence can have more credibility and authority (more people speaking together with better information and better connections). • When groups share information openly, the ability to influence decision makers and duty bearers is easier.
Impact	• Working together effectively and efficiently can bring greater long-term changes for children. • Being part of a group means that problems can be addressed jointly and systemically; it enables better integration of plans and activities. • Helping to strengthen the roles and build the capacity of local partners and duty-bearers can lead to more sustainable change after WV's contribution has ended.

2

Sustainability is at the heart of World Vision's Development Programme Approach. The goal of the Approach is to promote the sustained well-being of children.

One of the main reasons for developing WV's Development Programme Approach was to address concerns about limited sustainability after a WV programme ended. The Approach works on the basis that sustainable change cannot be achieved without ownership, capacity and commitment for child well-being.

Partnering increases the sustainability of child well-being through:

1 developing voluntary and mutual **accountability** between groups working together on common priorities

2 building the **capacity** to respond cooperatively, efficiently and effectively (achieving the benefits listed above)

3 building a culture of on-going **learning**, that helps future responses to child well-being needs be appropriate and effective.

Local advocacy approaches, such as *Citizen Voice and Action* (CVA), are effective ways of building an enabling environment. Partnerships can use CVA to ensure that local government service providers are held accountable for the quality of their services. CVA can also strengthen the sustainability of child well-being outcomes because it builds local skills and capacity for social accountability that will remain after WV's contribution to the programme has ended.

2.1 STRENGTHENING LOCAL OWNERSHIP

The Development Programme Approach empowers local stakeholders to lead the development process from the beginning. Together with World Vision, local stakeholders do a careful analysis of their context, identifying the gaps in child well-being and which resources already exist. It is this joint analysis, planning and decision making process that empowers local stakeholders to own the plans that are developed.

This joint analysis and exploration also enables WV staff to build strong relationships with all key stakeholders. In the process, staff will develop a good understanding of the activities, power dynamics and linkages that exist in the local area. WV's engagement in the programme area will be based on this understanding, and this should ensure that WV's contributions do not duplicate or undermine existing activities and resources. WV programme teams support local stakeholders to define and work towards their own 'preferred future'.

Bringing groups and organisations together to collaborate in this way can change the local power dynamics. This enables the poor and marginalised to negotiate with duty-bearers for the protection of rights and provision of services for their children and families.

MATCHING APPROACH AND CONTEXT

Throughout the programme planning process, World Vision chooses between three main approaches, as appropriate to the local civil society context. This is called the 'Decision Gate', and the _Decision Gate_ tool helps programme teams to navigate these three options.

mobilise
Where civil society is weaker, and there are few or no civil society groups, WV may **mobilise** local groups around key child well-being issues. WV will then work with these groups to strengthen their capacities in key areas.

catalyse and build
In areas where civil society organisations have readiness and some capacity but are not working together, WV will **catalyse** existing groups to collaborate on child well-being priorities, and **build** needed capacities.

j o i n
Where civil society is stronger, and local networks already exist, WV may **join** and support pre-existing partnerships.

SERVICE DELIVERY AND PARTNERING

Empowerment and delivery of services need not be mutually exclusive. There is no question that the provision of good-quality services is imperative for the well-being of children. In normal circumstances, government agencies provide these services to its citizens – including education, health care, basic public safety and protection. When there is little or no government capacity to provide these essential services, World Vision will consider a direct implementation role, including service delivery.

When in fragile or low civil society contexts ('Mobilise' in the Decision Gate), urgent child well-being needs may require WV to take on essential service delivery roles. Even then, WV maintains an attitude of empowerment. This sees the poor as actors and primary (or at least significant) contributors of ideas and resources. WV will avoid a paternalistic development approach which sees the poor simply as passive recipients of things and ideas provided to them by external groups.

WV should provide any service in a way that helps build the capacity of local government and legitimise local duty-bearers to deliver the service in the longer term, and must take care not to undermine these local capacities.

The _Programme Effectiveness Standards_ state that the **preferred role of WV's programme staff** is:

"to serve as a catalyst and builder of capacity of local partners and partnerships for sustained child well-being".

2.3 PARTNERING IN THE CRITICAL PATH

The Critical Path creates space for sustainability.

The Critical Path is a flexible process for putting World Vision's Development Programme Approach into action. It empowers communities, local stakeholders and programme staff to jointly plan and implement shared projects that contribute to the sustained well-being of children.

As stakeholders work through the Critical Path, they have the space and opportunity to explore child well-being in a way that builds relationships, encourages multi-stakeholder analysis, reflection and decision-making, and leads to shared action.

The Critical Path is designed to give programme staff the opportunities and the tools to apply partnering principles (see 'Section 3' below) through a process of relationship and trust building, shared project planning, and implementation. Partnering in the Critical Path starts right from Step 1, when WV considers how to express its identity and communicate effectively with local communities and stakeholders. The Critical Path is much more than a participatory design process. It is a framework for sustainability.

The framework is explained as follows:

PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN STEPS 1 TO 5

Steps 1 to 5 of the Critical Path lay the foundation for good partnering by identifying all the actors that are contributing to child well-being, and bringing them together to explore and plan jointly.
Sustainability is planned for by:

- ▶ **enabling WV to understand the context progressively** from a range of different points of view

- ▶ **understanding stakeholders and building their capacities**

- ▶ **deepening stakeholders' mutual understanding** of each other's values, agendas and activities

- ▶ **enabling deeper relationships and effective dialogue** in the community, that builds awareness of power dynamics, critical problems and issues to be addressed

- ▶ **enabling local stakeholders to jointly form a shared vision of child well-being and priorities for action.**

Figure 2. Partnership developing along the Critical Path

Improving child well-being in families and communities

How do we transition together?

How do we manage together?

Who will contribute what?

What will we do together?

What more can be done?

What is already being done?

Who are you?

Local partners

Who are we?

World Vision

Assessment

learning

God's presence and work

Steps 1 to 3

Understanding the bigger pciture and who is involved. Introducing ourselves. Working with key stakeholders to explore child well-being (CWB) in the primary focus area and gathering information to build a shared understanding of existing strengths and challenges.

Steps 4 to 5

Sharing and analysing information. Building dialogue, relationships and a shared vision for child well-being. Choosing child well-being priorities. Identifying stakeholders willing to work together on exploration and analysis of priority areas.

Step 6

Working group members building their relationships and agreeing on a timeframe and the outcomes they want to see. Members are also working with the development facilitator to explore their mutual compatibility, readiness to work together and power relationships.

Step 7

Collaborations start implementing on the different priority areas. Impact and effectiveness are measured, the relationships reviewed and revised as they progress and new plans are developed. A broader child well-being network of interested stakeholders is maintained.

Step 8

Maintaining the ongoing community dialogue and web of relationships between stakeholders involved in child well-being through appropriate community structures, which carry the shared vision for child well-being. Existing partnerships are managed sustainably.

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE OUTCOMES IN STEPS 6 TO 8

From Steps 6 and 7 partners are working together to improve child well-being and implementing activities in priority areas. By Step 8 they have the experience, relationships, skills and motivation to sustain child well-being outcomes into the future without further support from WV.

Sustainability is built by:

▶ **implementing, monitoring and evaluating shared projects together**

▶ creating **new interventions**

▶ ensuring **duty-bearers take due responsibility**

▶ establishing **shared values and expectations** about child well-being

▶ deepening **collaborative relationships** that can address emerging and difficult problems.

2.4 CHILD SPONSORSHIP WITH PARTNERS

World Vision partners in Child Sponsorship when it is in the local partner's interest to work with us, and where their priority child well-being outcomes will be improved because of sponsorship. There must be mutual benefit.

Programme teams need to consider how child sponsorship can help partners achieve their organisational goals. Partners adopt only those aspects of sponsorship that further their own work.

Sponsorship monitoring can encourage and strengthen community-led monitoring for child well-being. Working together, schools, health centres and other child-focused organisations can monitor child well-being (with co-ordination by a joint group). This can help support local child protection, show the overall progress in child well-being and identify changes in the context.

WV may not always have sponsorship partners. A decision to partner for sponsorship will be based on what is learned in Steps 1 to 5 of the Critical Path.

ADVANTAGES OF PARTNERING IN SPONSORSHIP FOR LOCAL PARTNERS INCLUDE:

Deepen a partner's involvement with children

For example, a school committee has greater access to families. They can help address some of the reasons children are struggling to attend school, and build a stronger school community.

Build a partner's capacity

WV can support a partner's work by sharing good practices on engaging with children, and providing mentoring and training opportunities for their staff and volunteers.

Strengthen child well-being networks

Children benefit more when organisations develop coordinated responses to address problems identified through sponsorship monitoring.

Build a partner's workforce

Instead of recruiting volunteers, WV can help build a CBO's volunteer base to work for the local organisation (for example, contributing to the organisational costs of recruitment and volunteer support).

ADVANTAGES OF PARTNERING IN SPONSORSHIP FOR WORLD VISION INCLUDE:

▶ **availability of locally-led volunteers for child well-being activities**

▶ **leveraging partner's local knowledge**

▶ **WV staff are released to more strategic roles**

▶ **more cost-effective.**

Issues that will need to be addressed include:

For the partner(s)	• being perceived as WV's agent, rather than being seen as independent and primarily responsive to the people it was set up to serve (branding) • being overwhelmed by sponsorship activities that that take too much of a smaller partner's energy and capacity
For World Vision	• determine which aspects of sponsorship to maintain internally • record keeping and confidentiality by partners • accountability of the work done on sponsorship • realistic assessment of partner capacity or stability, and plans for capacity building.

2.5 CHILD PROTECTION IN PARTNERING

Child protection is always at the forefront of World Vision's awareness and concern. This is to prevent cases of abusive, negligent or exploitive practices in a community where WV works. WV extends this concern to all of its partnering activities.

Working in a community as a catalyst and broker for child well-being means that WV engages with many different groups. So far as it is possible, WV ensures that 'with partners, we support prevention of exploitation, harmful traditional practices and violence against children in their family and community; protection of children living in risky situations in communities; and restoration of children who have been abused, neglected or exploited'.[2]

Sometimes, a working relationship will need to be established with groups that do not initially qualify as child safe organisations. In such cases:

▶ World Vision 'equips partners to understand and perform their child protection responsibilities and obligations'.[3] This includes any services for children, and all aspects of child participation – it must be safe, ethical and voluntary (Standard 1.2 of the Child Protection Standards).

▶ World Vision will 'influence partners to be safer organisations for children'[4] (Standard 7.1).

LEARN MORE:

- *Local Partnering in Practice,* 'Child Protection in Local Partnering' section
- *World Vision International Child Protection Standards*

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[2] *World Vision International Child Protection Standards,* November, 2012, https://www.wvcentral.org/wvipolicy/Documents/child%20protection%20policy.doc

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*

Partnering is a general term that World Vision uses when collaborating with others in programmes. This section explains WV's principles for collaboration and shows that many kinds of collaboration are possible. There is no 'one size fits all' approach. But there are particular types of collaboration that can be used, depending on stakeholders, need and context.

No two collaborations are the same, and each has its own story. For this reason, this document does not focus on a 'blueprint' for collaboration, but on the principles, skills and ways to approach collaboration.

3.1 THREE COLLABORATION TYPES

Three types of multi-stakeholder, and ideally cross-sector, collaborations can be developed:

networks
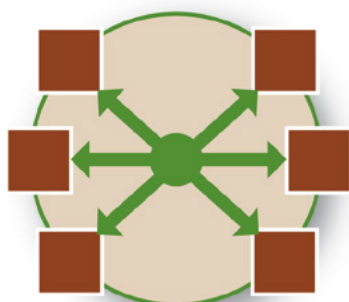
Networks are for sharing information on activities and learning together on child well-being priorities. They are the simplest type of collaboration. They are good for activities that require little commitment or trust. Good dialogue on child well-being priorities creates common vision. A typical child well-being network will build on existing work and allow sharing of ideas, updates and even members between different working groups or partnerships. They can have many members.

coalitions
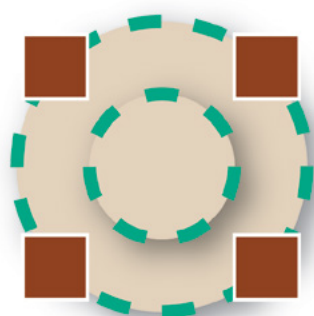
Coalitions are for coordinating activities, plans and broader cooperation (for example, for advocacy purposes). Coalitions require more careful facilitation than networks. Shared measurement (using the same indicators) enables effective coordination around child well-being priorities. Advocacy is enabled by groups coming together in coalition to speak together, using the increased and better quality information available to them.

Growing shared values in a coalition may be shown in attitudes and policies for child protection. For example, it is often possible to have a shared child protection policy in a coalition that is not possible in a network. The tighter criteria for participation in a coalition generally means there are less members than in a network.

partnerships
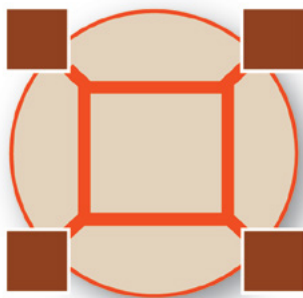
Partnerships are carefully designed shared projects. They have clear agreements between partners, specific goals, they actively work together and share mutual accountability. Each partner contributes resources of one kind or another. Partnerships typically will have between 2 to 8 partners.

Partnerships are a good way to achieve particular tasks because their structure brings together individual contributions to the community's shared vision for child well-being.

The wider coalition or child well-being network helps to get a wider perspective on the overall progress made towards the community's child well-being vision, to celebrate success and to develop future plans.

In addition, contracts, grants and sub-grants can be used as appropriate. Wherever possible, these should be used in accordance with the partnering principles described below. WV uses the *Minimum Financial Standards for Working with Partners* in all forms of collaboration when transferring finances or material resources.

When stakeholders collaborate together, they need to consider:

① **The specific outcomes desired**

What is the goal or purpose that the possible partners would like to achieve together?

② **The readiness and willingness to work together**

Do the organisations have capacity to fulfil their shared work commitments, and to build and develop their partnering relationships? Can they be flexible enough in their work practices to work together? Is there enough trust in each other and the process?

③ **The compatibility of their values**

In order to work together effectively, partners need to have a set of shared values around child well-being and the shared project approach. It is not necessary for partners to have all the same values, but they need to have enough in common to be able to work together and avoid open conflict.

④ **The timeframe available for working together**

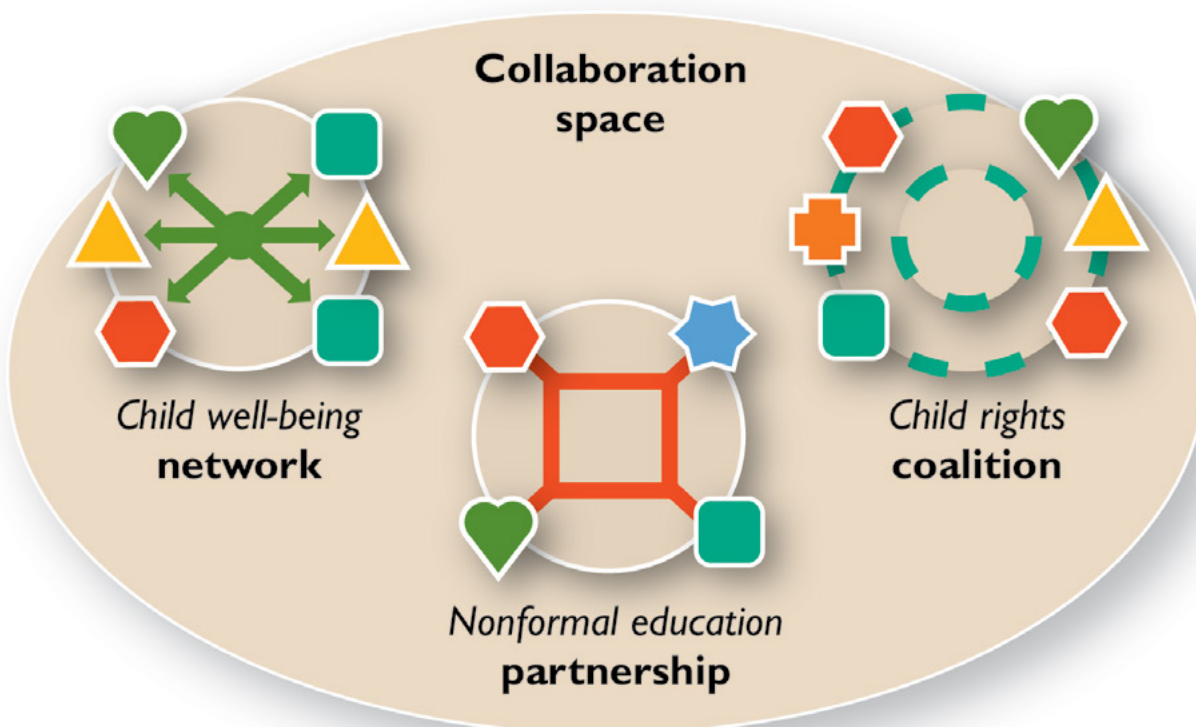Very practically, the time needed for the project should match the time possible partners are available.

3.2 THE COLLABORATION SPACE

Several networks, coalitions and partnerships may be working towards child well-being in one programme area.

A Collaboration Space is a practical way of identifying the partners and the different collaborations in any specific area. It provides a simple monitoring tool that can show how engagement in child well-being activities across the community is changing over time. It helps to recognise the participation of different groups in child well-being that otherwise be missed. It can be used to help plan for future relationships. It builds on stakeholder, influence and relationship mapping. The following diagram shows a range of collaboration options. One group can be a member of more than one collaboration. In this diagram, groups are shown half in and half out of the collaboration icon. This represents how a group can remain independent or autonomous and at the same time be committed to the collaboration.

A suggested key

Non-governmental organisations

National government

Citizen's and children's groups

Faith community

Local government providers

Business

Figure 3. An example of three collaborations working in the Collaboration Space

3.3

THREE COLLABORATION PRINCIPLES

1 mutual benefit

2 equity

3 transparency

These principles are guides for decision making - if a decision leads to improved mutual benefit, equity, and transparency - then it is likely to be a good one. This section explores these three ideas and how they can be achieved. The principles are important because they create trust, respect and sustainability in a collaboration.

## **1** MUTUAL BENEFIT - BUILDING SUSTAINABILITY

Mutual benefit is about ensuring that all the participants gain something valuable from collaboration. If everyone is expected to contribute, everyone will also expect to gain. In other words, partnering must provide a 'win-win' situation for everyone.

If a win-win situation is achieved, then the collaboration becomes sustainable because of the realistic commitment from each partner. Each partner can easily justify its contribution, because the benefit gained by that particular partner is obvious to everyone. Note that a 'sustainable collaboration' is one that can achieve its time-bound goals. Collaborations should only continue after their original goals are completed when there is specific reason to.

Each partner benefits from working collaboratively. These benefits can include:

- ▶ **achieving organisational goals** – succeeding in their mission

- ▶ **development of 'human capital'** – building the capacity of their staff and volunteers

- ▶ **improved operational efficiency** – doing more with less

- ▶ **organisational innovation** – finding new ideas

- ▶ **enhanced reputation and credibility.**

Mutual Benefit
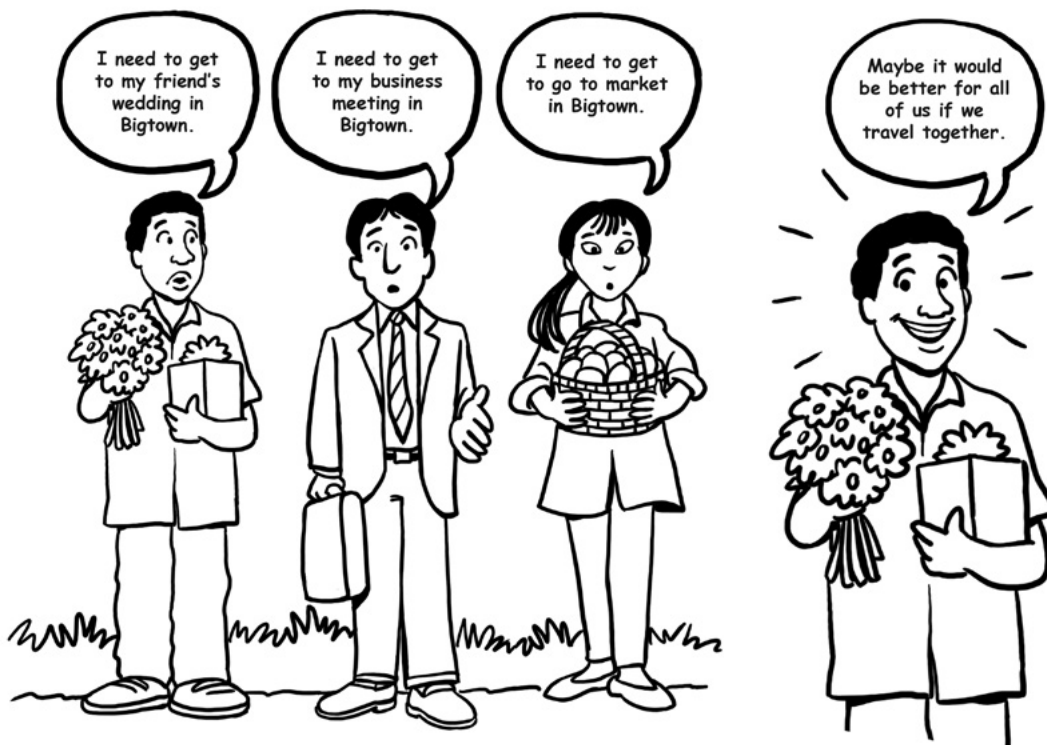
"Every partner has a good reason to join the shared project."

Facilitation tips: achieving mutual benefit in practice

Bringing a group together can require patience. Three things to keep in mind (for facilitators and partners alike):

☑ The benefits of collaborating must feel like good value. It is important that each participant feels that what they are gaining from the collaboration is proportional to what they put in, and that it is worthwhile.

☑ No two participants will gain the same mutual benefit, and each will value their gains in different ways. It is important that each participant is realistic about the potential gains and the costs of the collaboration.

☑ Mutual benefit is not the same as the shared project goal. The shared project goal is what all the participants are working towards together. Mutual benefit is the gain the individual participants get from collaborating. Sustained action towards the shared project goal is more likely if mutual benefit is recognised and appreciated by all partners.

2 EQUITY - BUILDING RESPECT

Equity occurs within a collaboration when each partner:

▶ **contributes** effectively and appropriately to the collaboration

▶ has practical, **shared ownership** of the collaboration itself, with ability to influence and implement along with everyone else

▶ feels that they are **respected and valued** as much as any other partner.

Partners can rarely be said to be 'equal'. Different groups and organisations that are collaborating together are not likely to be equal – in size, in finances, nor in standing or influence within the community. For example, a youth group, a local education department and an international NGO are not 'equal'. But they can treat each other fairly, without bias or favouritism and they can learn to respect all the different and unique contributions.
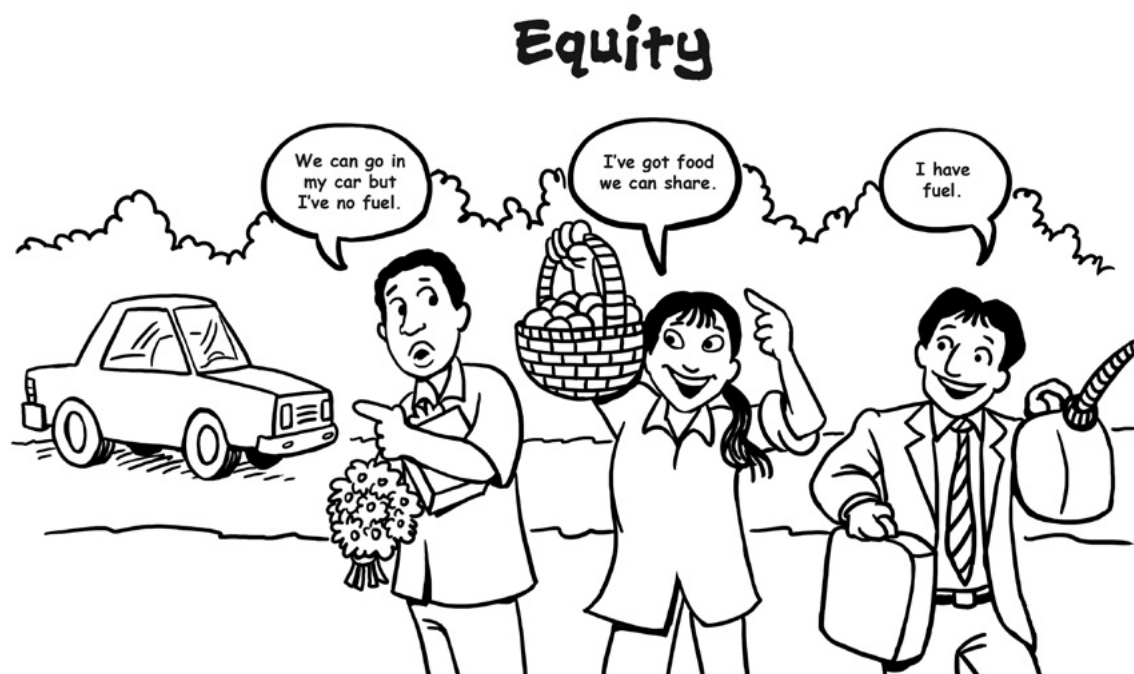
"Every partner had a vital resource for the shared project."

Facilitation tips: achieving equity in practice

Achieving equity is not easy. Therefore a facilitator will need to:

- ☑ help all the different partners to recognise and value the different contributions that the others are bringing to the collaboration, with careful understanding of the value of non-financial or non-material resources (see box below)

- ☑ support partners to practice respect for each other's opinions and their right to influence decision-making - this can be modelled and practiced in good meeting facilitation

- ☑ help larger partners avoid dominating discussions and decisions.

③ TRANSPARENCY - BUILDING TRUST

Transparency means openness.

Transparency means not hiding things that matter from other partners. Transparency results in building trust. It is a way of being accountable to other partners. Transparency can be improved when each participant can explain their ambitions, hopes, strategies, constraints and concerns.

E X A M P L E: *A business and an NGO are considering a shared education partnership. The business employs older children and is concerned that the shared project will result in the children's work not getting done. The NGO may have donor pressure to not partner with a business that uses (even legal) child labour. In order to negotiate and work together realistically, they must share their concerns openly or risk reducing the collaborative options.*
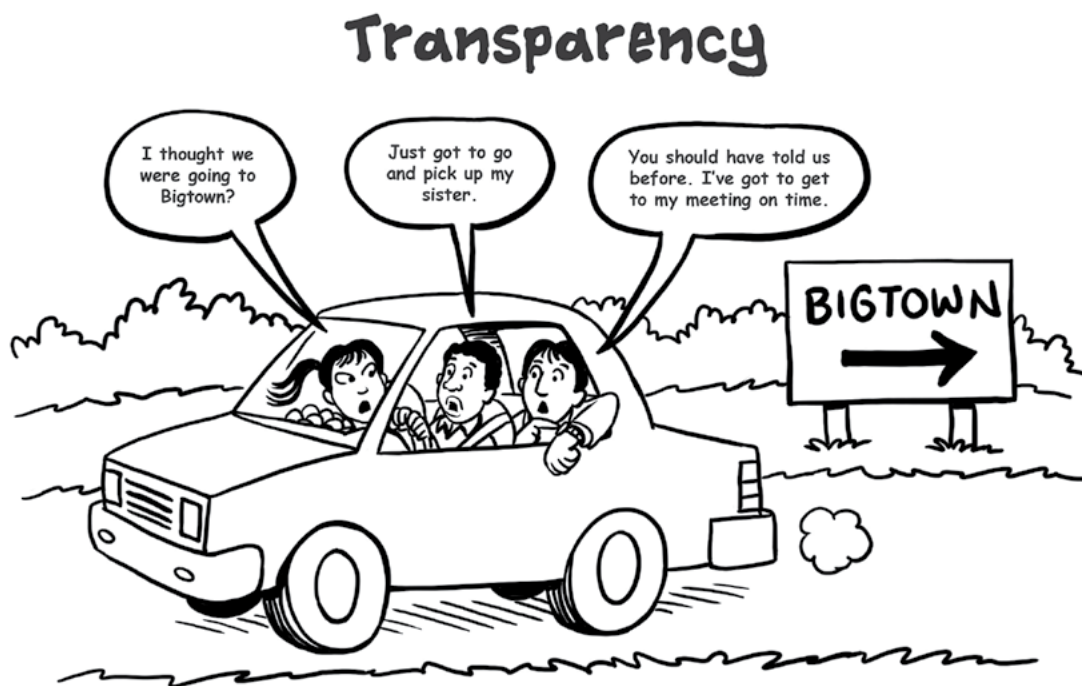
"Every partner should be transparent about their needs."

It is much easier to build trust if each partner is seen as being open and honest. They must not feel that they are being manipulated by someone else's hidden agenda. It is particularly important for larger, richer or more powerful partners to explain clearly their motivations for any plan. This is simply because they are the ones that are most likely to be suspected of using their power to push their own agendas (especially where financial contributions are involved).

Transparency is built into the Critical Path. In Step 1, World Vision considers how it can clearly explain its identity and purpose to the community (for example, using the _Message Box_ tool). In Steps 5 and 6, WV openly negotiates its interests and contributions with other working group members through a shared planning process.
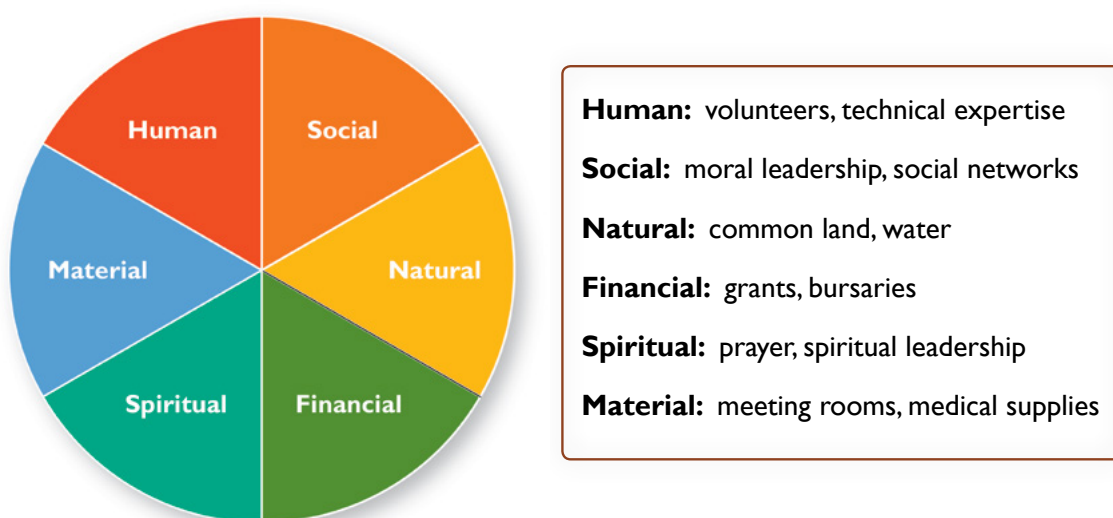
Facilitation tips: achieving transparency in practice

No organisation can be fully transparent about everything. Some things need to remain confidential, such as personnel files. However, the more open and honest a partner can be about issues relating to the shared project, the stronger the partnership will be. This demonstrates integrity and builds trust.

WHAT'S YOUR CONTRIBUTION?

It is easy to focus on the financial element as the main contribution to a partnership's project. Other resources can be practical, for example, providing a neutral meeting room in the community by a mosque or community group. Social networks, leadership, volunteers, local expertise and access to natural resources can all be vital to the success of a shared project.

Often it is local groups that are best positioned to provide these. The diagram shows six possible categories of contribution, with examples listed at the side. Mapping a whole range of possible contributions can make the idea of equity very practical for partners.

Human: volunteers, technical expertise

Social: moral leadership, social networks

Natural: common land, water

Financial: grants, bursaries

Spiritual: prayer, spiritual leadership

Material: meeting rooms, medical supplies

3.4 PUTTING THE PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE

A regular collaboration health check is practical and helpful.

Simple questions can be asked of any partnership based on the three partnering principles. These are a clear way of showing the health of the collaboration over time.

Some questions include:

- Is everyone, regardless of social status or size of organisation they represent, able to contribute at collaboration meetings?
- Are there perceptions that more powerful partners have hidden agendas?
- Are there clear ways in which the different contributions from each member are celebrated by the collaboration?
- Are all members fulfilling their commitments in a timely manner?

It is worth checking individually with partners that they are in the right kind of collaboration, and that it is of the right size for them to succeed in their roles. This needs to happen before any agreement, but can be reviewed whenever is appropriate.

WORLD VISION'S ROLE

World Vision seeks to be a 'catalyst' and 'builder'. It also contributes, in collaborations, to shared child well-being projects using its resources (for example, financial, technical expertise and connections) to complement the resources of the other partners. Sometimes WV will take a facilitation role, but contribute little or no resources – this can be called 'partnership brokering'.

Other times, WV will be acting as a full partner, pursuing its own interests that are linked to the national office's strategic priorities and related technical approaches. Staff must have the appropriate skills either to represent WV's interests, or play the role of partnership broker.

Whenever they are brokering, WV staff must be able to demonstrate that they are completely fair with each partner, or 'impartial'. That is, they will ensure that each partner is represented equally.

When WV is a full partner, good understanding of the partnering principles outlined here will help WV guide the group of partners through the partnership process as they proceed together. If the other partners feel WV is manipulating the process, then an external partnership broker could be used.

Whether acting as partner or broker, WV staff will be transparent in the processes they are using and ensure that they are building the partnering skills within the group.

Roles of World Vision

World Vision as a broker:

World Vision as a partner:

"Finding the best way to help a collaboration move forward."

4

The essential processes, principles and skills of partnering can be applied to networks, coalitions and partnerships. They can be adapted for differing timeframes, numbers of partners and kinds of shared impact desired from those collaborations. Because partnerships are the deepest form of collaboration, with the most tangible goals and require shared resource commitments, this chapter will focus on partnerships.

The _Partnering Cycle_[4] is a simple management tool that helps plan the processes of a partnership.

The essence of the _Partnering Cycle_ is the four stages, shown on the diagram below. The arrows show that this cycle is not a linear process to follow rigidly, but it can be used flexibly, always adapting to the changing context and needs of any group of partners. In particular, the steps within any stage may be reordered or completed iteratively.

The practicalities of each stage and its relationship to the Critical Path (see Figure 2) are summarised on the next pages. As explained at the end of 'Section 3', the group of possible partners may have skills to facilitate itself, or a partnership broker (internal or external to the group) may be appointed for one or more stages of the partnership.

Figure 4. The Partnering Management Cycle

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[4] The 'Partnering Management Cycle' developed by The Partnering Initiative, see www.thepartneringinitiative.org.

SCOPING AND BUILDING

This first stage is about **building a partnership**. The outcome will be a partnership agreement based on good working relationships, careful analysis, sharing resources and a specific shared project goal.

The first two steps, 'Scoping' and 'Identifying' lay the essential foundations for any partnership. Groups of possible partners start discussing a shared response to a particular child well-being priority. These groups will typically be working groups that have been formed in the community summit found in Step 4 of the Critical Path. They could also come from a government or other initiative.

Then 'Building' follows. This is where the group of possible partners build working relationships with each other. The _Understanding Partners_ tool can be used to help discover their motivations (benefits, drivers, opportunities, costs and risks), and their capacities. By the end of this step, the group agrees on an overall shared project goal.

1 **Scoping**

2 **Identifying**

3 **Building**

4 **Planning**

'Planning' includes a process of analysis, **negotiation and consensus-building**. The starting point is the shared project goal that was agreed in the previous step. With this goal in mind, the working group goes through a process of root cause analysis and resource mapping to develop an outline plan around which an agreement can be made.

At this point, the working group will need to consider any existing good practice that may be relevant to their shared project goal. This can include adapting relevant WV project models and national office strategic technical approaches. This negotiation will require **effective facilitation**. The outcome should aim to be genuinely win-win, providing real benefit for each individual partner. It must also demonstrate equity.

Achieving win-win in practice takes skill and good negotiation. It will often need groups to adapt to each other, for example, to match budgeting cycles. To move from compromise to win-win will take creativity. A period of brain-storming, discussion and uncertainty is normal.

> The practice of **interest-based negotiation** helps to achieve win-win outcomes.

It is during this period that the understanding, ideas and innovation develop. These will allow the possibilities of partnership to reach their potential. At some point, the group and World Vision need to decide if a partnership broker should be appointed. The broker could be someone from within the group or from outside.

LEARN MORE:

- _Local Partnering in Practice,_ 'The Partnering Cycle' section
- _Local Partnering in Practice,_ 'Facilitating Effective Meetings' section
- _Local Partnering in Practice,_ 'Negotiation and Consensus Building' section

To succeed in building a partnership, it will be important to consider due diligence, organisational capacity building and managing expectations. A broker can take the lead, but partners can support each other in these processes as their relational capacities grow.

► **Due diligence:** Each partner must (in some way) assess the others to ensure that the risks of associating (working) with them are not too great, and that the risk of not meeting commitments is not too high. This process must be done sensitively and transparently. It builds on the local knowledge gained and shared in the earlier steps of the Critical Path.

► Assessment and **organisational capacity building:** A highly strategic partner may lack some key capacities. It is important to identify these and make a plan to develop them. World Vision can support this, taking a mentoring approach and drawing on local strengths.

► **Managing expectations:** It is important for every partner representative to recognise and manage the needs and expectations of their internal stakeholders as well as focus on negotiations and due diligence with the other partners.

Before signing a partnership agreement, a facilitator and the new partners can work through the *Strategic Alignment* tool. Combined with due diligence, this can help to ensure that risks for each partner are not too great, and that the values and project goals are well-matched to the partners' needs and capacities.

To conclude this stage, a partnership agreement should be developed (see *Strategic Alignment* tool). A good agreement is one which is clear on responsibilities, but flexible enough to allow adaptation and development.

The Partnering Cycle and the Development Programme Approach

PARTNERING CYCLE:	CRITICAL PATH:	LEAP/ DME:	DESCRIPTION:
SCOPING	Steps 2 and 3		• understanding the challenge • gathering information • consulting with stakeholders and potential external resource providers • building a vision for the partnership
IDENTIFYING	Steps 2 and 3		• identifying potential partners and, if suitable, securing their involvement • motivating them and encouraging them to work together
BUILDING	Step 4 and 5		• partners form working groups, building their working relationship through agreeing on the goals, objectives and core principles that will underpin their partnership
PLANNING	Step 5	Design of project	• undertaking surveys and exploratory workshops • detailed root cause analysis • identify initial design parameters and required competencies • stakeholder engagement and resource mapping • agreeing on an outline project plan • identification of relevant good practice and adaptation of project models • developing a partnering agreement.

LEARN MORE:

• *Local Partnering in Practice,* 'Strategic Alignment and Risk'; this includes the *Strategic Alignment* tool.

4.2 MANAGING AND MAINTAINING

Once an agreement is signed, the real work of **implementation** begins. Successful implementation needs a careful, continuous balancing of relationships and outputs. This involves:

▶ **working to develop the right structures**

▶ **keeping the resources coming in**

▶ **continuously reviewing progress**

▶ **adapting to changing situations**

▶ **responding to the needs of the partners**

▶ **ensuring quality in delivery.**

5 **Structuring**

6 **Mobilising**

7 **Delivering**

The first step is to create the simplest possible 'structure' that can maintain the functions described in the table below. Structure does not mean a new organisation – it means deciding who, in which partner organisation, will do what and when.

Five functions to include in a partnership structure

Decision-making and accountability	• decision-making and planning • accountability to each other • procedures for when things go wrong
Communications	• between partners (especially the partner representative and the people carrying out the partnership activities) • internal communications within the individual partner organisations (typically from the partner representative to their own managers) • outside the partnership (to beneficiaries, other collaborators and stakeholders)
Resources	• finances • time – including committed time of the representatives to run the partnership • other resource commitments
Managing	• progress measurement • activity progress • meeting schedule
Behaviours	• co-working – how to work together day-to-day • coordination – how the partners co-ordinate their own particular contributions.

A good structure is essential for success in a shared project. In many partnerships, the members will be able to take responsibility for the coordination. Sometimes staff can be given some of these responsibilities as part of their jobs. See 'Facilitation for effective collaboration' in _Local Partnering in Practice_ for further tools for structuring a partnership.

══ LEARN MORE: ══

• _Local Partnering in Practice,_ 'Facilitation for Effective Collaboration' section

The second step is 'Mobilising'. This ensures that now the partnership is operating, committed resources from partners or other external sources are made available.

The third step is the on-going coordination of actually carrying out the shared project, described in 'Managing and delivering'.

The task of delivering the shared project should be shared amongst the partners, depending on each partner's resources and capacities. Decisions on who implements what and how should be mutually agreed upon. It is essential that there is good communication and coordination, so that each partner knows what is expected of them. In addition, final decisions need to be made to select the indicators for the project outputs and outcomes, along with a monitoring plan for the shared project.

The Partnering Cycle and the Development Programme Approach

PARTNERING CYCLE:	CRITICAL PATH:	LEAP/ DME:	DESCRIPTION:
STRUCTURING	Step 6	Design of M&E plan	• partners explore structure and management of their partnership in the medium to long-term • defining governance and decision-making processes • agreeing on communication systems and protocols
MOBILISING	Step 6		• partners (and other supporters) identify and mobilise cash and non-cash resources
DELIVERING	Step 7		• after resources are in place and project details are agreed upon, the implementation process starts - working to an agreed timetable and to specific deliverables.

Across the Collaboration Space
At the same time as this partnership is in its implementation stage, other collaborations will also be developing in different ways (through Step 7 of the Critical Path, and future iterations of Steps 5 to 7).

World Vision's programme team can play a role in facilitating:

▶ **networking:** keeping connections alive for effective sharing

▶ **interpreting:** helping different groups understand what is happening

▶ **entrepreneurship:** helping partners recognise what is new and respond to it.

4.3 REVIEWING AND REVISING

This stage of the _Partnering Cycle_ focuses on monitoring and evaluation – implementing the monitoring plan, analysing results and adapting or developing plans as appropriate.

Good monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes are vital for successful collaborations. They increase accountability and provide valuable opportunities for learning to improve shared project plans.

It is vital that the M&E plans of each shared project are owned by all partners, and that they provide information that is useful to each partner.

Monitoring and evaluation for collaboration can use appropriate participatory tools (for example, using 'PACE' - Process, Activities, Context, Effects - as described in the _Programme Monitoring Guide_), or some specifically designed for collaboration.

See _Local Partnering in Practice_ for more detail on how this works. Celebrating every partner's successes, contributions and achievements is essential – and should be fun.

8 Measuring

9 Reviewing

10 Revising

The Partnering Cycle and the Development Programme Approach

PARTNERING CYCLE:	CRITICAL PATH:	LEAP/ DME:	DESCRIPTION:
PLANNING & STRUCTURING	Steps 4 and 5	**Plan**	• develop definitions of success and agree on indicators • create the monitoring plan
MEASURING	Step 7	**Do** the planned M&E; LEAP programme management report	• measuring and reporting on impact and effectiveness – project outputs and changes to child well-being • partnership functioning • individual partner's contributions and behaviours
REVIEWING	Step 7	**Analyse** what has changed	• reviewing the partnership: what is the effect of the partnership on partner organisations? • impact of shared projects • partner capacities and changes • partnership's facilitation processes
REVISING	Step 7	**Use** the analysis to make judgements, for accountability and for advocacy	• revising the partnership, or shared project based on experience • The shared project plans: are they doing the right things, are they working in the right ways? • Is it time for some partners to leave and new partners to join? • The partnership: how should it be different?

LEARN MORE:

• _Local Partnering in Practice,_ 'Monitoring and Evaluation for Collaboration' section

Monitoring information will be used by partners to improve shared project plans. Regular review and planning sessions will form an important part of the M&E process for the partnership. It will also be important to connect this M&E and learning process with that of the wider community. Working groups may share their learning with that of the wider community groups. For example, this can happen at regular community review and planning workshops.

M&E processes must fully reflect the three partnering principles:

▶ **Equity:** So far as is possible, all partners contribute meaningfully to planning, doing, analysing and using the monitoring and evaluation system.

▶ **Mutual benefit:** Each partner should gain clear value through the partnership. The immediate shared goal is not the only concern of each partner, so specific benefits must be identified in all measuring processes.

▶ **Transparency:** All partners have open access to data and interpretations about the shared projects and partner contributions (or difficulties). This could include the groups to which the partnership and the partners are accountable to as well.

4.4 SUSTAINING OUTCOMES

The sustained well-being of children, especially the most vulnerable, is the goal of World Vision's activities. This last stage, **planning for sustained outcomes,** considers what partnerships must be doing to sustain the improvements in child well-being, and how it relates to changes across the programme area.

11 Scaling

12 Moving on

Three options are possible:

▶ When a shared project achieves its outcomes, and there is an adequate enabling environment, then the partnership can conclude its work together.

If partners can continue to participate in a local child well-being network this will allow the capacities and relationships that have been built to remain as assets within the community. Partners can also join in new collaborations if needed.

▶ If a partnership is succeeding, but more needs to be done, it can look at 'Scaling'. Scaling can include recruiting new partners to do more, sharing its model or working in new locations. It depends on careful matching of partners' own mandates and capacities. The planning process can begin again in the 'Scoping and Building' phase, with new partners or resources as appropriate.

▶ It may be that the partnership is making progress, and they want to continue, in which case a return to the 'Building' and 'Planning' stages can help in starting a second round of work together.

Some new partners may join the working group, and others may exit. These transitions need appropriate management. They also need celebration, as closure only comes when exiting partners effectively transfer or hand-over their knowledge, records and responsibilities. Similarly, new partners need to be inducted well to make up for their lack of shared history in the group. They need to grow trust in each other and the processes.

The Partnering Cycle and the Development Programme Approach

PARTNERING CYCLE:	CRITICAL PATH:	LEAP/ DME:	DESCRIPTION:
SCALING	Step 7 (or repeat Step 5)		• building appropriate structures and mechanisms for the partnership to ensure longer-term commitment and continuity
MOVING ON	Step 8 (or Step 7)		• agreeing how to end the current partnership in a way that ensures sustainable results.

When World Vision plans its own exit from different partnerships and collaborations (in Step 8 of the Critical Path), it needs to ensure that the following six features are built into the processes happening in the community:

1. **a common community vision and agenda for child well-being**

2. **shared measurement** processes with continued enhancement

3. **clear roles** for all mutually re-inforcing activities

4. continuous and transparent **communication**

5. **continued facilitation** for networks and partnerships where relational capacities continue to be used and developed

6. **participation of the most vulnerable** in planning and action.

These features will be possible where WV has enabled the community to perform good development practices. Such practices include community reviews, ongoing dialogue with government and sustained local advocacy, such as using *Citizen Voice and Action*.

Where these six features are present, it can be said that duty-bearers are involved in continuous learning and adaptation. This is a way of saying that the community's 'resilience', and its ability to respond to new changes, is improved. Because of this, that community is more likely to continue to focus on the well-being of children in the future.

LEARN MORE:

• *Local Partnering in Practice,* 'Planning for Sustainable Outcomes' section

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