

Hitting the target

If you are a football fan, you will know the feeling of frustration and anger if the ball just misses the goal in a decisive match. If you are a parent (or remember your days back at school) you know the annoyance rising if the good mark was missed by just because of a 'silly errors'. And as a WV employee you know the heated discussions over a poor scoring in any given dashboard, due to a 'minor' performance issue.

In World Vision we also have committed to hitting the target – not to win a trophy, but to see children find fullness of life!

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Esther Lehmann-Sow



The target:

All across the world the height, length, depth and position of a football goal have been standardized. And so have the criteria for marking a goal. This allows that every player, every coach, every sponsor and every fan exactly knows when they can celebrate a goal scored, and when not. In the same way, World Vision has defined the goals for all its offices across the world, the way it's measured, and the rules to be applied so that the goal is counted. To help our memory here are the parameters which define if we hit the target in WV or not:

- Children report an increased level of well-being
- Children are protected from infection and disease
- Children are well-nourished
- Children can read by age 11

Hitting (or not hitting) the target

Having a clear target helps us to see if the effort we put into 'scoring the goal' is bearing its desired fruit. If we discover that we are not hitting the target, it allows us to do necessary adjustments to score our goal.

The same is true for our work. If we don't measure the result of our work against the defined target, we never know if our time and effort really results in 'scoring a goal' or not! And we can't do needed adjustments to get the aspired result.

During my visits to projects I often see and hear about project activities and how these have changed the situation of children and their families; for example: 'We used to fetch water far away... with the water pump WV installed, we now have access to good water close by!' This is a beautiful testimony! And in our discussions we then talk about how this frees up time for women for other needed activities, how this will allow girls to attend school, how this will reduce diarrhoea etc. But if you look at it critically, all of these are mainly assumptions, not proof...

Until today, I have not yet heard somebody present me a water pump saying: 'Because of dirty water, we used to have a diarrhoea incidence of X , but we since we have this pump, it decreased to Y! Also the DAP¹ assessment showed that since we have put in this pump, positive use of time of girls has increased by X, and children reporting increased level of well-being by Y'.

We are (or might be) doing the right things, but by stopping our attention at activity level, we don't really know if we hit the target or not. And even if we are sure we really hit the goal, we can't provide evidence to anybody out there that we scored a massive goal!

Here is what I suggest we do:

- **Whenever somebody tells you of a great activity, ask him/her: 'How this will contribute to one of the above mentioned Child Well-being targets?' - and check that he/she is not talking about an assumption, but has evidence to prove that he/she is hitting the target there.**
- **Whenever you plan for a project/activity to resolve an issue, ask yourself how specifically life will look different for the children once you've implemented this activity/project. Make sure you measure the situation BEFORE you start the project (baseline) and at its completion (evaluation).**

Imagine what a powerful story you will tell in your Child Well-Being report if you do this!

You and I are entrusted with our role by World Vision, in order to hit the target and win the fight for seeing children enjoying life in all its fullness. Let's not take this responsibility lightly – not because we fear bad performance reviews, poor GNOD scores or the like (compliance mode), but because we know that we are part of something far greater than a Football World Cup: showing children that God loves them and cares for them! So let's help one another in making sure we hit the target!

Esther Lehmann-Sow
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¹ **Development Asset Profile, a widely used tool for Child Protection**