A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR children

World Vision | **Our approach**
to fragile contexts

World Vision's approach to linking humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts for the well-being of children in fragile contexts

Purpose of the document: This paper proposes the way that World Vision, in partnership with others, intends to leverage humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts toward realising the rights of children living in fragile contexts. It defines the problem, recommends specific collective actions and highlights key conceptual elements for addressing fragility. Our intention is to share our learning in addressing fragility and to empower and support affected children, families and communities to become more resilient in the world's most dangerous places.

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Scope of the problem

Today two billion people live in countries where development outcomes are deeply affected by fragility, conflict and violence. By 2030, the share of extreme poor living in fragile and conflict-affected contexts is projected to reach more than 80 per cent.[1] In 2017, the number of people displaced by conflict and violence almost doubled, from 6.9 million in 2016 to 11.8 million.[2]

Fragile contexts are some of the most dangerous places in the world to be a child. In these contexts children face extreme levels of abuse, exploitation, deprivation and violence, often for generations. Fragility can lead to conflict and violence, which in turn contribute to complex protracted crises. While the nature of such protracted crises is diverse in cause and effect, high levels of food insecurity, hunger and child malnutrition are common features.[3] Boys and girls in these contexts are nearly three times more likely to be out of primary school than in other low-income countries.[4] A complex set of overlapping vulnerabilities leaves large numbers of children, women, and men caught in a chronic poverty trap with extreme protection risks. In fragile contexts, those with a responsibility to care for children are unable or unwilling to do so. These are places where 'emergencies' can continue for decades, and where humanitarian action is a temporary and inadequate response to what are, at their core, geopolitical, development, governance, economic and state-building failures. In these contexts natural disasters and climate change often exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and/or cause new ones.

Cities are emerging as a new locus of fragility. More than half of the world's population lives in cities and urban centres; this is reshaping the dynamics of poverty, vulnerability to disasters, conflicts and violence, especially when situated in fragile states.[5] Currently 58 per cent of refugees live in urban areas.[6] Projections are that 23 out of the 31 most fragile and conflict-affected countries today will be significantly urbanised in the near future.[7]

In fragile and conflict-affected contexts, political dynamics increasingly impinge upon the ability of humanitarian actors to deliver assistance. International action to address egregious breaches of humanitarian law and children's rights is scarce. The growing needs remain unmatched by resources. In 2017, UN appeals reached a high of US$25.2 billion. These were mainly driven by protracted crises in fragile contexts like Syria, Yemen, Somalia and Nigeria. They were met by a funding shortfall of US$10.3 billion (41 per cent of requirements), which made this the largest humanitarian appeal request and shortfall to date.[8]

What is currently being done?

For decades the international community has wrestled with the challenge of fragility. Multilateral, financial and regional institutions such the United Nations, the World Bank, the African Union, the European Union, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and others have proposed solutions across the relief-to-development continuum. The intent to address fragility is not new, and initiatives have catalysed this community into collective action before, most prominently in the lead up to the 2011 New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States.[9] What characterises the state of current discussions is the collective high-level political agreement of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In addition, other key processes such as the World Humanitarian Summit and its proposed New Way of Working have significantly moved forward the debate on addressing humanitarian, lifesaving needs in a way that builds on the comparative advantage of a diverse range of actors, including those outside the UN system, towards 'collective outcomes' that address risk, vulnerability and fragility in the longer term. The joint 'Sustaining Peace' resolutions in 2016 of the Security Council and General Assembly elevate the role of civil society (including women's and youth groups) and other actors in sustaining peace. The OECD's Development

1   OECD, States of Fragility 2018, http://www.oecd.org/dac/states-of-fragility-2018-9789264302075-en.htm.
2   IDMC and NRC, Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID) 2018,
3   L. Alinovi et al., 'Towards the Measurement of Household Resilience to Food Insecurity: Applying a Model to Palestinian Household Data,' in Deriving Food Security Information from National Household Budget Surveys: Experiences, Achievement, Challenges, ed. R. Sibrian, 137–52 (Rome: FAO, 2008). The prevalence of undernutrition is three times higher in these contexts than the average in developing countries as a whole (37 per cent compared with 13 per cent) and the 'depth' of food insecurity and under-nutrition becomes worse over time. Almost 122 million, or 75 per cent of all stunted children under age five live in countries affected by conflict (FAO and WFP, State of Food Insecurity in the World: Addressing Food Security in Protracted Crises (Rome: 2010), http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i1683e/i1683e00.htm; and FAO, WFP, IFAD, WHO, UNICEF, State of Food Insecurity and Nutrition in the World: Building Resilience for Peace and Food Security (Rome, 2017), http://www.fao.org/state-of-food-security-nutri-tion).
4   DFID, 'Delivering Quality Education in Protracted Crises: A Discussion Paper' (2015), http://gbc-education.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Delivering-quality-educa-tion-in-protracted-crises-a-discussion-paper-March-2015-1.pdf.
5   Fragile states don't always give birth to fragile cities, and fragile cities can be found outside fragile and conflict-affected states. There are many cities exhibiting signs of vul-nerability, fragility and instability in considerably middle-income and high-income settings (see R. Muggah, 'Deconstructing the Fragile City: Exploring Insecurity, Violence and Resilience', Environment and Urbanization 26, no. 2:1 (2014). Most of this violence, concentrated largely in cities, is considered as a gradually defining characteristic of urban living in conflict as well as non-conflict situations (J.Gupte, with S. Cummins 'Cities, Violence and Order: The Challenges and Complex Taxonomy of Security Provision in Cities of Tomorrow', IDS Bulletin, Institute of Development Studies, 2016).
6   UNHCR, Global Trends Report 2017 (2018), https://www.unhcr.org/5b27be547.pdf.
7   J. Gupte,, with S. Cummins,(2016).
8   Development Initiatives, 'Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2018: A Leading Resource for Understanding Humanitarian Financing and Related Aid Flows', http://devinit.org/post/global-humanitarian-assistance-report-2018/# .
9   International Dialogue for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, 'New Deal', https://www.pbsbdialogue.org/en/new-deal/about-new-deal/.

Assistance Committee passed recommendations in February 2019 to 'support, incentivise and implement more collaborative, coherent and complementary humanitarian, development and peace actions, particularly in fragile and conflict affected situations'.[10]

A wider range of stakeholders is engaging more substantively with the complex set of challenges that protracted crises pose. These stakeholders include, for example, those engaged in peace and conflict prevention, most recently articulated in the UN/World Bank report Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict.[11] Integrated programming is a core prerequisite for success in delivering meaningful 'collective outcomes' to achieve the SDGs. A 2018 Security Council report outlined ways to harness the efforts of young women to address difference and grievances, strengthen social resilience, and support processes that increase trust and inclusion gaining prominence[12]. Successfully delivering services in such contexts requires compromises, trade-offs and 'negotiation between service providers, local communities and insurgents on the ground'.[13]

Across many of these engagements is an attempt to bring humanitarian, development and peace actors into greater complementarity, working to a set of shared collective outcomes. World Vision believes that this points to an historic opportunity to strengthen collective efforts to leave no one behind and put the last first; tackle issues of mass displacement and migration, climate change, failure of inclusive economic growth, and social exclusion; and address the urbanisation of poverty, proliferation of conflict, as well as the strain on the international community's ability to cope with a growing number of multigenerational crises.

However, many governments continue to pursue security using militarised approaches, either in the absence of, or in isolation from, policies that address exclusion and inequality – which are core drivers of conflict. While the international community achieved unprecedented consensus on the SDGs, the international order is facing increasing levels of fragmentation along protectionist and nationalist lines. Many governments are increasingly turning inwards and showing less concern for internationally agreed norms and multilateral approaches to address fragility and inequality. Eroding accountability for governments who flout their obligations to protect the rights of their citizens and provide stability, democracy and security further undermines the multilateral system.

What more is needed?

In the face of this reality, it is vital to invest in comprehensive and practical solutions. Civil society in particular has highlighted the immense opportunity to strengthen and grow peaceful peoples' movements for social change, cohesion and child rights that are led by citizens, children and youth at the local, national, regional and international levels. From grassroots social accountability programming[14] in fragile contexts to advocacy and campaigning globally, World Vision has consistently sought to amplify the voices of children and youth living in fragile contexts and drawn particular attention to the positive role of faith-based actors. People living in fragile contexts consistently cite priorities as better governance, peace and reconciliation, improved livelihoods and citizen empowerment. Robust civic engagement is vital to accommodate for the governance gaps that arise in fragile contexts, as well as acting as a powerful counterpoint to the actions of extremists. UN Security Council Resolutions 2250 and 2419 both call for meaningful representation of young people in peace processes to address the violence of exclusion that spoilers exploit to deadly advantage. In such complex, fragile environments meaningful inclusion is a difficult but urgent and necessary step to achieving meaningful change for the most vulnerable girls and boys.

World Vision welcomes the international community's renewed approach to addressing both root causes and consequences of fragility. Recognising the urgency for new action and greater funding, and based on our experience, World Vision believes that the following collective efforts, including within our own organisation, are needed to achieve transformational change for children, families and communities in fragile contexts:

- **Work towards people-centred, child-focused collective outcomes:** World Vision has endorsed the 2030 Agenda as the central framework for addressing vulnerability and delivering people-centred transformational change, especially for the most vulnerable girls and boys. World Vision believes the 2030 Agenda also provides a powerful framework for addressing fragility. To date, however, voices of affected people and their expectations are largely missing from global decision-making forums and processes that are working on collectively delivering across the humanitarian, development and peace agendas. In particular:

10 OECD, 'DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus' (2019), https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/public/doc/643/643.en.pdf.

11 World Bank, 'Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict' (World Bank, 2018), https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28337.

12 UN Advisory Group of Experts, The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth and Peace and Security (2018), https://www.unfpa.org/resources/missing-peace-independent-progress-study-youth-and-peace-and-security.

13 World Bank, 'Social Service Delivery in Violent Contexts: Achieving Results against the Odds (World Bank, 2017), http://www.worldbank.org/en/region/sar/publication/social-service-delivery-in-violent-contexts-achieving-results-against-odds.

14 World Vision has developed proven programmatic tools and approaches in the domains of citizen empowerment, livelihoods and peacebuilding that have been tested in various fragile contexts. These include Citizen Voice & Action, a social accountability tool; the Ultra-Poor Graduation model, a livelihoods support tool; Empowering Children as Peacebuilders (ECaP) to empowering adolescent peacebuilders; as well as tools for faith and interfaith engagement such as Channels of Hope.

1. urgent efforts are needed to invest and grow people-led, child-focused movements that drive transformational change and connect local, national and global action towards achieving the 2030 Agenda in fragile contexts
2. humanitarian, development and peace efforts must move on from a focus on internal structures and processes within institutions and instead focus on inputs, perspectives and aspirations of children, families and communities living in fragile contexts
3. those working towards collective outcomes in fragile contexts and supporting the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda should measure success by how well they contribute to concrete, tangible improvements in the lives of the most vulnerable children; tracking such changes will require the international community to move away collectively from counting what has been delivered towards prioritising measures of success that are based on the perceptions and self-assessment of people themselves about their ability to survive, adapt to new circumstances, and thrive

- **Ensure context-specific action:** Efforts to build an effective nexus among humanitarian, development and peace approaches must be context specific and context appropriate. In certain situations this will mean operating in separate but coordinated lanes to prevent compromising one another's principles while building towards commonly agreed goals that align to the 2030 Agenda. This requires:

1. common goals and more coordinated ways of working, underpinned by international law and reinforcing norms and behaviours in line with child rights–based approaches by formal, informal, national, regional and international actors
2. regular impact-focused and people-centred joint context analysis to develop a shared understanding of the context that will equip operational staff to make and implement principled, evidence-based decisions
3. increased acceptance of risk by those engaged in supporting fragile contexts, including flexibility in planning, implementation and sustainable funding of core programmes and strategies
4. empowering affected children and communities as agents of change and development in their own right, involving and giving them a voice in issues which affect them, including recovery from crisis and development

- **Strengthening protective systems for children at multiple levels:** Programmes must first and foremost

focus on strengthening systems that build and reinforce a protective environment for the world's most vulnerable girls and boys. This includes strengthening:

1. community-based/kinship systems
2. local government structures
3. national systems
4. global safety-net and social protection systems, including the international humanitarian system
5. advocacy movements for social cohesion and child rights, led by children and youth at the local, national, regional and international levels.

In fragile contexts this may include elements of all five having to operate alongside one another. If national governments are unable or unwilling to provide adequate protection for all their citizens, international actors must continue to invest in civil society strengthening, community-based structures, and local institutions. This makes it possible to immediately build and/or strengthen local protective systems for children. As the context stabilises, these local, community-based structures can be scaled by civil society and linked with other system-wide efforts towards achieving collective outcomes at national and global levels to deliver transformational change for children.

- **Build a better future for the next generation by engaging in positive politics:** Bridge divides; reduce inequality; promote equity, openness and understanding; embrace diversity; and address differences through solution-focused dialogue. In particular, global leaders must:

1. work collectively to deliver equitable, inclusive development gains for children, their families and communities around the world
2. invest long-term political will as well as technical and financial resources to address disputes between state and non-state actors before they lead to violence and conflict by building the capacity of states to support peace and reconciliation processes, including local capacities for peace, and increasing mediation capacity and informal diplomacy
3. strengthen the rule of law and access to justice for all citizens nationally and internationally
4. embrace diversity as a rich contribution to society and bridge divides through inclusive politics

World Vision's commitment to the most vulnerable children in fragile contexts

Clothing distributions for working street children in Afghanistan help reduce the impact of a harsh winter. Narges Ghafary/World Vision

Through our global strategy Our Promise, World Vision is aligning our humanitarian, development, peacebuilding and advocacy efforts with the global nexus agenda. A key part of this commitment involves an organisation-wide effort to expand and deepen World Vision's impact on the most vulnerable children living in fragile contexts. In 2018, World Vision directly reached 10.1 million of the most vulnerable people in 10 of the most fragile countries[15] where we operate – almost 60 per cent of those reached were children. We have already exceeded the commitment we made to direct 27 per cent of our global funding to fragile contexts by 2020, and will continue to grow this commitment through diverse funding.

World Vision has developed a global impact framework to deliver outcomes aligned to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. This framework is based on decades of experience as a Christian humanitarian, development and advocacy organisation working in fragile contexts with vulnerable children, families and communities. Building national and international movements for change and strengthening local civil society to respond to humanitarian, local and national peacebuilding and development challenges are vital components of achieving transformational impact. Even in fragile contexts, our impact framework defines our understanding of our contribution to the well-being for boys and girls. It serves as a set of collective outcomes against which World Vision's work can be designed and also measured by others.

All World Vision's offices will use this framework to reflect on their strategies and any externally relevant plans (such as the national government SDG plans) to define a set of impact goals and targets. These goals and targets will vary based on what is relevant for each context but will be used to provide the foundation for multiyear planning and budgeting as well as to benchmark progress for reporting to donors and external policymakers on World Vision's contribution to the SDGs.

World Vision is also field testing a programme approach that enables affected children, families and communities in fragile contexts to survive, adapt to new circumstances and thrive as a result of our support. This approach prioritises outcomes to address fragility, such as improving trust, safety, inclusion, peace and hope. It also defines practical approaches to realising these outcomes through consistent adaptation to change, regular use of context analysis/monitoring, and frequent measurement of impact across people's perception of their ability to survive, adapt and thrive in changing circumstances.

This programme approach is being refined in 2019 through field testing and action learning to enable expansion of World Vision's work in fragile contexts, including some urban ones. The goal is to build resilience in highly volatile contexts by, among other things, strengthening informal and formal institutions, partnerships, systems and structures to create, over the long term, a more protective, caring and empowering environment for the most vulnerable girls and boys, their families and communities. It requires a sustained, integrated approach with appropriate resourcing and acknowledgement of risk and contextual realities of working in fragile contexts (for example, security, access, negotiations with different actors to deliver services). It also requires an intentional focus on learning and building evidence of what works.

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15 Syria, South Sudan, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Pakistan, Burundi.

Global Impact Framework

World Vision
OUR PROMISE 2030
Building Brighter Futures for Vulnerable Children

Child Well-Being Aspirations

Children experience the love of God and their neighbours

Girls and boys enjoy good health | **Girls and boys are educated for life** | **Girls and boys are cared for, protected and participating**

Impact Goals

World Vision collaborates and advocates with governments, civil society, faith partners, peer organisations and the private sector to promote the sustained well-being of children, especially the most vulnerable, contributing to the global partnership on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Child

• By 2030, all forms of child malnutrition are eliminated.

• By 2030, all children and their families have access to safe and nutritious food all year around.

• By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria and end preventable child deaths from pneumonia, diarrhea, and other communicable diseases.

• By 2030, all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary education, leading to relevant learning outcomes.

• By 2030, all primary school girls and boys achieve literacy and numeracy.

• By 2030, all forms of violence, exploitation and harmful practices against girls and boys are eliminated.

• All children feel loved and supported, have increased dignity and hope, and improve their spiritual well-being.

Community

• The resilience of people is built and their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters is reduced.

• By 2030, all households, education and healthcare facilities have access to safe and affordable drinking water, and adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene.

• By 2030, extreme poverty, measured as people living on less than $1.90 a day is eradicated and the incomes of the bottom 40% of households consistently grow at a rate higher than the national average.

• Social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, economic or other status.

• Country capacity to develop and implement multi-stakeholder partnership and national plans to achieve SDGs.

Impact Targets

Communities reached by World Vision and its partners progress towards the well-being of children at a rate that matches or surpasses country performance or agreed national (SDG) targets, and ensure that the most vulnerable children benefit from this progress.

(Specific targets to be determined according to Child Well-Being Objectives prioritised in each Field Office strategy. These will reflect country progress towards SDGs, efforts by government and others, and available funding.

Programme Outcomes

Empowering children and their communities to promote sustainable change

Community **disaster preparedness**

Access to quality **shelter, food, healthcare, education, water and sanitation, and child protection services**

Children, caregivers, local partners and service providers develop **knowledge, skills, tools, resources, and adopt practices** to improve the well-being of children

Faith leaders are mobilised to promote positive social norms, interfaith relations, and behaviours and practices that improve the well-being of children in their congregations.

Community **social norms & values** promote respect for diversity, gender equality, disability inclusion, non-violence, and recognise the rights of children

Young people are mobilised as **agents of change** and future leaders in their communities and countries

Communities create **safe, nurturing environments** for all children

Children have positive and **peaceful relationships** in their families and communities

Improved collaboration, networks, trust and social cohesion within communities

Sustainable livelihoods (income, assets, access to finance, access to markets, local enterprise, natural resource management)

Local leadership, and improved **governance, accountability and stability**

Governments commit to child well-being and the SDGs through policy frameworks and national action plans

Participants & Partners

Boys & Girls (by sex, age & vulnerability) % most vulnerable | # Parents & caregivers | # Leaders from community, church and other faith groups | # Local enterprises | # Partners (governments, community organisations, faith based organisations, private sector)

Approach

To address the context-specific causes of child vulnerability, World Vision combines up to 5 sectoral approaches (child protection and participation, health and nutrition, water & sanitation, education and livelihoods) within its child focused, community empowering development model. As a Christian humanitarian and development organization WV recognizes the spiritual nature of poverty. This is reflected in its concern for the world's most vulnerable children, its ministry of presence in communities, its focus on bearing witness and advocacy, its partnership with faith leaders and its attention to the spiritual nurture of children.

Programs incorporate cross-cutting themes such as gender, social accountability and peacebuilding.

Humanitarian Response

To support children and families affected by disasters and war, World Vision acts quickly to respond to the needs of vulnerable children and families providing food, shelter, and commodities; it contributes to building national capabilities and community self-help mechanisms; and commits to long-term engagement to promote peace, stability and development.

Community Development

To promote long-term sustainable change in the lives of children, especially the most vulnerable, World Vision equips children, parents, caregivers, community & faith leaders, local organisations and governments, private sector, with the tools, relationships and resources to promote the holistic well-being of children – material, physical, spiritual and emotional.

Advocacy

To promote societal and policy changes that support the rights of vulnerable children, World Vision engages governments, the private sector, civil society organisations and the public.

Context Analysis

and % most vulnerable children I Health, education, child protection and child participation levels I Sex, disability inclusion levels I Drivers of vulnerability & disadvantage (economic, political, social, environmental) I Enablers of the SDGs.

World Vision's framework for addressing fragility

In line with our global impact framework, World Vision's fragile contexts framework outlines a more detailed pathway for change. It provides a conceptual direction for approaches that address root causes of fragility and deepen sustainable impact of work in these contexts.
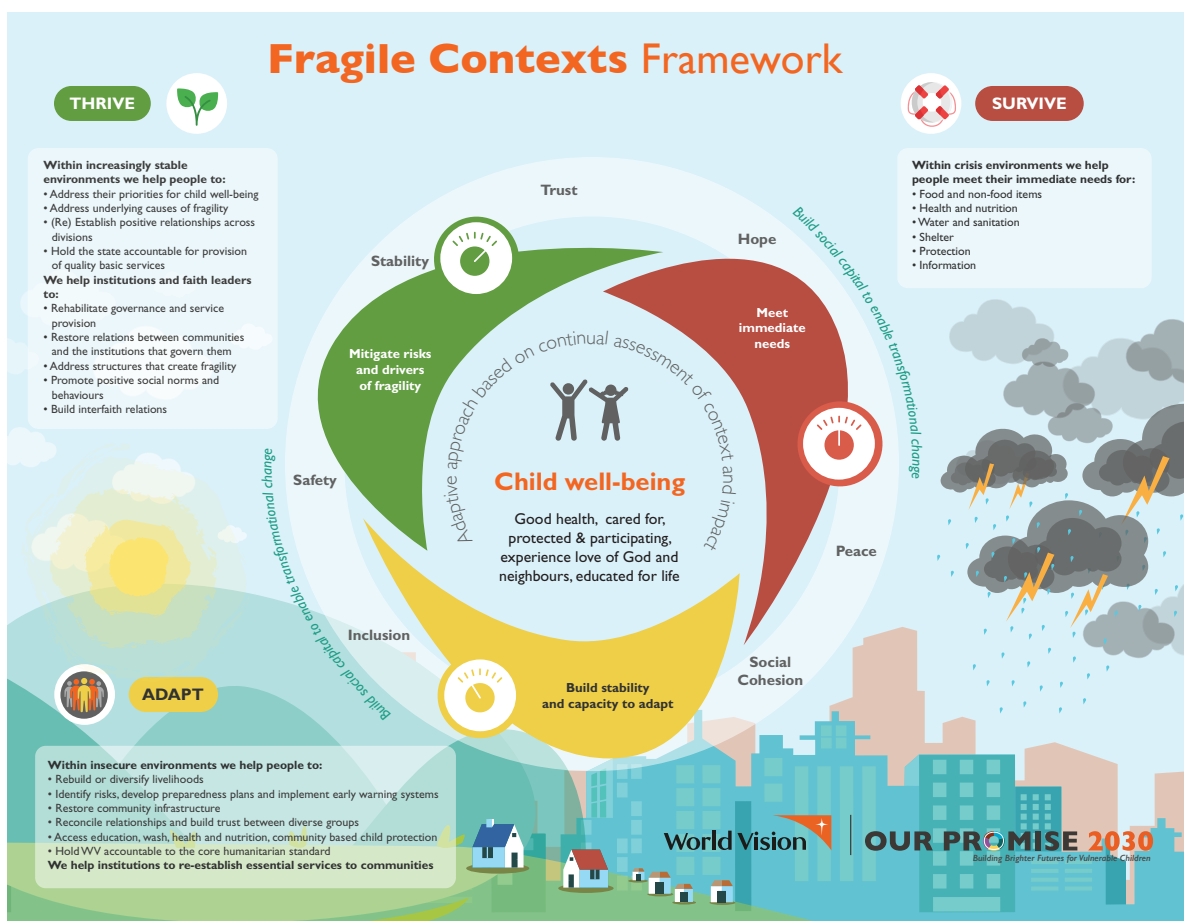
Our fragile contexts framework makes it clear that meeting lifesaving needs in many fragile contexts remains essential. This work is underpinned by humanitarian principles[16], applying these in both disasters and conflict and ensuring we can access the most vulnerable children and their families, and keep our staff safe from harm. The framework recognises the importance of survival interventions and calls for additional approaches that help reinforce resilience ; it emphasises the importance of introducing approaches that help children and communities adapt to dealing with risk and reduce dependency on aid. This work includes building stronger networks, interpersonal, intercommunal, interreligious and group ties and building peaceful coexistence. Underpinning this integrated approach is a

deeper analysis and shared understanding of the root causes of fragility and the need to build greater flexibility in programming to be able to respond to rapid and frequent fluctuations in the operating environment, while continuing to apply a principled approach.

At the heart of this framework is the agility to integrate and shift from meeting immediate humanitarian needs (Survive) to addressing root causes to transform communities (Thrive). Such multi-sectoral programmatic agility entails designing and implementing risk-informed integrated programming aligned to building resilience over the long term. The framework also envisions sustained and bold advocacy to anticipate and respond to major risks and threats facing the most vulnerable girls and boys and their families and communities.

The high-level changes World Vision wants to see for the most vulnerable children and families living in fragile contexts are

- relationships restored
- hope strengthened
- trust built between stakeholders
- resilience of communities reinforced
- children and their families protected

Fragile Contexts Framework

16 The four humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence have been endorsed in two UN General Assembly Resolutions and have been integrated into interagency standards (including Sphere, the Core Humanitarian Standards, and Code of Conduct for Disaster Relief). These principles and standards form a part of World Vision's HEA Ministry Guiding Philosophy and the Disaster Management and Conflict Response Policy.

Food distributions for displaced children and families in Central African Republic. Chelsea Maclachlan/World Vision

The distinctive of being a faith-based agency working on conflict and fragility

As part of our global strategy Our Promise World Vision is committed to living out our Christian faith and calling with boldness and humility. This commitment includes seeking harmony with those of other faiths and none. Within fragile and conflict-affected contexts faith can be a vital asset for resilience and a foundation for hope, while recognising that some violent actors also manipulate faith to promote violence.

In working to address fragility World Vision engages faith communities to understand the spiritual and cultural root causes of vulnerabilities, working together with them to address these issues. World Vision has successfully used Channels of Hope[17] and Celebrating Families[18] to engage with vital faith leaders and groups to improve child well-being in fragile contexts and build relationships of trust and cooperation among different faith communities.

Achieving social cohesion through interfaith approaches

Turbulence in Central African Republic (CAR) has been fuelled by multiple factors, yet it was the manipulation of faith identity for political purposes that resulted in shocking levels of violence in 2013. Christians and Muslims who had lived together in relative peace were rapidly turned against each other as armed groups organised along religious affiliation and tore communities apart.

World Vision's operational assessment and context analysis highlighted the criticality of engaging faith leaders to ensure conflict-sensitive and context-appropriate humanitarian programmes. As a Christian humanitarian organisation new to CAR, we were acutely aware of the sensitivities around operating in a context where faith had been used to divide communities; therefore, World Vision proactively identified approaches to ensure transparency and foster local trust and acceptance.

Before starting operations World Vision leadership engaged with local imams, pastors and priests, drawing all together to design assessment strategies and ensure that programmes appropriately targeted those who were most vulnerable. These faith leaders informed World Vision's Communication with Communities approaches – co-determining appropriate ways to communicate, locations and critical groups for consultation – and joined World Vision staff to support programme startup in new areas.

After assuming management of an internally displaced person's camp in Yaloke, World Vision staff and local religious leaders facilitated conversation to reduce animosity between the predominately Christian host community and Muslim displaced people. Within a month those who previously had been confined within the camp boundaries were able to access local markets and public service centres. These same faith leaders encouraged World Vision to rethink the design of two child-friendly spaces – one for the Muslim displaced children and a separate one for the Christian host community children – and instead establish a common one for both. At the urging of the local leaders the child-friendly space was built in the camp and made available to both host community and displaced populations, physically bringing these once separate communities into a common space and creating bonds between groups.

The goodwill fostered through this inclusive, interfaith dialogue has since carried over in all World Vision projects in the country. Following the dismantling of the internal displacement camp, the host community made it possible for the predominately Muslim displaced families to resettle in Yaloke and register their children in the local schools.

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17   World Vision International, 'Channels of Hope: Igniting a Movement to Transform Communities', https://www.wvi.org/church-and-interfaith-engagement/what-channels-hope.
18   World Vision International, 'Celebrating Families', https://www.wvi.org/church-and-interfaith-engagement/celebrating-families.

Programme approach for addressing fragility

Programming in fragile contexts can be extremely complex, with frequent, rapid, and profound changes in context. Flexibility and consistency need to be held in careful balance. To adapt to rapidly evolving situations aid actors must respond quickly and effectively to ensure the most vulnerable children and families have the tools and support to survive; simultaneously and consistently they need to work to address the root causes of fragility, catalysing recovery and bringing hope to the affected population.

World Vision's fragile contexts programming approach suggests how aid actors can break down the silos between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding approaches through blended programming to meet holistically the full spectrum of needs. It is based on many years of World Vision experience in these contexts and draws upon and adapts best practice across our humanitarian, development, advocacy and peacebuilding work.

The ultimate outcome is to ensure that children, families and communities feel they have the tools and are empowered to make decisions that will enable them to survive, adapt and thrive in any fragile contexts at any given time. Few have so far been able to demonstrate a consolidated approach that works.

World Vision has designed and tested programmes in Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Honduras and Mali to validate approaches, competencies and organisational agility to:

1. focus on the participation and input of people throughout programme implementation and design, making adjustments based on perception of our impact, while urgently meeting immediate needs
2. respond quickly to humanitarian crises while also building national and local capabilities to adapt to risk
3. track changes in context in real time to understand when the situation has reached a threshold which will necessitate adjustments in the programme and partner activities, plans, actions and behaviours and make rapid adjustments in response to this information.

A fundamental part of this new approach is building intentional partnerships at international, national and local levels with civil society, donors, peer agencies, the private sector, faith-based organisations, governments and institutions, among others, bilaterally and through existing coordination mechanisms. World Vision believes that to address fragility, partnerships are required to co-create solutions, advocate for change and open up new investment. Given the number of stakeholders working across the nexus of peacebuilding, humanitarian and development, it is vital that efforts are aligned.

The design of our programming approach for fragile contexts is based on detailed scenario planning. Joint context analysis identifies underlying drivers of fragility at the local, national and international levels, which can include poor governance, exclusion of vulnerable groups from political and economic decision making, cross-border insecurity, threats from armed actors or groups or specific violations of rights. World Vision has developed tools, such as Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts and Good Enough Context Analysis for Rapid Response (GECARR),[19] that have been used for multi-agency analytical exercises. Scenarios in the programme area are outlined along with the indicators that track how the scenario is unfolding and implications for child well-being. This information can be used to develop matching theories of change, macro and micro advocacy strategies, and design programming, but also to plan for how to respond if the situation gets worse or gets better, building adaptability from the start and aligning impact measurement and potential funding requirements to deliver on the operational plan.

In April 2015, World Vision and Action Aid undertook an interagency context analysis using the GECARR tool in Burundi as requested by the START network. It was conducted amidst growing tensions prior to legislative and presidential elections. The resulting report:

- recommended increasing coordination and preparedness, resulting in a more timely interagency response
- focused on improving communications with affected Burundians, which resulted in the establishment of an accountability hotline project
- saw World Vision activate our crisis management strategy in country
- influenced the design of all new programmes and projects (including the accountability hotline, two food grants and a malnutrition-prevention project)
- was used to inform advocacy and communications
- helped to establish a clear NGO platform of understanding
- nsured credibility, visibility, better information sharing and stronger relationships with donors for future collaboration

19 S. Pickwick and J. Eldebo, 'World Vision's Conflict-Sensitivity Tools' (2017), https://www.wvi.org/peacebuilding-and-conflict-sensitivity/publication/world-visions-conflict-sensitivity-tools.

Piloting our fragile contexts programme approach

World Vision intends to share our learning where practices show early promise. If taken to scale, this approach could contribute towards addressing some critical challenges of working in fragile contexts, namely, how to programme sustainably in an integrated way across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding approaches, while at the same time responding quickly and safely in an environment that is inherently volatile.

At the heart of operationalising this new approach is flexibility and the agility to respond to changes in context in real time. This agility is expressed through three 'dials' of action: survive, adapt and thrive. The programme approach empowers field staff to adjust plans, budgets and activities based on the real needs of people across the three categories. Just as a sound engineer adjusts dials at a live concert to respond to the interaction between musicians and audience, aid actors must adjust intervention dials in real time to ensure effective local, national and international action for the most vulnerable.

Survive: The survive dial is turned up when a local context is violent and volatile, or in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. Activities are focused on saving lives and protecting the rights of children. Context-appropriate adapt and thrive activities can be introduced and integrated immediately. They can include social cohesion, strengthening local governance systems and/or livelihoods interventions.

Adapt: As a local situation stabilises, the adapt dial is turned up. The survive dial can be turned lower or maintained high as needs require introducing more adaptive activities – such as rehabilitation, social cohesion, recovery from psychosocial effects of violence or upheaval, access to basic services, and re-establishing livelihoods – with a focus on building back better. Aspects of thrive activities are strengthened and integrated where appropriate to include longer-term investments focused on systems strengthening.

Thrive: As the local situation continues to stabilise, the thrive dial can be turned up, and the other dials adjusted as required. At this stage longer-term, more developmental and transformational activities can be initiated. Actions to deal with the root causes of fragility, to improve social accountability, to strengthen broken governance systems and to strengthen coping mechanisms and prevent or mitigate future disasters are strengthened alongside any other adaptation and survive programming that may still be necessary.

Fragile contexts change rapidly, and World Vision's programme approach aims recognise the need to assess context constantly and to make adjustments in these three dials in response.

These efforts to build World Vision's evidence base in fragile contexts, and the subsequent learning and adaptation, will seek to enhance the overall humanitarian, development and peacebuilding communities' understanding of what works in fragile contexts to bridge the nexus. Most of these efforts will be carried out in close collaboration with external academic research partners.

Conclusion

Working at the nexus of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding needs is a vital act of solidarity with people living in fragile contexts. The challenges of this work have been known for decades. Many organisations are working to propose solutions. Into this context World Vision offers these proposals as a way to incorporate the agility, flexibility, speed, transparency and accountability needed to improve child well-being in fragile contexts. These proposals are informed by nearly 70 years of experience in fragile contexts supported by millions of generous individual donors and hundreds of institutional partners. World Vision is committed to investing and expanding in these most difficult place, in the belief that people-centred, agile, responsive and integrated programming across the nexus, combined with advocacy and empowerment, is both possible and urgent to achieve change for the most vulnerable children. Our promise to the most vulnerable children is to relentlessly pursue life in all its fullness. We invite existing and new partners to invest, learn and implement together to improve the well-being of the most vulnerable children in fragile contexts.

Annex 1: Note on terminology and definitions

Fragile contexts (short definition): Political and social pressure make these contexts vulnerable to conflict and have fractured the institutions that would normally provide protection and security to residents, including children. Fragility can cover one or many states or only a few neighbourhoods, and it can change rapidly. In fragile contexts children suffer extreme levels of violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect.

Fragile contexts (longer definition): In fragile contexts political and social stresses result in extreme vulnerability of children to violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. In some fragile and conflict-affected contexts the government is unable or unwilling to ensure the basic rights and well-being of its population and lacks the capacity to manage conflict without violence. In extreme cases the state may be either non-existent or actively involved in perpetrating violence against its people. Fragility and conflict are neither fixed nor immutable but move along a spectrum. They can affect entire countries or be contained in particular parts of a country, and they can cross borders to affect neighbouring states that are vulnerable to instability.

Protracted crises: There is no internationally recognised consensus definition of protracted crises. For consistency's sake, the term is used throughout this document as a means to describe contexts that have a mix of many of the following characteristics: duration, deprivation, displacement, disasters and disregarded. Each protracted crisis is different, but protracted crises usually have some combination of conflict, natural disasters, natural resource pressures, serious climate-change impact, inequalities, prevalence of extreme poverty and governance factors as root causes. A protracted crisis may have widespread impact or be limited to a specific geographic area of a State or a territory; it may not affect the entire population. Protracted crises may also have international, regional and transboundary aspects and impacts, including the presence of refugees as defined and recognised under applicable international law, who are often in protracted refugee situations.

World Vision's approach to peacebuilding: As a Christian, community-based and child-focused organisation World Vision 'seeks peace and pursues it'. Violence and conflict affect thousands of communities where World Vision works and jeopardise sustained child well-being. World Vision's peacebuilding seeks to protect children from violence and empower them to participate in promoting peace and loving their neighbour. World Vision's peacebuilding work is both a cross-cutting theme and a technical sector of its own. World Vision's peacebuilding programming seeks to weave a fabric of resilience throughout a community, so that its members can resolve their own conflicts, heal broken relationships and nourish more just systems and structures to prevent conflict. Empowering children as peacebuilders protects them from violence and empowers them to participate in creating greater levels of justice, equity, prosperity, and peace – not simply in the reduction of overt conflict. More specifically, World Vision defines peacebuilding both as programmes and activities and as sustained processes which are relevant to every context and steadily build or restore networks of interpersonal relationships, address underlying causes of conflict and past grievances, contribute toward just systems and continually work with the interaction of truth and mercy, justice and peace[20].

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20   For more details see World Vision International's "Do-Assure-Don't Do Framework recommended for Reconciliation and Peacebuilding" 2012.

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