World Vision

ANNUAL PROGRAM REVIEW 2010

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SECTION 2:
EMERGING PRACTICE

Introduction

From its inception three years ago, the purpose and tone of the Annual Program Review has been of critical reflection. The first edition talked about "providing an honest insight into the complex realities of our programming and advocacy activities". The second edition applied this intention to the theme of development effectiveness and the third edition emphasised accountability. For some, this level of reflection may not be enough; one can always find another flaw or gap in the argument. For others, it may be too much – what's the value of airing "dirty washing" for others to see? Yet World Vision has been unashamedly tackling the business of reflection for some time now. A good example is a book of essays edited by Alan Whaites, former global director of advocacy for World Vision, called *Development Dilemmas: NGO Challenges and Ambiguities.* Some of his writing is still instructive:

> NGOs are organisations and, like all organisations, they are inevitably flawed. The problem of organisational roles can be seen as the constant need to balance ideological NGO objectives with the deeper obligation objectively to serve the cause of the poor ... NGO failure to provide an effective macro-economic analysis and their inability to consider adequately the spiritual dimension of development or the consequences of nationalism are simply facets of a determination to remain within a comfort zone of existing development thinking.[1]

We would agree with Whaites that there is a need to ask the right questions to avoid defaulting to a comfort zone. We also note that we are not the only ones with this view; it is a feature of the development sector. The re-evaluation of these balances has manifested itself in various forums. One development thinker described the world as a "whirlpool of desperate ironies – increasing chaos and growing paralysis, increasing poverty amidst growing wealth, expanding economies and shrinking ecologies, a globalising centre accompanied by fragmenting peripheries"[2]. At an academic level, Deakin University recently hosted a forum on "Reconceptualising Development" and Canberra University hosted a conference on "Development and Aid Effectiveness". At the practitioner's level, research is promoting new approaches to effectiveness for community development "projects". In World Vision, we have undergone our own scrutiny, publishing a paper on "The other side of complexity", which addresses the critical factors for, and barriers to, development effectiveness.

The Annual Program Review is another layer of this process of examination that provides important insights as we pursue balance and clarity. By its very nature, critical reflection needs to dwell on the past and present, to examine what we are doing. The articles in this review are committed to exposing tension points and sometimes the way forward.

Critique is part of the prophetic tradition, a tradition at the core of faith-based organisations like World Vision. The prophet Amos' critique of his society in the 8th century BC exposed trafficking of entire communities as slave labour for economic returns, manipulation of power, total disregard for the needs of those in poverty, the violation of rights and the marginalisation of human beings through violence or disdain.

The capacity of institutions to neglect their constituents is no less today, whether they be governments, religions or the marketplace. The question to ask is, "What have we learned?" – especially given that Amos was ignored.

The flip side, of course, is that reflection can reveal promise. Too often civil society "builds havens, not heavens" and is focused on what we don't want. The building of society through good governance and ethical commerce is hard work and the critics of government and business need to be held just as accountable for demonstrating the promise of alternative practices. The Annual Program Review is committed to critical reflection that seeks evidence of change for the good.

This edition provides us with reflections on current practice and promising practice. It opens with one of the enduring and fundamental challenges of development – gender equality. It is with pain that we inspect the wounds of attempts to align our own organisation and related institutions with the need to respect and uphold the rights of women and men. Yet there are signs that change is possible. Subsequent articles examine our own internal practices, the dilemmas involved in allocating funding and trying to generate global standards for microfinance. We show that we have been slow to adopt appropriate economic development practice and tools, such as value chain analysis, but that there is cause for encouragement in the example shown by mango producers in Ethiopia. Turning to our own shores, we discover that international community development principles may not always be easily applied in Australian Indigenous communities. We also gain an insight into what development workers do, with an account of one World Vision Australia staff member on short-term secondment to Kenya.

Our reflections on promising practice begin with an account of an initiative that brought together the business acumen of IBM and the research capacity of RMIT students to develop a technology solution for real-time collection of community health data by mobile phone. An article on the introduction of fuel-efficient stoves shows that our efforts to address climate change reach beyond growing trees in Ethiopia's Humbo forest (see Annual Program Review 2008). It also demonstrates the range of constraints involved in linking these stoves to carbon credits.

Mental health and psychosocial support, particularly in emergencies, is an emerging area of work for us, but the article exploring this issue acknowledges that astute decisions will be required. Finally, an article on a project in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro demonstrates that human rights training can empower young people to demand better governance and it provides an optimistic conclusion to this edition.

As I commend our 2010 Annual Program Review to you, I'm pleased to provide an encouraging postscript to an article on carbon trading, community forestry and development in Ethiopia's Humbo forest that appeared in our 2008 edition. In September 2010, the first US$35,000 instalment of carbon credit revenue from the World Bank BioCarbon Fund was paid for carbon sequestered through this project. This represents the first forest carbon project in Africa to achieve registration and revenue generation under the Clean Development Mechanism, with financial benefits accruing to the seven Humbo community cooperatives in the form of new and complementary project opportunities. Over 10 years,
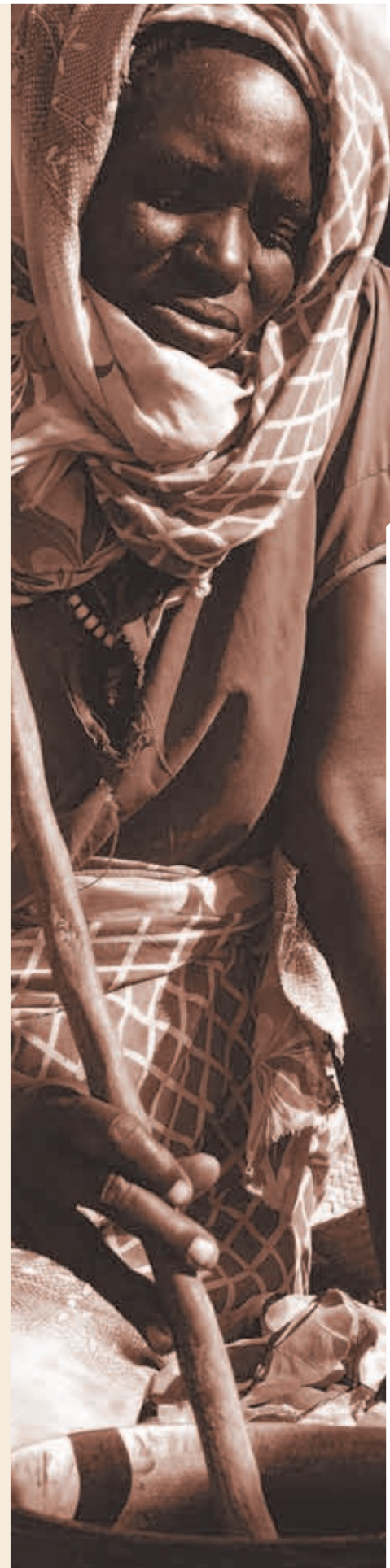
the World Bank has guaranteed US$726,000 worth of credit revenue for the first 165,000 tonnes of carbon sequestered. An additional 165,000 tonnes is expected to be sequestered for sale, furthering revenue generation for the local community.

Most of us rarely feel that we sit in Alan Whaites' "comfort zone", but we recognise that the constancy of "work" displaces the time to reflect adequately and we inevitably get trapped in our own zones. Hopefully this review will be suitably catalytic to rattle your comfort zone.

Graham Tardiff
Director of Policy and Programs
World Vision Australia

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[1] Whaites, Alan (ed), 2002. Development Dilemmas: NGO Challenges and Ambiguities, World Vision International, p.267

[2] Kaplan, Allan (ed), 2007. "An Approach to Struggle", in Dreaming Reality: The future in retrospect – Reading social intervention through the CDRA Annual Reports, 1990-2003: and its relevance for the future, CDRA , p.14.

REFLECTING ON PRACTICE

Poverty is a woman's face

Navigating power, culture and religion Lessons for gender programming in Africa

▶ **MICHELLE THOMAS AND CLARE SEDDON**

"A hen cannot sing if the rooster is around." So the saying goes in Burundi. Behind this Kirundi saying is the idea that a woman must lower her voice or not speak in front of a man: "Inkokokazi ntibika isake ihari." In the African context, tradition and culture particularly shape the interactions between men and women. In the communities where World Vision works, "doing gender" is difficult; religion and culture are particularly sensitive and power analysis has often been absent from programming interventions. World Vision's gender programming has tended to emphasise compliance to global World Vision directives rather than transformation – passive acknowledgment rather than actions that speak to unjust systems and structures – resulting in interventions which do not adequately sustain social change. This article explores lessons from gender programming in Africa, using Burundi as an example of the broader challenges facing those working in this field.

▼ *Members of Burundi's Tubiyage Theatre Troupe perform a drama about early marriage. Recognising that gender-based violence is an unspoken issue, the Gender-Based Violence Sensitisation Pilot Project used drama and other alternative communication methods to raise awareness.*

Africa is a continent delineated by differences in culture, geography, language and ethnicity. Despite these differences, gender inequalities are a common contour – early marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting, gender-based violence, limited economic opportunities and low female political representation plague countries across Africa, constraining its future. While the visibility of gender issues has notably increased, and despite headway in relocating previously "taboo" subjects like sexual violence into the public sphere, there are still challenges. "Gender" emerges as a misused and misconstrued term; the fact that gender mainstreaming is about transformation for both men and women has often been overlooked. The idea that power, culture and religion shape the opportunities, identity and roles that define the lives of men and women also impacts the organisational culture and practice of organisations like World Vision.

For many years, World Vision has attempted to address gender discrimination and inequalities through various development programs. Gender is a core cross-cutting theme for World Vision's official design,

monitoring and evaluation methodology, LEAP – Learning through Evaluation with Accountability and Planning. Like other cross-cutting issues, gender has often lost its potency and meaning through absorption into the language of project design, and project implementation has accordingly failed. Because it's a requirement for gender mainstreaming to be officially included in documents, the focus often becomes on merely including words in documentation – compliance.

In 2006, World Vision Australia, in partnership with the World Vision Africa region, began an ambitious organisational program to strengthen the gender skills and capacities of World Vision staff. This project, Gender Mainstreaming Project (Phase I) identified four key factors – organisational culture, technical skills, political will and accountability – as critical for improving gender mainstreaming. Previous investment from various World Vision offices and a fledging network of dedicated World Vision gender advocates provided a good base from which to increase staff training in gender analysis and a willingness to review human resource policies on issues such as flexi-hours and parental leave for mothers and fathers. Within World Vision, "gender" became increasingly visible and work across the World Vision International Partnership, particularly in the area of advocacy and policy, reflected this shift in importance. In the Africa region, World Vision national offices have since taken strong positions on issues such as early marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting, and there has been recognition of the importance of gender for the environment of the child.

SAYING YES … AND LIVING IT OUT

The Africa Gender Mainstreaming Project facilitated the employment of full-time World Vision National Gender Advisors in some of the participating project offices. This was a strong indication of the increasing level of support for gender programming in Africa. However, some of these placements were often constrained by their relatively low positioning and associated authority in the organisation. If gender mainstreaming is about challenging power dynamics and socially-constructed roles, the environment must allow this. The project struggled to gain consistent political support. The viability of regional gender positions was contingent on sponsorship by individual World Vision regional leaders and separate fundraising appeals, rather than an organisational priority that was integrated into core program budgets. The perception was (and often continues to be) that addressing gender

issues belongs in the space of a few key people and is limited to "gender projects" rather than a crucial perspective to be embedded within all projects.

The "compliance" perception of gender was also highlighted in the draft evaluation report of the Gender Mainstreaming Project (Phase I). Gender mainstreaming was seen as a technical skill needed to fulfil LEAP requirements rather than a changed approach to development; an approach which sees radical change in the way individuals live and how, consequently, organisations need to broaden their horizons about power and women's leadership. The project design focused primarily on building technical skills, but this meant that issues of organisational culture and political will – which are linked to personal mindsets and cultural beliefs – were merely minor considerations. Perhaps the rationale for this was based on the assumption that prioritising capacity would automatically mobilise political will. However, in this emphasis on the technical, power dynamics and systemic issues that impact on gender relations were largely untouched. The transformational elements inherent in gender mainstreaming were reduced to statements about "gender balance", and the world views that underpin gender norms were minimised.

Understanding that gender has a wider scope than just "women" has also been a challenge, with the lingering legacy of the "Women in Development" approach operating to narrow understanding of gender in World Vision's work to the limited sphere of women's issues. The Gender Mainstreaming Project used deliberate targeting of men in training and human resources as a strategy to broaden this scope. Engaging men on issues relating to women's workload and access to health services has since been an intentional focus in order to prevent polarisation of men and women within development projects and to dispel the myth that gender is just for women.

PERSONAL MINDSETS BEFORE PROGRAMMING INTERVENTIONS

The experience in Burundi provides an example of some of the lessons that have emerged from the Gender Mainstreaming Project. Based on InterAction's Gender Integration Framework, a Gender Self-Assessment was conducted by World Vision Burundi to obtain baseline data on organisational culture, technical skills, political will and accountability. The self-assessment revealed that some of the negative associations held by staff in relation

DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Women in Africa represent 52 percent of the total population, contribute approximately 75 percent of the agricultural labour, and produce 60-80 percent of the food. Yet they earn only 10 percent of African incomes and own just one percent of the continent's assets. Within patriarchal structures in African countries, inequality is rife, perpetuating systems which discriminate against women and deny them basic rights. Lack of access to basic services increases the vulnerabilities women experience. In sub-Saharan Africa the risk of death from pregnancy or childbirth is one in 16 (UN Population Fund, 2005).

Burundi, a small landlocked country in central Africa, has experienced decades of civil war during which an "unprecedented increase in violence against women", particularly rape, occurred (UN Peacebuilding Commission, 2007). Despite the official end of conflict, violence against women and girls still continues and the legacy left by war continues to entrench gender inequalities. A recent study conducted by the Association of Catholic Women Jurists found that one in three women in the capital are beaten by their husbands – a statistic that is expected to be much higher in rural areas (Human Rights Watch, December 2008). Despite a high level of female political representation, lack of basic access to health and educational services, unavailability of inheritance rights for women, and gender-based violence continue to threaten long-term development.

PROJECT CONTEXT

A series of gender projects funded by World Vision Finland saw a number of key interventions occur in Burundi – both within the World Vision Burundi office and in the community. The aim was to create understanding amongst staff about basic gender concepts and to begin shifting away from focusing only on practical gender needs which are short term (as reflected in the World Vision Burundi gender-based violence project funded by World Vision Australia) towards meeting strategic gender needs as well. These interventions were:

- staff gender audit
- staff gender training
- staff legal frameworks training
- community gender and gender-based violence sensitisation
- pastor's training using "Reclaiming the Wonder of Sexuality" methodology
- Presidential Cabinet gender and gender-based violence policy training

to gender were grounded in messaging from churches and cultural beliefs. Gender was seen as a "Western" imposition which contradicted the Bible and sought to destroy Burundi's culture.

Despite implementing the World Vision Australia-funded Returnees and Refugees Gender-Based Violence Project, which ended in March 2009, some staff did not understand the "why" behind this discussion on gender, and did not understand the difference between "gender" and "sex". Gender was understood as "women's issues", which were connected to feminist movements in the West and which sought to condemn men. Whilst this perception raises questions about the effectiveness of the compliance-approach taken by World Vision in establishing gender as a cross-cutting theme, the most important lesson is about the need to ensure understanding before implementing. Building World Vision's own understanding on the issue, particularly its religious and cultural underpinnings, should be a priority before implementing projects at field level. The Burundi experience highlights that this requires significant investment of time in both personal reflection and transformation, alongside technical skill development. World Vision Burundi's leadership recognised this and took steps to address the gaps. It was acknowledged that gender mainstreaming cannot be seen as a "once-off" or an "add-on", but that it is a continual change approach that is crucial to achieving development outcomes – not just for women, but for society as a whole.

In order to demonstrate their commitment, and to intentionally explore some of the cultural and religious beliefs about gender identified in the self-assessment, World Vision Burundi's leaders endorsed a series of discussions and debates with staff. Gender training also helped to dispel stereotypes as well as enable staff to understand that gender roles are socially-constructed, and that this often results in the placement of men in positions of power. Official international legal frameworks were met with resistance, with some staff feeling that they clashed with Christian beliefs and some male staff feeling they detracted from their own position. Staff were encouraged to take part in debates about domestic violence and the role of women in the household. However, the most significant shift in understanding took place when a theological approach being piloted in World Vision's Africa region was taken to explain gender. Christianity is core to Burundian values, so exploring equality and the husband-wife relationship through a Biblical lens was the

catalyst which enabled shifts in mindsets. This is not to say that all staff came to understand the importance of gender, but because messaging about gender in Burundi has primarily come from churches, the Biblical approach was crucial for World Vision Burundi staff in starting the journey of personal transformation.

A journey of personal transformation among Burundi church leaders was also triggered through this approach. A workshop was held to explore theological perspectives in Burundi and the church leaders acknowledged that they had been interpreting Scripture through the lens of their culture, without acknowledging Biblical language and context. By the end of the workshop, significant changes had occurred in the way participants were engaging with the topic. A church leader who had initially said he would be "devastated" if he awoke one day and found himself to be a woman stated: "All my life I have undervalued women and treated them as people who do not have anything to contribute to leadership." As well as creating a forum for understanding the way cultural and religious ideas infuse discussions on gender, this approach was important for exploring issues of power. The assumption that the man is to be "chief" with unlimited power over the woman was challenged and contrasted with Biblical perspectives. For church leaders to acknowledge that women had worth and could be leaders was quite a shift in attitude. The idea of partnership was put forward as an alternative way of looking at power dynamics, instead of power in the male-female relationship being seen as a zero-sum game where power for women results in disempowered men.

Another intervention which intentionally focused on issues of culture and power in Burundi was the Community Gender and Gender-Based Violence Sensitisation Pilot Project which was implemented at the end of 2009. Recognising that gender-based violence is often an unspoken issue, alternative methods of raising awareness were utilised, specifically drama. The project engaged a local drama troupe called Tubiyage ("let's talk about it"), which uses "theatre of the oppressed" methodology. The troupe performed dramas focusing on domestic violence, early marriage, rape and women's rights, raising issues around the workloads of women and access to justice. This approach was successful in opening up dialogue on issues which are culturally seen as "taboo". By allowing community members themselves to play roles within the dramas, people were able to engage more with how specific

issues are grounded in cultural beliefs. This extent of participation is not always possible during traditional workshops/training settings where real community engagement may be limited. Community members (particularly women) openly discussing issues like domestic violence was a shift: relocating matters seen as private into the public sphere. By engaging Tubiyage as an implementing partner, the risk that the intervention could be construed as an imposition of Western values was avoided.

STEPS FORWARD

Implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming Project, and the experience of World Vision Burundi in particular, raises important questions about World Vision's approach to gender issues across Africa, including how we understand gender and how we implement gender mainstreaming. It also highlights the broader, underlying issue that gender is about power. Significantly, political will is mobilising around the World Vision International Partnership to recognise the importance of gender to our mission and work, particularly in relation to child wellbeing. Through internal advocacy efforts, there is increasing openness on the issue which has been matched by an investment of resources – a very positive sign.

For continued progress, there must be recognition that making gender a cross-cutting theme within World Vision's project design, monitoring and evaluation framework has been reductive and resulted in a compliance-focus rather than interventions which are grounded in power analysis. We must change the way we work – the way we think about gender – to meaningfully address issues of power. This demands institutional courage because focusing on power involves challenging the status quo and often requires engagement in political spaces. It means grappling with culture and religion; being prepared to explore how mindsets are shaped, and being intentional about working with religious and community leaders to shift biases and stereotypes that perpetuate gender inequality. This is not development as usual.

This kind of social and cultural change takes time and requires significant and intentional investment. We need to invest in building our own capacity as an organisation and focus on our own attitudes, mindsets and practices before we can facilitate lasting transformation in the communities we work in. As a change management strategy, gender mainstreaming is radical. It's "agenda setting" where there is a shift from focusing on women, to focusing on the institution, and overhauling the objectives, priorities, structures and processes through which

policy is formulated. Reducing gender mainstreaming to only gender analysis skills and ability limits the effectiveness of interventions and neglects the other factors that are required for gender integration: accountability, supportive organisational culture and political will. Attempts to reform organisational policies and challenge discriminatory practices within societies require focused political leadership and strategic investment. This means matching our gender rhetoric with a commitment to better resourcing.

Partnering with organisations that have proven expertise in gender programming should be a focus. Where specific technical capacity in gender programming is lacking, World Vision should engage implementing partners who are already working in this field and learn from their lessons and experience. This will help to prevent the organisation from using lack of capacity as an excuse to revert to band-aid fixes which predominantly reflect women-only approaches rather than address gender relations in a holistic manner. Progress has been considerable so far and there are certainly signs of change, but we need to ensure that we invest in the right type of change.

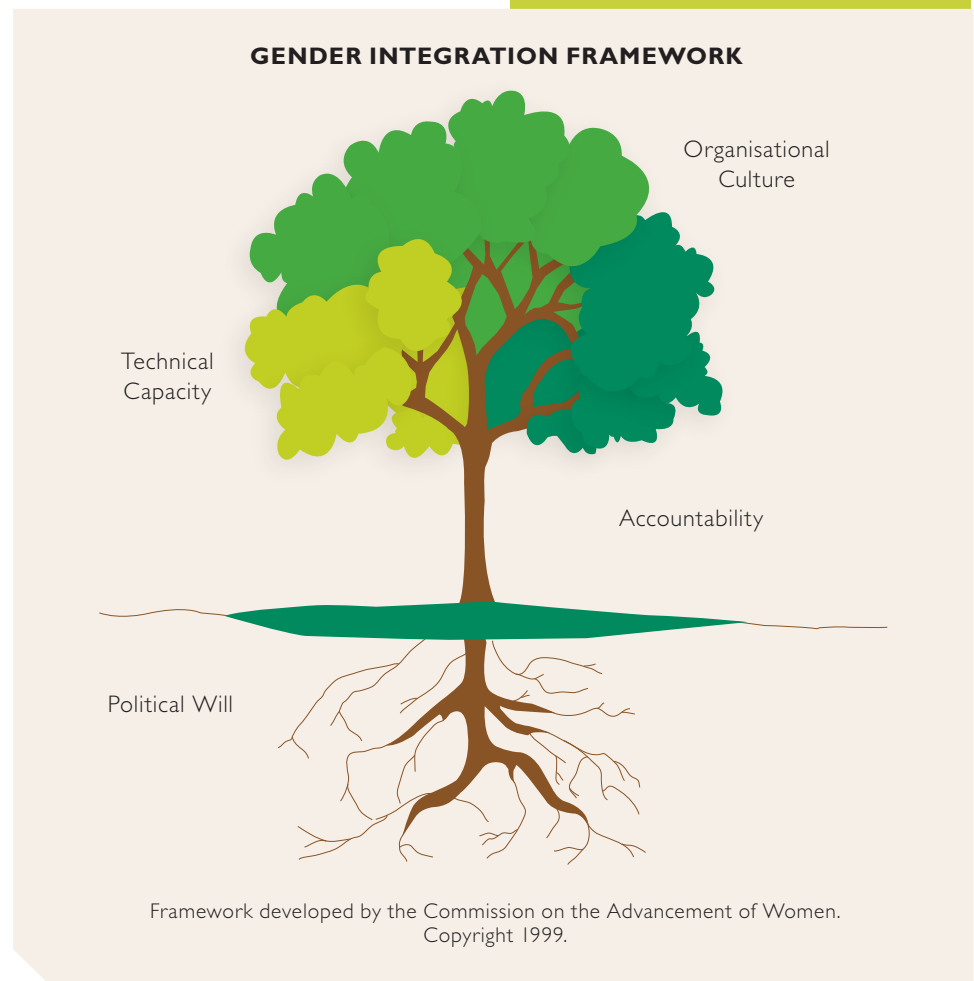▼ *This diagram helps to explain the key elements that are essential for improving gender mainstreaming.*

GENDER INTEGRATION FRAMEWORK

Organisational Culture

Technical Capacity

Accountability

Political Will

Framework developed by the Commission on the Advancement of Women. Copyright 1999.

Value for money or humanitarian imperative?

A financial crisis for Darfur

▶ **KAREN ALEXANDER AND ALISON SCHAFER**

The Darfur crisis remains one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters. The already unstable situation was severely affected by the 2008 Global Financial Crisis (GFC), which resulted in reduced financial support from international donors – including World Vision Australia.

The GFC's impact on the organisation led to a need for increased scrutiny in decision-making about limited allocations of private funding to field offices. For World Vision Australia, this process has created debate about the pros and cons of a "cost-effectiveness approach" to funding allocations, versus the humanitarian imperative to assist those in greatest need. While a solution remains elusive, the issues it raises are fundamental to explore, not only for the current needs in Darfur but for the inevitable funding needs in future protracted emergencies.

▼ *Children share food in Darfur's Otash camp for displaced people. Darfur's extremely challenging operating context makes it hard for aid agencies to respond effectively to people's needs.*

THE CRISIS IN DARFUR

Sudan has a mediocre record of development, with large disparities between different parts of the country. After a bitter 22-year civil war between North and South Sudan, a peace agreement in 2005 saw improved prospects for the people of southern Sudan. Around the same time, African Muslims in the western region of Darfur rebelled against the Arab government in Khartoum. Perhaps inspired by their southern neighbours, they were frustrated with the lack of services in their region and poor protection of their land and natural resources. It is alleged that the government's response was to arm Arab militia groups to suppress the rebellion, which led to killing, rape and displacement on a catastrophic scale. According to the United Nations, up to 300,000 people have died as a result of the ongoing conflict,[1] with 2.7 million people displaced and facing critical humanitarian needs, which remain today.[2] The situation in Darfur is one of the world's worst protracted humanitarian crises, with minimal prospects for change in the near future.

The desperate need of the people of Darfur is exacerbated by the difficult operating context for humanitarian agencies, in which

humanitarian staff deaths, abductions and assaults on humanitarian vehicles and premises are common threats.[3] Free movement of aid workers is hampered by administrative hurdles, complicated and lengthy visa regimes and the requirement of permits for travel between and within states. Humanitarian agencies also face restrictions on the type and quality of program activities they can engage in. For example, social justice, advocacy, protection or governance programs are not permitted. Further, the inability to conduct household surveys for baseline or evaluation data makes program impacts difficult to measure.

Sudan's President, General Omar Al-Bashir, is the only sitting president to have been indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC), accused of crimes against humanity and war crimes. In March 2009, within one week of Bashir's indictment, the Government of Sudan expelled 16 international and local humanitarian agencies, depleting the humanitarian workforce by approximately 40 percent.[4] Since that time, significant gaps in aid have remained unmet, but not only as a result of the political climate. Coinciding with these events the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) dramatically reduced financial support to Darfur, despite enduring humanitarian needs.

THE IMPACT OF THE GFC

Throughout the World Vision partnership, programmed funding to World Vision North Sudan prior to the 2008 GFC was nearly US$50 million. Presently, World Vision's programmed funding has been reduced to about US$38 million, of which US$28 million consists of food aid. The impact of this reduced financial support "on the ground" included World Vision North Sudan scaling down some life-saving programs in the health, nutrition, and water and sanitation sectors and reducing recovery activities in the agricultural and education sectors. The country office struggled to reach thousands of people with humanitarian assistance through World Vision's programs, and was forced to reduce its costs by retrenching national and expatriate staff. This placed greater pressure on the country office to sustain program monitoring and quality, compromised staff safety and has necessitated the national program to reduce its overall presence in Sudan and Darfur.

World Vision Australia accordingly reduced its financial support from US$1.6 million per annum prior to the GFC to US$600,000 in 2009. This was the outcome of numerous factors: the lack of new donations to the organisation's Darfur emergency appeal; the prioritisation of World Vision and its donors to support new emergencies; and

the ongoing challenges of World Vision accessing private funds to support protracted crises. The Darfur context lies between humanitarian relief and early recovery. The Overseas Development Institute suggests such contexts are the most challenging to finance given the need for flexible, adequate and risk-tolerant funding because the situation meets neither the criteria of an immediate crisis nor of sustainable development.[5]

From World Vision Australia's perspective, North Sudan is additionally challenging to fund because its operational needs are inherently expensive, with high overhead costs. Further, certain program quality measures cannot be guaranteed, as insecurity has resulted in a lack of access to communities. This restricts the field office's access to some government grants and it is forced to rely heavily on private donations.

During the GFC, World Vision Australia's private donations were depleting, for all supported countries. The organisation needed to become more stringent in its decision-making about where and how private funds would be disbursed amongst the many nations requiring aid. This generated debate about how such decisions should be reached; when faced with less financial resources than before, should World Vision support developing countries that have potential for greatest "value for money" or should the organisation be led by the humanitarian imperative to support those most in need? How is it appropriate to disperse funding across the relief, development and advocacy areas of World Vision's field work?

A CONCEPT OF VALUE FOR MONEY

Recently, World Vision Australia sought to rationalise its disbursement of funding by making decisions aimed at gaining the best possible value for money. The intention was to determine in which countries or contexts our private funding commitments are most effective and therefore, where we should increase or decrease financial support. The essential components considered by the resulting framework and their relative weighting by percentage were:

- relative intensity of need (33%)
- existing commitment (7%)
- relative ability to achieve field impact, which included an assessment of a country office's capacity to implement programs in an efficient way, the quality of programs and whether or not there was a constructive operating environment (36%)
- marketability (6%)
- regional office or global priorities (18%)[6]

[1] United Nations, Darfur - UNAMID Background, www.un.org/depts/dpko/missions/unamid/background.html, as of 26 May, 2009

[2] Humanitarian Policy Group, ALNAP, Where to Now? Agency Expulsions in Sudan: Consequences and Next Steps, March 2009

[3] UN-OCHA. A Darfur security scorecard for 2009, reporting incidents of seven humanitarian staff killed in the eight months up to August 2009, 38 wounded, 29 abducted, 64 vehicles hijacked and 103 assaults on humanitarian premises.

[4] Humanitarian Policy Group, ALNAP, Where to Now? Agency Expulsions in Sudan: Consequences and Next Steps, March 2009

[5] Baily, S., Pavanello, S., Elhawary, S. & O'Callaghan, S. (2009). Early recovery: An overview of policy debates and operational challenges. Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG)/ Overseas Development Institute (ODI) Working Paper: UK

[6] More about the Bang for the Buck Analysis, World Vision International Programs Document Library. March, 2010.

▲ *Otash camp, home to 56,000 displaced people. The crisis in Darfur is one of the world's worst protracted humanitarian emergencies.*

[7] Code of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, International Federation of Red Cross Societies, 1994, http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/conduct/code.asp

[8] Ibid

[9] Baily, S., Pavanello, S., Elhawary, S. & O'Callaghan, S. (2009). Early recovery: An overview of policy debates and operational challenges. Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG)/ Overseas Development Institute (ODI) Working Paper: UK

The model incorporates a matrix to ensure all geographic regions where World Vision Australia provides financial support are represented according to strategic intent (eg. the Pacific, Asia, Africa, Middle East and Latin America). Further, this approach needed to account for needs in the relief, development and advocacy areas.

When working towards serving the poor, the use of a financial efficiency model may seem unfeeling but it has certain benefits. It helps ensure transparency of financial decision making. It complies with the organisation's obligation to donors who entrust World Vision with their money and desire it be used in the most cost-effective ways. It is consistent with World Vision's core value of stewardship and ultimately ensures funding is based on accountable performance and good programming across all geographical areas. It also allows World Vision Australia to support strategic themes, sectors or priorities that are innovative, new or of greater interest to us and our donors.

There are difficulties with a value-for-money approach however. It can prioritise World Vision Australia's needs or our donors' needs. Pitting needs against "relative ability to achieve field impact" means that a context like Darfur, with highest need but highest insecurity, inevitably falls behind if competing against contexts with lower needs but higher security. Such contexts always have higher operational costs and greater difficulty achieving good outcomes, due to factors such as: threatened or actual suspension of operations; difficulty in hiring and maintaining staff, and expensive procurement; and delays in program implementation, monitoring and quality caused by hostile actors. Also, the ideal of undertaking new and innovative work is generally restricted due to the need for life-saving operations (basic provisions of food, water and healthcare).

Under any type of value-for-money funding allocation model, country offices with more stable contexts will always be considered more "cost-effective". Having a regional perspective on funds available and committing to support for relief, development and advocacy programs, field offices in places like Darfur are somewhat safeguarded from having to meet all the value-for-money criteria. However, the expense of operating in Darfur has also seen World Vision Australia need to limit funding when the GFC left the organisation with physically less money than before. The fact that the humanitarian needs in Darfur may outweigh those in other developing contexts remains an ethical dilemma for World Vision (no doubt other aid agencies as well).

THE HUMANITARIAN IMPERATIVE

An argument can be made that value-for-money frameworks and the division of funds amongst regions or relief, development and advocacy activities may contravene our obligations to the humanitarian imperative, and that intensity of need alone should determine funding priorities. The humanitarian imperative as defined by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Code of Conduct obligates the international community to "provide humanitarian assistance wherever it is needed".[7] Article 2 of the code explicitly states that "aid priorities are [to be] calculated on the basis of need alone".[8] World Vision Australia and World Vision International, like most other humanitarian NGOs, are signatories to the Code of Conduct.

Basing financial decisions on a humanitarian imperative framework would be an

internationally accepted and validated approach. It delivers a methodology of ranking countries in most need. It is transparent and open to scrutiny by recipient communities, donors and the humanitarian community. Compared with a value-for-money model, it is based on objectively verifiable, universal measures of need. It promotes impartiality and assures donors and communities that aid is not linked to any other subjective measure such as religion, race or political persuasion. Costly contexts such as fragile states are not penalised due to high operating costs or difficulty in meeting compliance measures. Finally, lifesaving interventions are prioritised for funding.

As much as World Vision would like to be exclusively bound by concepts like the humanitarian imperative there are also downsides to this approach. It's simply not feasible for World Vision to operate in some countries with high humanitarian need. These may include places where World Vision does not have existing operations or where the contexts are so insecure or corrupt they are prohibitive to humanitarian work. As well, some donors have restrictions on their funding which prevents its use for the most fragile states.

It is understandable that donors want organisations like World Vision to be accountable for their money and limit operating costs and field overheads. World Vision has already invested financial support in many countries where improvements against poverty are slowly being realised, hence the importance of needing to build on those gains and enabling continued funding for development and advocacy activities; not just relief.

WORLD VISION AUSTRALIA'S IMPACT IN DARFUR

In the relief, development and advocacy areas, there are clear advantages and disadvantages to a value-for-money approach and one that leans more strictly towards the humanitarian imperative. But are they equal in weight? While a value-for-money approach seems to be a pragmatic rationale, it is more naturally aligned to the development or advocacy sectors. In contrast, the humanitarian imperative is a moral and ethical obligation more aligned to relief. For World Vision as a development, advocacy and relief organisation, this creates a persistent financial dilemma about where and how funds are best utilised.

It is important to point out that all countries supported by World Vision Australia, including North Sudan, were adversely affected by reduced financial support due to the GFC. At the peak of the crisis, when the value of the Australian dollar slumped against the US dollar, all country offices – regardless of whether they were development or relief-focused – were required to reduce programming targets. Every office supported by World Vision Australia was required to submit requests for new funding to undergo higher measures of scrutiny against the value-for-money model, and to be incorporated into their geographical allocations. Unfortunately, if World Vision Australia maintained its pre-GFC funding levels to North Sudan, then there would have been almost no funds available for the remainder of the Africa region.

World Vision Australia was forced to balance limited resources with competing interests, resulting in significantly less financial support for Darfur. This contributed to a reduction in services provided by the North Sudan program office and a decline in the number of people assisted. It also had many implications for the ongoing financial stability of the World Vision North Sudan operation, which remains solvent through financial support from government donors but has scaled down activities. Program activities are unlikely to reach pre-GFC levels given the challenges of funding such protracted crises, which don't fall into "new emergencies" or "longer term development" contexts.[9]

FUNDING FOR THE FUTURE

This funding disparity and conflict between a value-for-money model and abiding by the Code of Conduct's humanitarian imperative has forced World Vision Australia to re-evaluate approaches for allocating financial support to field offices. It has escalated debate about how World Vision will fund other protracted emergencies and work in insecure and fragile states in the future. Discussion has also been ongoing about whether relief or early recovery activities, such as those in Darfur, need to have a separate funding pool so they are not being measured against development contexts or advocacy initiatives.

Many ideas are being investigated, but the solution has not yet been realised. As outlined in this article, the way forward is far from simple and there are many competing concerns. Nonetheless, it is a critical issue that the organisation must continue to grapple with. After all, this is not just a dilemma for World Vision or other international agencies; for the people of Darfur, it could mean the difference between life and death.

PROJECT DETAILS

World Vision Australia currently supports six projects in North Sudan (as at 1 July 2010).

• One project is supported through private donations – these refer to donations offered by the general public through emergency appeals or non-child sponsorship programs. Total World Vision Australia funding for this project is US$250,000 per annum.

• Two projects are funded by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). World Vision receives food from WFP to distribute in communities and contributes funds to help cover costs associated with the distribution, such as storage and project management. Total World Vision Australia funding for these projects is US$204,000.

• Three projects are funded through the Australian-NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP). Under this arrangement AusAID provides about 80 percent of total funding for an ANCP project and World Vision raises match funds to cover the remaining 20 percent. Total World Vision Australia funding for these projects is US$109,000.

"Not another service provider"

Partnering for sustainability

▶ **TERESA HUTCHINS AND MARK MORAN**

Anita is a young Warlpiri child from a family who hold their traditional language and culture strong. Because she is Aboriginal and living in a remote area of Australia there is more than a 50 percent chance her parents will be unemployed and that her family line will have experienced the dispossession of traditional lands and the separation and institutionalisation of young children resulting from a plethora of failed policies and programs. At five years of age, Anita is 14 times more likely than the general population to have poor access to good healthcare and education and to meet minimum standards for literacy and numeracy. Her brothers and sisters are three times more likely to die in the first 12 months of their life as other Australian children, and twice as likely to be of low birth weight, be hospitalised for chronic infections, and suffer respiratory and parasitic infectious diseases before they celebrate their first birthday. She is eight times more likely to be the subject of care and protection orders and nine times more likely to be placed in out of home care than other Australian children.

Anita's family of five are entitled to almost $40,000 in welfare payments of various forms and their community has a well-stocked store. So why then is one of Anita's younger siblings malnourished? There are no easy answers here. Faced with these realities, government and other service providers have responded on a massive scale through emergency relief and increased services, with little consideration to building human capacity or sustainable governance structures. So for World Vision Australia entering the field, we have faced the dilemma of whether we should directly feed Anita and her siblings through a government-funded breakfast program, or whether we should work with her parents and extended family so that they themselves can sustainably feed their children more nutritious foods.

BACKGROUND

In December 2007, the Australian Government responded to disturbing reports of sexual abuse of children in remote Indigenous communities by introducing the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER). The introduction of the NTER prompted a broader debate about how this crisis could occur and what should be done about it. The centralist, top down, "one size fits all" approach adopted by the NTER also prompted a broader debate about the role of international development organisations, such as World Vision Australia, in responding to a domestic emergency of this kind.

Two years earlier in 2005, the Central Land Council (CLC) began a process of consultation among the four Warlpiri communities of the central Australian desert. A consultant's investigation presented a

number of alternative options for improving education and training outcomes, and a strong community consensus emerged for early childhood development to be given the highest priority, characterised by statements like "starting with the little kids" and "getting the early years right". World Vision's involvement began in 2007, building on this earlier work. In 2008, World Vision partnered with the CLC and the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust to deliver an Early Childhood Care and Development Project. A group of strong Warlpiri teachers advocated for the development of the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT) which would set aside a portion of the royalties earned from mining to be spent on projects that would benefit the whole community.

The project operates in the four Warlpiri communities of the Tanami Desert in Central Australia. Warlpiri are one of the largest Indigenous language groups in Central Australia, the majority being settled in the four communities of Yuendumu (pop.700-1,000), Willowra (pop. 200-270), Nyirripi (pop. 200-250) and Lajamanu (pop.700-900). Once self-sufficient hunter-gatherers, Warlpiri also have a history of station and stock work. Over several decades, however, like many Indigenous groups in Australia, they have suffered the loss of autonomy and become increasingly dependent on welfare payments for their survival. Employment opportunities today are quite limited.

Particular family groups receive royalties from a large mining operation in the Tanami Desert, but the nature of the payments differs little from welfare payments from government.

Whilst World Vision Australia has experience working with communities that have become dependent on non-government assistance in the international arena for some time, the entrenched dependence on state welfare posed a unique set of challenges for the design of the Early Childhood Care and Development Project.

CHALLENGES

One of the first challenges to be considered was how we could mobilise depleted community energy and challenge an ingrained belief, based upon their past and present experience of government intervention, that as a community they had little power to affect change. A recent change in local government, that saw the demise of community councils and the

imposition of a new local government shire structure, increased feelings of disempowerment. Many Warlpiri leaders perceived this change in local government arrangements as a deliberate attack on their ability to be self-governing.

The second challenge we faced was thinking about how we could embrace the opportunities provided by the increased government commitment to services in these communities through the NTER without compromising our development efforts. We tried to respond to these challenges in our project design through concentrating our efforts on:

- consultation through activity;
- the restoration and strengthening of existing governance arrangements; and
- putting "others at the centre" through the development of partnerships.

OUR APPROACH

Consultation through activity has proved to be a successful strategy. One of the first issues identified by the communities was the lack of facilities for young mums and

▼ *"Starting with the little kids."* – *The World Vision-supported Warlpiri Early Childhood Care and Development Project focuses on pre-school education.*

▲ *Winning the trust of Indigenous communities lies in facilitating their ability to identify and implement their own solutions to community issues.*

The restoration and strengthening of existing governance arrangements has been much more difficult to accomplish. Initially, we were probably a little naive and envisaged that it would be a relatively simple process of identifying those community leaders who had an interest in Early Childhood Care and Development and developing strategies for them to lead project initiatives. We have found that community leaders tend to be overcommitted, have depleted energy and are time poor. In each community there are a handful of people who are committed to seeing change in their communities; these people are constantly in demand by various organisations to provide advice and to sit on committees and boards. In addition, these same people are often vilified by other members of the community who are jealous of their positions or dissatisfied with their performance. We have learned that community decision-making occurs through a range of formal and informal processes and bodies, including local government, extended families, elders councils, justice groups and football clubs. Following these local decision-making processes requires ongoing facilitated dialogue, often between family groups who are sometimes in conflict with one another. Negotiating our way through community conflict and the widespread disengagement from decision making has proved one of our biggest challenges. We are beginning to make progress through holding discussions with the various family groups before we initiate any kind of community meeting.

We have also been challenged by our commitment to partnering and putting "others at the centre". To ensure the long-term sustainability of outcomes, we have tried to capitalise on the opportunities provided to these communities through the NTER. This has required us to work with and alongside government agencies as well as with the communities themselves. Over the last 18 months World Vision Australia has established working relationships with 17 different agencies. The transaction costs have been high. Much time is taken up in complex negotiations and drawing up legal agreements that form the basis of collaborations. It is also taxing when working relationships are disrupted frequently by the high attrition rate of government and non-government personnel.

While World Vision Australia has been successful in attracting some government funding for the project, it has proved more difficult to persuade government agencies

their children. By assisting local women to quickly establish playgroups through a Community Development and Employment Program operated by the local shire, we demonstrated our ability to "make things happen". The playgroups also provided a vehicle to engage the broader community and encourage members to come up with strategies to overcome some of the problems they face. For example, in one community senior men decided to work on a script for a DVD that will illustrate traditional family structures and the role men traditionally played in caring and providing for their children. The production of the DVD will be used as a spring board by them for discussing with young men their role in contemporary family life.

of the benefits of taking a "bottom-up", community-driven approach to development. This commitment to working slowly towards long-term sustainable outcomes does not fit well with the electoral cycle and the need for government agencies to demonstrate quick gains. Hence, we have often been asked to accept funding to implement an intervention that has predetermined outputs and deliverables within a very short time frame.

On one occasion, we did step into the breach and operated a service for a short time while we supported a local organisation to prepare itself for taking over the service. When the time came for the contract to be transferred to the local organisation, we were accused by some of "pulling out" rather than being acknowledged for building the capacity of the local organisation.

Turning down these requests to provide intervention services, such as anger management programs and childcare facilities, has been difficult as it strains our relations with the agencies as well as depriving ourselves of increased funding. If we accept them, however, our relations with the communities will be compromised, as winning their trust lies in facilitating their ability to identify their own solutions and assisting them to act upon them through organisations that they control. Even so, without the high profile of service delivery it is difficult for others to recognise what we actually do. Working developmentally is very new in Australia and we constantly have to resist the pressure to become the new service provider of choice in these communities.

MOVING FORWARD

As an international non-government organisation working within Australia, we realise that our strength lies in demonstrating the effectiveness of working developmentally. We believe that to bring about long lasting change, both our practice and our advocacy work must be based on evidence and the importance of demonstrating what actually works. As we make gains we can see that other agencies are beginning to acknowledge the value of working with us and have begun to approach us to assist them in developing their relationships with community members in order to deliver their services.

A strategy we have developed is to make ourselves as useful to both government and non-government agencies as possible without delivering direct services on behalf

of government agencies. We have found that our ability to broker working relationships between communities and agencies and among the agencies themselves is very fruitful. World Vision Australia's strategy for moving forward is to work with both the communities and government agencies to identify shared interests and to facilitate a way for them to work together to achieve sustainable outcomes.

We recognise that at times the State must intervene around child protection issues or malnutrition, but the NTER has championed or legitimised a whole raft of emergency relief-type programs that have collectively accumulated on such a massive scale that Anita and her family have become effectively disenfranchised from their own development. As a senior government official was remarkably heard to say: "We are too busy achieving our targets to be engaging with people." This is a consequence of service delivery operating beyond any notion of development. A balance and tension between emergency relief and sustainable development is always necessary, but in the Northern Territory this balance has tipped too far away from sustainable development. By working with families like Anita's, World Vision Australia hopes to strengthen capabilities for people to follow development pathways of their choosing, and then by demonstration, to influence the system of Indigenous affairs to operate more developmentally.

PROJECT DETAILS

The Warlpiri Early Childhood Care and Development Project is a five-year project operating in the Tanami Desert in Central Australia. The project commenced in August 2008 and has an annual budget of just over $1 million. The majority of funds are provided by the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust, but other important funding partners include the Northern Territory Department of Education and Training and the Commonwealth Government, and our corporate partners Jetstar and the ANZ Bank. The project has more than 17 implementation partners.

▼ *The Warlpiri communities inhabit the Tanami Desert, northwest of Alice Springs.*

More bang for your buck

Harnessing a community's comparative advantage

▶ **JOSEPH K KAMARA AND CHRIS ROWLANDS**

"Think about a metal chain lying straight on the floor without any attachments at either end. The best way to move the end of that chain is to pull it; it's almost impossible to push it." This expression is helpful to understand how to support farmers to improve market access for their produce. Too often in the past, NGO approaches have focused on what happens at the start of the chain and have employed "push" strategies that help farmers to produce more or better quality produce. A recent World Vision project in Ethiopia working with mango farmers began at the "pull" end of the chain to understand whether there was market demand for the mangoes, and if so, how farmers could better engage the market and increase the benefits gained from these interactions.

This thinking about market access programs was a change for World Vision Ethiopia and World Vision Australia because these programs adopt basic business principles that reflect the simple economics of supply and demand.

▼ *It estimated that the Homosha-Assosa region produces more than one quarter of the mangoes sold in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa.*

Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa and is typically remembered for the 1984 famine that decimated the country's wealth. Since then, the overall humanitarian needs have gradually decreased but underlying structural problems, complicated by the effects of climate change, keep approximately seven million people dependent on relief support[1]. Ethiopia is unable to meet its food needs because of a rapidly increasing population which is unmatched by the country's rate of agricultural production. During the 1970s, Ethiopia was self-sufficient in cereal production but this position has slowly been eroded, leaving the country a net food importer.

Ethiopia is often associated with famine and food shortages. Whilst this perception is the reality for much of the country at certain times, there are also regions within Ethiopia that are well suited to producing a surplus of particular agricultural commodities. One such location is the Homosha-Assosa region in western Ethiopia, which is particularly suited to the production of mangoes. In a 2006 study, it was estimated that as many

as 28 percent of the mangoes sold in the capital, Addis Ababa, were grown in the Homosha-Assosa region[2].

On the face of it, one could assume that the mango industry in this region was serving larger markets well. However, the reality was that farmers were getting very little income from their mango farming activities and the industry faced many issues that hindered the development of a competitive agricultural market.

BEFORE THE INTERVENTION

World Vision has implemented Area Development Programs (ADPs) across Africa for over a decade. These have been primarily driven by the need to respond to issues like food insecurity, as well as national poverty reduction strategies. The ADPs have often not sought to explore and make use of a community's comparative advantage. During the assessment period for the Assosa ADP, the mango industry was identified as a potential engine to drive change, but because it did not fit within the traditional approach of the ADP framework, it was left untapped.

In 2008, World Vision undertook a value chain study to better understand the nature of the market for mangoes in Ethiopia, with the aim of determining if the mango value chain from Assosa was one worth supporting through further facilitation and investment. This was a significant departure from the traditional area development programming approach which had indentified the potential of the industry but not acted. The mango project sought to leverage the existing capabilities of the community, beginning with what was already present in order to maximise benefits.

Despite the value chain analysis, and its specific recommendations for the project, the staff did not understand why they were being asked to embark on a different approach that was commercial in nature and contrary to the ADP design. Commercial projects were perceived as exploitative and not pro-poor. This became a key area of negotiation because the staff had not understood the efficacy of the business approach relevant to the context. At first, the farmers and our own staff perceived the project would hand out inputs; for example, they wanted World Vision to buy them a refrigerated truck and build a cold storage facility even though they did not have any experience in operating them. This meant the staff responsible for the implementation of the project had not understood the concept. It became apparent that they needed to first understand the

concept before they could embark on implementation. Clearly, better support is required that offers World Vision national offices information about promising and emerging practices to continually improve our work in the field.

After a series of trainings, workshops and consultations with other players in the mango industry, the project was ready for implementation almost a year after the planned commencement date. This "new" approach (for World Vision) enabled the program to focus on market linkages as the means to improve household income and livelihoods.

MOBILISING COMMUNITIES

World Vision's ADP assessment framework, carried out in 2004, dictated that critical themes such as reliable access to food be explored. Even though it was clear that mango growing was the main economic activity of the area, it was not ranked among the top 10 priorities during the ADP design. This was because the staff and community leaders involved at that time could not envisage how mangoes would enhance the thematic emphasis.

Prior to this project, most farmers had very little understanding of the market for their products or the types of by-products that could be produced, eg. juices, jam and pulp. In addition, these farmers did not grow mangoes using techniques that could improve quality and better meet the customer's needs. Most farmers were working at subsistence level and only 14 percent of them belonged to a farmer's association whose role was mainly confined to fruit production of 2.7 tonnes annually.[3]

In the first year of project implementation, World Vision concentrated on supporting the effective use of what already existed. The field staff began by mobilising farmers in the Homosha and Assosa districts to form groups of cooperatives where they could access extension services such as the use of weighing scales, the grading of fruit according to size and type, and packaging. In addition, the farmers were taught to make and manage temporary fruit collection centres instead of waiting for brokers to purchase produce from individual homesteads. The 19 cooperatives were also trained on basic business skills and the processing of mango by-products such as wine, jam and compote.

Building confidence among the farmers was a challenge because their traditional decision-making process is based on

DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Ethiopia is a land-locked country that lies in the Horn of Africa sandwiched between Somalia in the east, Sudan in the west, Kenya in the south, and Djibouti and Eritrea in the north. It is ranked 171 out of 182 countries on the United Nations Development Programme Human Development Index. Thirty-nine percent of the population lives below the poverty line and the country relies on foreign aid to balance its budget. GDP growth averages 6.8 percent annually.

Ethiopia's poverty-stricken economy is based on agriculture, accounting for 45 percent of GDP and 85 percent of total employment. The agricultural sector suffers from frequent droughts and poor farming practices. Coffee is the chief cash crop with exports of some US$350 million in 2006. Historically, low prices have seen many farmers switching to unconventional but lucrative crops such as chat, an amphetamine-based stimulant.

Under Ethiopia's constitution, all land belongs to the state which determines the nature of leases for tenants. This system continues to hamper growth in the agriculture and industrial sector as entrepreneurs are unable to use land as collateral for loans or long-term agricultural commitments.

[1] Ambassador Tony P. Hall, 2004: Hunger in Ethiopia; Past, Present and Future

[2] Addis Ababa, Mekele and Awassa: Final report for Improving Productivity and Market Successes (IPMS) for Ethiopian Farmers Project, Addis Ababa. World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), Nairobi, July 11, 2006.

[3] James Ssemwanga et al, 2009: Analysis and Baseline Status of the Mango Value Chain from Homosha Assosa to Addis Ababa

PROGRAMMING CONTEXT

Benishangul Gumuz Regional State (BGRS) is one of the nine Federal States of Ethiopia located in the mid-western part of the country bordering Sudan and it has a total area of 50,382kms². According to the 2001 Population and Housing Census, the total population of BGRS region was 460,459, a population density of nine people per square kilometre.

Assosa zone is the capital of the region and one of the three zones and two special woredas (second from lowest administrative unit in the Ethiopian government structure) in the region. It has a total area of 1,519kms² and a population of 28,970. More than 96.3 percent of the population is Muslim.

The climatic conditions in this region, especially the Assosa and Hamosha zones, are conducive for growing fruit, especially high quality mangoes. The region produces 28 percent of the mangoes sold in the capital Addis Ababa.

consensus whereby minority ideas cannot be disregarded. Although the consensus approach is inclusive, it is not efficient for business. In addition, the farmers lacked the "go get it" spirit necessary to run a profitable business. The cooperatives were encouraged to hire an officer with entrepreneurial skills and business knowledge to coordinate their interests. Doing so would significantly reduce the burden on World Vision staff to fill this gap and also make the cooperatives independent of World Vision.

CREATING THE MARKET LINKAGE

World Vision invited a range of government and private sector stakeholders to workshops where information about the market potential was shared along with a vision for how the industry could benefit poor farmers. One of these participants, Etfruit (the state-owned Ethiopian fruit marketing agency), established an agreement with the cooperatives based on an understanding that World Vision would guarantee the farmers' compliance with industry standards. During the first harvesting season in 2009, Etfruit purchased 357 tonnes of fresh fruit from the 19 cooperatives at a farm gate price equivalent to approximately US$46,000. The farmers did not have to incur transport costs beyond collection centres within their villages. This new partnership increased the price farmers received for their fresh mangoes by approximately 300 percent.

Although Etfruit was able to absorb much of the supply from the region, its demand was still lower than the supply capacity. To address this gap, World Vision also helped negotiate a partnership between the farmers and Ecological Products of Ethiopia (Ecopia), a young company with excellent knowledge in food processing and management which offered to co-own with the farmers a commercial mango processing plant based in Assosa. Under this arrangement, Ecopia would carry out the processing and marketing of products while the farmers supplied the fruit and labour required. Prior to this, the farmers had never owned liquid capital and had very limited understanding of how to operate a business. As a result of the project, they were empowered to sit in the same board room with Ecopia and have equal voting rights. Even though World Vision encouraged this approach, we have realised that the farmers' limited business experience has a negative impact on the level and nature of decisions they can make.

In addition, none of the cooperatives had capital to invest in the partnership with

Ecopia. As a result, World Vision field staff helped to negotiate an agreement which recognises the labour input from farmers to build the company premises and process the produce. Although the participatory approach works well in community development, it is not necessarily effective in business. For example, it takes more time and resources to mobilise community input than to outsource the service to a commercial provider.

Although the farmers' cooperatives and Ecopia are in partnership, they are yet to register a company because Ethiopian law on cooperatives is not clear on the legality of forming a business company within cooperatives. Some local government departments have interpreted it as possible while others say it is not allowed. World Vision and Ecopia are looking at models from other governments in the region and also seeking consultation on the interpretation of the particular legal clause relating to cooperatives and businesses.

Unfortunately there are no privately owned suppliers of inputs like harvesting tools, fertilisers and improved seedlings in the region. In most cases, farmers have to apply to the government for allocation of these inputs, which are in extremely high demand. This often makes it almost impossible for farmers to practise most of what they learn from the project. World Vision is currently exploring how best to support the emergence of private input suppliers. This could include persuading big companies based in Addis Ababa to extend their services to the Homosha-Assosa region where there is an already existing market.

LESSONS LEARNED AND STEPS FORWARD

- Market demand is key. You can't push produce like mangoes into the market if there isn't an underlying demand. There was a good starting point in this case as Assosa mangoes were highly regarded in the market already and considered as the best in the country. We didn't know this when we started, but discovered it when we began following the chain to the city and researching the potential for the market.

- This type of programming was evolutionary for World Vision. Our typical approach, which was common within the development community, was to stimulate production or process the product, but without much thought about the market potential of those products. In the past

decade, the development community has learnt about the importance of responding to market demand and World Vision's change in practice reflects that learning.

- Development organisations are increasingly recognising that a "business mindset" is required to stimulate economic and business development. Traditionally, they have struggled with this mindset as "business" typically sits outside of the core development activities which tend to focus on basic necessities for wellbeing such as food, health, education and infrastructure. Also, staff often struggle with this "business" mindset because they have been educated on "development" theory rather than business and economics. More integration with the private sector is therefore necessary to embed this business thinking within development activities.

- In this project, World Vision encouraged an analysis of the end market first, as part of a market chain from producer to market. Once this was understood, the stakeholders could think about the best methods for intervention. This was quite different to how we would typically operate.

- Sometimes, following a good process will turn up no results, and sometimes there can be good success. In this case, we began by following a good market research process, which in time turned into business opportunities.

- Staff attitudes and their belief in the project were critical. The project was delayed because the staff had not understood the value chain concept. When they finally grasped the concept, they freely encouraged the farmers to take the lead in project implementation. This highlights how important it is for World Vision support offices to effectively share research and information with national offices who may not have staff or capacity to investigate new and emerging practices.

- Because this project approach is different from the traditional ADP approach it requires different skill sets and competencies. In ADPs, staff generally focus on addressing challenges in line with World Vision development strategy which may not necessarily make use of the community's comparative advantage. During the Assosa ADP assessment, the staff identified the potential of mangoes but no further action was taken because this was considered to be of a

business nature. The staff did not have the right skills set to jumpstart the business. In addition, the business framework was not amongst World Vision's traditional areas of competency.

- Local businesses are an existing pool of partners that can be mobilised to supplement development work by helping to identify commercial opportunities and by supplying inputs; without Ecopia and Etfruit, the project would not have been so successful.

- Rural farmers like those of Assosa are very poor but have established coping mechanisms that outsiders often misunderstand; for example, sometimes children need to work during mango harvesting to raise money for their families that, in turn, provides for educational needs. They do not have to do hard work, as a rule, but in reality this happens sometimes. This means that our attitude towards child labour needs to be contextualised. Even if they have more awareness about child rights, the realities of poverty force parents to compromise.

Development organisations should consider embarking on more market development projects where there are clear pro-poor benefits. This type of project empowers the communities to use what they have rather than depend on development partners like World Vision for their transformation.

PROJECT DETAILS

Project name: Increased Household Income by Creating Market Linkage to Mango Production

Project start date: July 2008

Project end date: June 2011

Funding source: AusAID

Total budget: US$645,800

▼ *In partnership with Ecopia, a young Ethiopian food processing company, a commercial mango processing plant has been established in Assosa which is co-owned by the farmers.*

Sizing up your own needs

Global standards or local control in microfinance?

▶ **RONI ORACION**

Economic development is a critical element in lifting people out of poverty. Microfinance, with its vast array of approaches and interventions, has emerged as a popular strategy among politically divergent groups due to its potential for financial sustainability, poverty reduction and empowerment of women. This popularity led to an industry-wide paradigm shift from subsidised microfinance services to cost-recovery models. World Vision, in line with industry best practice, opted for the commercialisation model of financially self-sustaining microfinance institutions owned and governed by VisionFund, World Vision's microfinance subsidiary. However, after nearly a decade of operations, it is timely to reflect on the applicability of the VisionFund-owned and governed microfinance institution model for all circumstances. The experience of World Vision Thailand offers a good example of why the standard model may not always be applicable.

▼ *The Supanimit Cha-uat Pattana Agricultural Cooperatives provide members with financial services, access to low-cost agricultural inputs, as well as marketing and business services.*

Microfinance institutions are one of the key providers of financial services – savings, credit, insurance and money transfers – for people living in poverty. To be self-sustaining, these institutions are set up as cost-recovery organisations with sound ownership and governance structures to ensure trustworthiness. Sound ownership and governance structures are also required to access large pools of development funds. They are not only required to meet fiduciary arrangements but also to ensure accountability. However, questions regarding client participation in the governance and ownership of microfinance institutions are being raised by a number of development practitioners and participating communities.

In 2005, World Vision International launched VisionFund, a wholly-owned microfinance subsidiary, as a new approach to promote the sustainability of the organisation's economic development initiatives. In keeping with the microfinance industry's commercialisation model, VisionFund International established a global standard that VisionFund microfinance institutions would be centrally governed, self-sustaining organisations with similar methodologies.

The logic to this approach was that standardisation would enable VisionFund to raise much-needed capital from non-traditional funding sources such as commercial lenders. More importantly, the establishment of global standards would serve as a basis for common performance review.

VisionFund's establishment was driven in part by the desire to establish a facility that enabled poor communities to access loans, savings, insurance and money transfer services not commonly available to them. VisionFund's microfinance institutions were also structured for cost-recovery that would, in turn, lead to greater sustainability. In addition, VisionFund would provide clients with training and mentoring so that they could maximise their access to the financial services. These services would come in a package that was uniform in standards and methodology throughout the world. Despite the apparent attractiveness of this approach, some have questioned whether there are alternative approaches to ownership, governance and sustainability beyond the VisionFund model.

The economic conditions and opportunities in developing countries vary greatly and this raises the question as to whether a standardised and uniform approach to microfinance services matches all the contextual realities. For example, some countries already have community-owned and governed microfinance providers. The situation in Thailand provides a case study in understanding how some of these issues have played out.

THE WORLD VISION THAILAND MODEL

In Thailand, World Vision's microfinance model differs from those in other national offices; it is a program rather than a separate microfinance institution. It provides grants, loans and technical services to cooperatives and savings and solidarity groups instead of directly to individual clients and builds on the successes of past community development interventions. In the mid-1990s, World Vision Thailand began establishing integrated farming activities as a model for developing sustainable livelihoods in the majority of its Area Development Programs (ADPs). This model began as a pilot in an AusAID-funded project and the initial community response was promising as evidenced by the rapid growth in community participation.

Despite the apparent success of this model, it wasn't enough to take farmers beyond subsistence agricultural production for localised markets; they needed capital to expand. World Vision Thailand formed savings groups to meet this need. These groups allowed poor farmers to aggregate their meagre savings which in turn provided them with interest and an opportunity to borrow from their group savings. The level of business activity generated by this new capital was small, but the initiative was owned by the farmers, used local resources and supported local markets. What was more important, it enabled the farmers to see beyond their local markets.

COMMUNITY-OWNED AND MANAGED ENTERPRISES

The next step was to establish agricultural cooperatives, a more formal organisation than a savings group that had clear ownership and governance structures. Through the co-ops, farmers could save more, take out bigger loans and consequently invest more in their businesses. This was largely because the interest rates for deposits were higher, rates for loans were lower and farmers were paid dividends based on their shares in the co-ops and on their level of patronage. They could also access low-cost agricultural inputs, agricultural equipment, animal feed and consumer goods on credit. The marketing services provided by the co-ops enabled farmers to sell their produce in greater volume and through different outlets. And equally important, the co-ops ploughed profits back into the community. These co-ops were jointly owned and governed by the farmers, thus ensuring they had a voice in influencing the design and delivery of co-op financial, purchasing, marketing and business development services. In addition, national and international standards that regulated the co-ops' conduct and their education and training systems served to protect co-op members.

Towards the end of the 1990s, a confluence of three critical factors in the national environment confirmed World Vision Thailand's promotion of savings and solidarity groups and cooperatives. These factors were the 1997 economic crisis, the King of Thailand's push for "sufficiency economy" and the Thai Government's policy of "people-centred development". Together they led to a shift in the nation's economic development paradigm from growth-based to community-based

DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

People living in poverty access financial and non-financial services from a wide spectrum of service providers. They range from informal to formal, with varying levels of sophistication in terms of governance, organisational structure, ownership and degree of supervision by governments. The informal types are usually not supervised by a government entity. Privately-owned informal providers include money lenders, savings collectors, pawnbrokers and traders, while group-owned informal providers include rotating savings and credit associations, accumulated savings and credit associations and self-help groups. Private and public banks are formal providers, with highly sophisticated governance and ownership structures, and they are regulated by central banks.

Specialised microfinance institutions and formal member-based financial organisations form the middle ground. These are usually supervised by a government entity, such as the Cooperatives Promotion Department in Thailand. Microfinance institutions are usually set up and owned by non-government organisations and/or private investors and rely on donations, government grants, commercial borrowings and private investments for their funds. Formal member-based financial organisations, such as credit unions or savings and credit cooperatives, are set up and owned by members. They usually rely on savings deposited by members for their funds.

World Vision established VisionFund International, a wholly-owned microfinance subsidiary, to support the sustainability of economic development initiatives. By the end of September 2010, 41 microfinance institutions had been established, lending US$341 million to over 638,000 clients (68 percent women), supporting over a million jobs and positively impacting the lives of over two million children.

▶ *Water bottling is one of several enterprises initiated by solidarity groups who are members of the Supanimit Cha-uat Pattana Agricultural Cooperatives.*

approaches to achieve sustainable development. World Vision Thailand thus had the opportunity to tap into resources and expertise to support the growth of co-ops and savings groups in its ADPs. As a number of ADPs were in the process of closing at this time, these developments would play a decisive role in supporting community self-reliance as the co-ops offered an array of programs and services.

It has been promising to see the evolution of business activity in the communities as a result of the development of co-ops and savings groups. Many communities who started out producing for local consumption have moved on to production for local markets and are now looking at commercial markets. In addition, community enterprises such as rice mills and organic fertiliser factories have emerged to reduce production costs and add value to the community's products. In line with the principle of self-reliant communities, the running and development of these community enterprises are primarily reliant on their members' savings and fundraising activities.

These community-owned enterprises have proved to be both popular and effective. Currently, World Vision Thailand supports 52 agricultural cooperatives and 298 savings groups in 73 ADPs, providing more than 28,000 members (63 percent women) with reliable access to high-return savings and low-cost credit. Some of these co-ops are now producing and marketing for local and export markets; their products include

organically-grown rice, vegetables, fresh and dried fruits (such as longans and coffee), and organically-raised pigs and chickens. In the process, World Vision has also laid the groundwork for establishing a niche in the organic farming movement.

Additionally, these community-owned enterprises have begun to foster greater ownership of local development initiatives. For example, all of World Vision Thailand's partner co-ops and savings groups now set aside at least 10 percent of their profits for community development, scholarships for local children and leadership and life-skills training for young people in the community.

The convenience, and access to high-return savings, low-cost loans and low-cost agricultural inputs provided by the community-based savings and credit structures are rated highly by the majority of their members. For example, one of the co-ops charges a loan repayment interest rate of nine percent per annum, compared to 11-12 percent charged by other credit providers. This co-op also offers 20-day credit for individual purchases and 30-day credit for group purchases of agricultural inputs and consumer goods.

Although most members are happy with the services their co-ops provide, some do not always agree with the processes. Some co-ops do not provide enough service locations to cater for members spread across a wide geographical area. In other co-ops, some members feel that not enough

information flows between members and the co-op board, indicating a need to set up a clearer communications strategy. Members have made recommendations to improve processes. These include sorting borrowers based on credit history and charging lower interest rates for the best borrowers, and providing clearer criteria for loan approvals and shorter turn-around times on loan applications.

PARTNERING WITH LOCAL ORGANISATIONS FOR NEEDED EXPERTISE

One key obstacle for World Vision Thailand was that it lacked in-house capability to meet some of the training, technical support and mentoring requirements for the development of savings and solidarity groups and co-ops. With a history of partnering with government and academic organisations, World Vision sought to partner with the local branches of Thailand's Cooperative Promotions Department for training, technical and mentoring support requirements, including auditing.

At the same time, World Vision expanded its partnerships with local government agencies, academic institutions and NGOs, particularly for technical support on the development of cooperative business enterprises. For example, the Thai Agriculture Department conducted training and provided technical support on livestock and crop production. Local academic institutions such as Chiang Mai University and Ramkamhang University provided valuable research on improving the quality of soil, livestock, crops and handicrafts. Local and international NGOs, such as the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement, provided technical support for market development and access.

These partnerships are proving highly beneficial to the co-ops, enabling them to offer not just financial services, such as savings, credit and insurance, but non-financial services as well, such as purchasing, marketing and business development. For example, one agricultural co-op, through its partnership with a local university, is able to offer the chance for 200 students per year to study in the co-op as part of their degree in community development. Other co-ops and savings groups have contributed to the establishment of community sports and meeting facilities.

THE WAY FORWARD

When World Vision International decided to establish a global microfinance network, World Vision Thailand was hesitant to

adopt its preferred "one-size-fits-all" model of independent microfinance institutions and methodologies. For one, it had already formed local savings and solidarity groups and co-ops that were successful and gaining momentum. Secondly, and more importantly, the Thai Government's model of providing financial assistance made the introduction of a microfinance institution redundant. The Thai model includes extensive grants and low-cost loans for co-ops, savings and solidarity groups to kick-start group enterprises. There is little more that an independent microfinance institution could offer. This serves as a timely reminder of the need to promote a diversity of sustainable approaches that fit the contextual realities of partner communities.

However, the challenge remaining for World Vision Thailand is how to harness the opportunities that co-ops, savings and solidarity groups offer for building capacity in struggling communities. There is still a long way to go to strengthen and consolidate the gains achieved so far in their pursuit of a model of sustainable economic and community-based development. Organisational development and market access need to be reinforced to ensure that the co-ops, savings and solidarity groups continue to be ongoing concerns. World Vision Thailand also needs to provide credible evidence of long-term positive impact. An October 2010 preliminary study of two agricultural co-ops that examined issues including inclusion, responsiveness, success factors, sustainability and integration is a positive step in this direction.

PROJECT DETAILS

Total funds remitted from Australia to support cooperatives in Thailand: (FY2006-10) US$302,567

▼ *Kiosks selling basic household supplies are a common enterprise in local communities. Microfinance can assist poor families to start or expand such businesses.*

"Building is viewed as process, not only product. The process is a dance of constant negotiations. At the end, the trace of the dance is seen in the building. In this process the architect leads a complex collaboration that folds culture, place and people into a new relationship with each other, effecting transformation." – Gregory Burgess, Multiplicity of the Whole

The space between

The dance of a Country Program Coordinator in the field

▶ **STUART THOMSON**

Engaging in development work attracts a variety of metaphors. Development workers, together with community and partners, are the architects of community change. We build foundations, frameworks and structures out of our human successes and failures. And as development professionals and institutions we commonly engage through the medium of projects and programs. In other words there's often a complex dance of joint interventions that aim at both saving lives whilst working to build and strengthen robust systems and structures. As co-contributors or architects for change we must therefore be continually mindful of the role we play in building a collective community future. My role and the role explored in this article is that of a Country Program Coordinator (CPC) for World Vision Australia. This article explores the implications for my role of a three-month secondment to World Vision Kenya, as opposed to the regular fleeting monitoring visit normally undertaken by CPCs.

The motivation for engaging in development work and especially in travelling to contexts and countries far from what we are used to raises important issues. Many ask: "What am I running from?" Some may ask, as in Helen Fielding's satirical novel about aid workers, *Cause Celeb*, "am I: (a) Missionary? (b) Mercenary? (c) Misfit? (d) Broken heart?" However, I asked a very simple question of myself: "Do I truly believe that this secondment will lead to any real benefit for World Vision Kenya and the communities with which we work?" Careful consideration of this question resulted in the realisation that whilst there was a large potential to do good, there was potential for the opposite. However, just like Gregory Burgess, I believed I should not see the failure in the product of this secondment before it had begun. Rather, that I should see it as a constant process that requires great awareness in a time of folding culture, place and people.

As I prepared for my trip the question at the forefront of my mind was: "During my time in Kenya, where will my touch points be?" Or as Burgess would ask: "Who will I be dancing with?" As a CPC for Kenya sitting at my desk in Melbourne, the answer was relatively obvious: I dance with my field office counterpart in Kenya. It is clear; it is defined. During shorter

field visits my role is also usually relatively clear. However, for a three-month field trip the lines became somewhat blurred. In Kenya, would I be responsible for the dance with the community and development partners as well?

I found some solace when answering this question by reflecting on Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, a fundamental concept of quantum physics. It states that it is only possible to understand the position or the motion of an object, not both at the same time. Therefore, I needed to consider a second question relating to process and direction: "When I meet my partner, what kind of dance should we do?" Previous experience shows that some dances are slow and close, some are fast and further apart, some are rhythmic and others are not. To be successful, as in Burgess' definition of building, it is essential that both parties understand what dance they're dancing, and are happy with its undertakings and potential results. The result otherwise may be a lot of bruised toes.

The first step therefore was for World Vision Australia and World Vision Kenya to understand and agree upon what form the extended trip would take. This took some time. During a humanitarian emergency, staff are sent to the field immediately. However for

development programming the process isn't as urgent or as smooth. Discussion papers, business cases and terms of reference were developed and lengthy meetings were held. Finally a decision in principle was reached between the two parties.

The second step was to determine the specific purpose of this trip. Generally, field trips are undertaken for two main reasons. The first is to gain experience of a context and build relationships or knowledge. The second is when a specific task is identified, requiring a specific skill set. As I had worked and lived extensively in east Africa previously, this trip could not be justified as a need to gain experience. The World Vision Kenya leadership team had identified advocacy as a specific capacity gap. This need matched my skill set.

Once these first two questions were resolved, the third and perhaps most important question I posed to myself was: "During this dance, what is the space between myself and my partners to be filled with?" As Burgess may ask, "what is the collaboration of culture, place and people that may affect transformation?" The answer to that question would ultimately emerge from the successes and failures of my extended trip to Kenya.

CAPACITY ALIGNMENT, NOT BUILDING

In addressing capacity issues, prior knowledge of the staff and capacity at World Vision Kenya helped me identify challenges that could be addressed. After working with this field office for three years, I knew the staff had significant expertise in areas such as health, WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) and HIV and AIDS. However, they sometimes faced challenges in strategically aligning this expertise. In development work there is often a false presumption that people need to be "taught things". The ideologue preaches, the misfit teaches the next big thing. However individuals and communities in the field are often very aware of their situation and equipped with a plethora of tools to address it. What is often needed is an external voice, not to add to the burden of knowledge and tools, leading to even greater complexity, but to help clean up and simplify the complexity that is already there. This fundamental principle underpinned my visit to Kenya.

TRANSCENDING POWER AND FINDING COMMON GROUND

My position as a CPC and knowledge of the culture provide me with the opportunity and confidence to transcend many levels of power during field visits. At one time I may be talking candidly with a World Vision national

director and the next moment joking with a field worker. I am happy to air my views to both, unlike many of my World Vision Kenya colleagues. In Kenyan culture it is not as easy to voice your views to managers and superiors as it is in Australia, with our largely egalitarian society. And as a CPC, I come to World Vision Kenya with resources and funding; well at least access to potential funding. This opens doors to power at various levels.

CPCs can sometimes overlook the power dynamics at play and this can result in a false sense of importance, which is dangerous. It is dangerous because it is coupled with poor awareness. An example of this may be directing field staff to conduct certain activities that are not culturally appropriate or developmentally sound. This is often seen as the missionary style of development that comes with good intentions but is often misdirected. The opposite may also be true for the CPC in choosing to be culturally relative, never questioning or challenging practices in the field. I have found myself "hopping" between the two, having a lot to say and being direct on one topic and then having nothing to say on another. To find that middle ground when operating as a CPC in the field, in knowing what to say and when to say it, is a challenging and vital step in being an effective development practitioner.

The power that CPCs (indirectly) wield, together with our cultural background and baggage, often make it difficult to find common ground with our field counterparts. Breaking down the walls to find common ground and build trust is an essential

▼ During his field placement, Stuart was able to spend time with children in Kenya's Wema community and hear directly from them about what their lives are really like.

component of our work. I have found that the most successful approach is just spending time with field staff to build relationships. Learning the local language, socialising, sharing food and experiences together go a long way in disarming restrictive power dynamics. By seeing the human in each other we may break through to a place where knowledge and ideas are shared openly and honestly. Close relationships, combined with greater awareness and patience, allow the CPC a unique opportunity to affect positive change.

KNOWING YOUR SPACE

Often good intentions, combined with field need, lead the CPC to do work during an extended visit that fills a gap in capacity, but that also leaves a gap when he or she is gone. During my three months in Kenya there was pressure to step in to spaces and do work that was the responsibility of permanent field staff. This had the potential to undermine staff confidence and compromise the purposes of the secondment. Being aware of what can be done in a reasonable timeframe and facilitating change during time in the field are important. Otherwise, despite good intentions, doing work for field staff may result in more damage than good once the visit is over.

Being intentional in using the capacity and status that come with the CPC role may result in strategic activities with high potential for sustainable and positive outcomes. For example, I attended meetings with development partners such as AusAID so that they saw the full spectrum of World Vision's involvement in Kenya. Such meetings also enabled me to draw connections between AusAID policy and practice in Canberra with what was actually happening in the field. It may also be useful for CPCs to support field staff in reinforcing established messages; these might be an emphasis on quality rather than just compliance or what agreed strategic sectors of activity might be. However, the CPC should be aware of creating additional expectations amongst communities or making false promises that field staff will need to deal with once the visit ends.

One insight I gained related to the tension between community needs, and organisational agenda and development thinking. The dance between longer term development thinking and the direct needs of community members and households must be clearly articulated and linked to reaching common outcomes.

This tension is exacerbated when the field office does not have a clearly articulated and operationalised strategy. In these cases the pressure placed on the field office by the CPC and donors to start new initiatives may result in a chaotic development process. When sitting in a field office for an extended

period, the CPC can be tempted to engage in the field's strategy processes and the field office can be tempted to involve the CPC to ensure strategy is aligned with program implementation. Therefore, it is not only important for overseas staff and field staff to understand their space, it is also vital that fundraising offices and donors understand their space as well.

In development it is said that we shouldn't start where we are at but where the community is at; that we need to meet the community not only on common ground through building relationships but at a time when the community is open and ready for change. It is important for CPCs to recognise engagement opportunities, such as during project assessment, design and evaluation phases, when field staff and the community are ready for new ideas and inputs. This was also true for my time in the World Vision Kenya office. World Vision Kenya had been going through a restructure during 2009 and into 2010 and advocacy was a relatively new area of activity for them. My trip therefore was an opportunity to do two things. First, it allowed me to engage in the structural reform processes that were taking place, and second it provided me with an opportunity to work with the Kenyan staff to integrate advocacy into the organisation's practices and processes. To do this it was important to provide examples of what such integration might look like for projects and programs. World Vision International's Child Health Now campaign provided a workable and focused model.

A NEW RELATIONSHIP

As I discovered in Kenya, the process of folding culture, place and people together is deeply rooted in the culture and position that a CPC holds. Disarming the power dynamics that exist in relationships between CPCs and field staff is a step that must be taken whether on a short or long-term assignment. A longer assignment, however, can cloud these relationships because there can be an expectation that the CPC will fill gaps in the field office structure. But this can be avoided by establishing clear terms of reference and agreement on outcomes. Meeting field staff where they are and offering an external perspective can be immensely powerful and mutually rewarding. However, it is the depth of insights that a longer term assignment can produce that creates opportunities for the CPC to make a greater contribution to the direction and alignment of office strategies, whether this is alignment of the bilateral strategy or the international partnership strategy. This is ultimately what we hope will lead to greater transformation for the poor and vulnerable in the communities where we work.

Taking the count in real time

The power of mobile phones

▶ **GERARD FINNIGAN AND ANUEJA GOPALAKRISHNAN**

There is no escaping the intricacy required to measure child malnutrition. By its very nature, the process demands precision and care. Yet it's not the process of measuring the height, weight or mid-upper-arm circumference of fragile children that represents the greatest challenge in addressing child malnutrition, but the time it takes us to respond to their needs.

New communication technologies, such as mobile phones, have the capacity to increase the speed and volume of information transfer, allowing organisations to improve the efficiency with which they respond to humanitarian need. Given the growth in mobile phone usage in developing countries, creating applications for these phones has, in theory, the potential to radically shorten our response time in identifying and reaching the most fragile children.

Conceptually, up-scaling technology that is used successfully and widely in developed nations has the potential to assist developing countries along a similar development path. However, as this case study reveals, while new technologies may work in countries with well established and maintained infrastructure, successfully implementing these advanced applications in less developed contexts can be a different matter. Problems with technology are not limited to remote locations, nor are technological issues the most significant.

▼ *The aim of transmitting data by mobile phone is to make it available for analysis in near real time.*

COLLECTING DATA

Child malnutrition rates in Cambodia are among the highest in Southeast Asia, with an estimated 36 percent of children under five years underweight and 46 percent stunted from chronic under-nutrition. While these national figures are startling in themselves, they often hide the variance in magnitude and severity of child malnutrition in communities of the same town, across districts and between regions. The only way to measure the extent of under-nutrition in any community and hence understand the degree of urgency for these children is to survey the community, and therein lies the challenge.

Data collection through surveys is expensive and time consuming. Governments typically

use census and demographic health surveys to collect this information in cycles of between five and twenty years. NGOs also undertake their own data collection exercises, on smaller scales, depending on the nature and purpose of their programs. In most developing contexts, paper-based nutrition surveys are used, which employ large teams of enumerators that travel from household to household collecting and recording data. The data is usually copied from the paper format and entered into an electronic database, analysed and then reported. This process is costly, resource intensive and prone to data error. But the greatest problem with the methodology is time. For every day a child remains severely malnourished, he or she is one day closer to the end of their life. These surveys can take a long time, from start to end, and it's subsequently a long time before a nutrition intervention reaches the community.

A STRATEGIC RESPONSE

A member of World Vision Australia's health team had long envisaged the potential advantages of using a near real time data surveillance system for nutrition programming. However, operationalising such a system required a collaborative effort involving multiple stakeholders. The health team member met with health advisors from World Vision International in Washington, who appreciated the technology's potential and recommended Cambodia as a possible pilot setting. This was because World Vision Cambodia was about to conduct a nutritional baseline assessment and the office had well established technical capacity in health. While a collaborative World Vision team was assembled to implement the pilot, a team with the capacity to program a required software solution was still needed.

In a fortunate coincidence, World Vision Australia had previously worked with RMIT University on investigating and developing potential mapping solutions to better inform agricultural programming.

Subsequently, RMIT University formed a relationship with IBM Australia to provide technical mentoring for a group of RMIT Masters students in software architecture. Through a series of somewhat random connections this relationship was identified by World Vision Australia's health team and leveraged to provide the software solution.

The challenge was to make the system easy to use for the local Cambodian community. Also, it could not be dependent on software

or operating systems that imposed any financial, legal or decision-making constraints on the user.

Four fundamental components were needed. Firstly, a mobile phone interface was needed to allow survey data to be collected on the phone and transferred over the internet to a database in real time. This would allow child measurements captured on a mobile phone to be received from the village or household by an online database for collation and analysis. Secondly, a mobile phone had to be found with the capacity to collect information and send it to an internet site. The phone needed to be able to run the newly created software (Java compliant), be compliant with Global Positioning System (GPS) capacity, able to read and write the Khmer script (the Cambodian national language), and also be easy to use. Thirdly, a software application was needed to receive the information from the mobile phone in the field, and finally, a database was required to store the information in a meaningful format once received.

The IT program approach created by the IBM/RMIT team was based on mapping systems and as such was suitably called "SMAP". The child nutrition data collected from each household had geographical coordinates assigned by the GPS software on the mobile phone. This information

▼ *Traditionally, collecting data on nutrition has involved teams of enumerators travelling from household to household and recording information on paper-based surveys.*

▲ Financial constraints, as well as hardware and software issues, emerged as key challenges during the pilot of the "SMAP" mobile data collection system in Cambodia.

was then transmitted to a database using the local GSM (Global System for Mobile Communications) mobile phone network in Cambodia. Because the data was transmitted at the same time it was collected, it was available to the survey coordinator in near real time for analysis. The database capturing the child nutrition information was hosted on the Open Street Maps (OSM) platform, thus the data could be analysed using any program by other OSM users or community members without cost or impost.

CHALLENGES

The first challenge was the lack of budgetary allocation. While NGOs have at times had small budgetary allocations for innovative activities, there was no budget allocated for this initiative. Both IBM Australia and RMIT offered their services free of charge, which made the project feasible. Telstra provided a SIM card free of charge for Australian testing purposes. Despite numerous attempts, we were unsuccessful in leveraging mobile phones free of charge/rent for the purpose of testing during the pilot.

The second challenge was the mobile phone. While several lower grade Nokia phone models were available with Khmer script, the higher grade N95 smart phone was not. Despite numerous requests to the manufacturer, they could not provide a Khmer script to enable the N95 to be used

by local people to read and complete the survey on the phone in their local language. This barrier did not deter the RMIT team; they recreated an electronic version of Khmer script by using symbols from word processing tools to match every symbol in the script. This task was difficult enough but further complicated by the intricacy of the Khmer language and its grammatical structure.

While this solution was theoretically strong, it created an unforeseen problem. When the Khmer script software was simultaneously used in conjunction with the SMAP software, the phones initially struggled to execute the functions of the SMAP software.

The third challenge was the cost of using mobile phones. The pilot was conducted during a baseline assessment for a nutrition survey in Cambodia's Battambang District. After the standard survey training sessions, the team of enumerators were divided into 18 pairs, three of which were chosen to use the Nokia N95 model phones with SMAP software. As this was a pilot study, only three phones were used due to the cost of each hand unit, approximately US$550 each. Despite the cost, the N95 was widely available in Cambodia. As one member of each pair of enumerators used the mobile phone to record the data, the other collected data using the paper survey.

There were also difficulties with the data transmission. Despite the GSM network

having the necessary band-width, the data files failed to transmit. Many data files that did transmit did so following several failed attempts. However, the phones demonstrated a higher data transmission success rate when using the local hotel's wireless network to establish an internet link compared to the field-based GSM connection. The Cambodian pilot was the first time the SMAP software was tested in a developing country. The software had previously been successfully tested for data capture and transmission around Melbourne. In Battambang, GSM coverage was widely available with three telecommunication providers delivering the service at a locally accessible price. Full technical support from Nokia was also easily accessible in Battambang, yet the data transfer difficulties remained.

Of the 219 surveys collected and transmitted using the phones, only 123 successfully landed in the remote server; 96 surveys were lost in transmission and never found. However, all 219 surveys were identified by the SMAP software as having been successfully transmitted from the phones. Despite numerous attempts to retrieve the lost data, it was never located. Also, when checking the survey data on the server, many of the surveys were repeated transmissions. A significant review was required to achieve a clean data set.

Another important consideration was data confidentiality. For this pilot, the information was only readable and accessible by a handful of people involved in implementing the nutrition survey. Standard security password access was used to protect this information and all data was kept and stored by the World Vision Cambodia National Office. However, there is potential for this information to be used in the future for the benefit of the participating community. For example, a second phase pilot could involve auto analysis of the nutrition data to produce pictures, graphs and descriptions of the prevalence of age-specific malnutrition rates and severity. This powerful information could be used to help community members identify the prevalence of child malnutrition in their community and importantly how this compared with other places.

SOME FINAL OBSERVATIONS

Mobile phone penetration in developing countries had already reached an estimated 57 per 100 inhabitants by the end of 2009 and there are numerous initiatives involving mobile phone-centred health technologies. Even if the technical issues in using the mobile phone technology reduce the time to collect nutritional data in surveys, this will not resolve all the issues.

The SMAP software has been significantly reviewed, revised and amended since the Cambodian pilot and it has been re-tested in four other field settings with significant progress in data capture and software development on each occasion. Software testing is critical for developing and advancing programs; however, it is also costly. Subsequent field tests have revealed that despite all parameters being the same, different countries have different limitations.

While there are costs associated with the development, trial and establishment of all new technologies, a critical element of this pilot was to investigate the feasibility of providing a data capture and transfer system with minimal cost to the potential consumer in the developing context. Money can be saved by procuring cheaper phones, but functionality (eg. GPS capacity, Java compliance, local script capability) cannot be compromised, otherwise the system will not work.

Similarly, there are considerations around network costs, phone repair, identifying software to read and analyse data, funding the licences, maintaining software and hardware, and the possible use of patches to resolve issues.

There is also the security and reliability of the server to consider, not to mention the security concerns relating to data transfer. If sensitive data concerning the age, sex and location of children was not securely stored and protected, there could be concerning ramifications.

The challenge is to develop and refine these systems without creating huge burdens on the poorest communities or imposing hidden constraints or operational costs. As this trial identified, technology that operates without fault in countries with well established infrastructure can be less reliable in different contexts. While it is easy to assume that solutions that work in developed nations can be adopted as cookie cutter approaches in developing world contexts to produce similar outcomes, the reality is not always the case.

Managing the operations of a system of this nature across many countries would also create considerable administrative costs. It raises the question as to whether an NGO like World Vision should be investing in this technology when many other international agencies (eg. United Nations health agencies) are pursuing similar technologies.

POSTSCRIPT

Testing of this technology has progressed significantly from the initial steps described in this case study. New approaches have been taken using open source software and that has resolved many of the technical problems. Ironically, the problems associated with data transmission to the server were caused by a "bug" in programming language and this has since been resolved.

There are still limitations relating to variations in mobile network coverage, but they will increasingly be reduced as mobile phone usage increases. Participants in a recent trial completed all tasks successfully, uploading a range of data on nutrition as well as information about sponsored children in the community. It is anticipated that the SMAP system will be fully operational in the first half of 2011.

Accessing carbon markets

Getting a stove under the pot - and being rewarded for doing so

▶ **ANDREW BINNS**

The need to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change is placing increasing pressure on developing countries to reduce emissions. Under the Kyoto Protocol there are mechanisms by which developed countries can fund "carbon credits" to "offset" their emissions. To be rewarded financially, projects must comply with the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) framework. Fuel-efficient stoves are an example of a small-scale CDM approach where the amount of carbon "saved" by the project through reduced use of fuel wood is assessed and credits issued for each tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent.

In the past, World Vision's approach has been to fully subsidise the cost of a product such as stoves, due to the degree of poverty in the communities. However, a market-based approach (currently involving a subsidy for the communities) is now much preferred. Rather than handing out stoves to households, stove units are to be sold as items of value that stimulate a sense of ownership, as well as productivity where locally manufactured units are sold. Any imported units are priced to ensure the local market remains competitive and technology transfer is encouraged.

The theory behind this was that if a project was to gain access to the carbon market, then it would ensure that pricing of the stoves would be affordable to the communities. A project was established with a two-pronged approach that focused on the cooking culture and community education needs of households (ensuring stoves are purchased and used), and the financial and legal aspects of tapping into carbon markets (ensuring that carbon credits, and hence funds, are generated to pay for the project).

The case for fuel-efficient stoves is strong. In most societies, women are in charge of cooking, spending between three and seven hours per day near the stove, depending on the demands of the local cuisine. According to the World Health Organization[1], 59 percent of all indoor air pollution related deaths are female. There is also a strong risk to young children who spend a large proportion of their time close to their mother, breathing in smoke from cooking fires during the early developing years. In addition to the health burden, there are also livelihood and environmental consequences to the use of open fires.

The use of improved fuel-efficient stoves can reduce the production of smoke and harmful gasses within households, reduce the use of biomass by up to 60 percent (wood, crop waste, dung etc), reduce cooking cycle times, and create significant household safety and labour benefits. The use of biomass for daily fuel consumption in developing countries accounts for up to 90 percent of all energy use and the majority of this is from non-renewable sources.[2]

[1] World Health Organization: http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs292/en

[2] Household Energy Network (HEN): http://www.hedon.info/CE:BasicsAboutCookingEnergy

These benefits and the use of stoves are not new, with NGOs and national governments, including those of India and China, having attempted to distribute more efficient stoves on a large scale. These projects however have generally not been very successful, due to ill-targeted government subsidies or a lack of cultural fit with regard to the stoves distributed. World Vision has also undertaken several small-scale projects helping to distribute stoves to households; however the relatively high price of stoves, with some costing up to US$40, put them out of reach of the majority of communities served by World Vision.

STOVE DISTRIBUTION – WILL COMMUNITY MEMBERS PAY FOR A STOVE?

As a registered charity in Ethiopia, World Vision Ethiopia is not able to collect revenue from the communities that it serves. Hence initial thoughts on the distribution and purchase of stoves by community members were focused on linking stove users directly to stove manufacturers. There were several barriers to this method. Manufacturers required customers to pay the full price for the stove upfront and the majority of community members could not afford this. The carbon revenue does not begin to flow until after the stoves have been used for 6-12 months, and so this could not be used immediately as a means to help individuals purchase a stove. Microfinance institutions were approached as a possible avenue for community members to gain access to money to purchase stoves and pay the institution back in instalments; however they were unwilling to lend directly to a large number of individuals, especially considering that a stove is not an income generating asset in its own right. Customers would also be paying interest on any microfinance loan, increasing the end price of a stove.

STOVE DISTRIBUTION – UTILISING WOMEN'S COOPERATIVES

A possible solution was using women's cooperatives. Women's cooperatives have been established as training and distribution points for stoves within communities, where members can purchase units over a period of time, making monthly payments rather than larger, one-off payments that would otherwise prove unaffordable. Cooperatives are funded through membership fees and from the purchase of stoves by each member. They can utilise the funds generated for economic development activities, as well as acting as distribution

points for other products and/or services, such as solar lights or health and hygiene products. Not only does carbon revenue from reduced stove emissions support more affordable pricing and pollution mitigation, but it could also help the cooperatives initiate other development activities and to become self-sustaining.

LOCAL VS. IMPORTED STOVES

Before commencing a project that utilises energy-efficient technologies, it is important to ensure that the technologies being distributed are effective. The actual energy savings generated by improved stoves are often modest compared to expectations or manufacturer guarantees because stoves are traditionally tested under lab conditions. In order to operate with maximum efficiency, stoves require fuel that is dry and chopped into small pieces, pot skirts or similar insulating mechanisms to prevent heat loss, and for users to make optimal choices about when to add more fuel to their stove.

The project team has also tried to ensure that the stoves being sold to communities are sturdy and meet Ethiopian cooking needs and conditions. Three different types of stoves are being trialled, a locally produced "Tikikil" stove, along with two stoves imported from China ("StoveTec" and "Envirofit"). This raises the question: How do we balance the needs of supporting local businesses with the need to provide communities with the best possible

PROGRAMMING CONTEXT

World Vision considers climate change to be a critical issue that must be addressed across all of our development and advocacy work. From addressing the causes through to assisting those suffering from the effects, World Vision is addressing climate change-exacerbated poverty in many ways.

World Vision Ethiopia and World Vision Australia are the pioneers of three carbon-based climate change mitigation projects in Ethiopia which accelerate sustainable development through environmental conservation and poverty reduction. The aim of the energy-efficient stoves project pilot phase is to trial the dissemination of stoves in three rural World Vision Area Development Programs as a means of tackling the effects of climate change while also increasing the health and wellbeing of families.

▼ *Traditional cooking methods and the smoke they generate expose women and children in particular to respiratory and other health problems.*

DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Like many developing countries, Ethiopia is highly vulnerable to climate change. However its contribution to global warming is negligible both in terms of total emissions volumes and on a per capita basis. The country is highly prone to droughts, famine and floods, with land being degraded through loss of vegetation and deforestation due to increased demand for pasture and wood for cooking. This has adversely affected the livelihoods of families, especially in rural and peri-urban areas. The traditional use of biomass for cooking is very inefficient (using less than 20 percent of the energy potential), but unfortunately few alternative energy sources are available for household use. Biomass can be burned without further processing, is usually locally available and affordable. It accounts for almost 96 percent of Ethiopia's total energy consumption, with petroleum at 3.3 percent and electricity at 0.4 percent (REEEP)[3] making up the rest.

Additionally, women and their children face health hazards due to indoor air pollution caused by the smoke of open fires; the open fire itself is also a risk causing accidents, burns and household fires. A 2002 United Nations report estimated that as many as 4,000 people die each day (1.5 million per year)[4] from respiratory diseases due to poor air quality, more than those who die from malaria. The report also found that over half of those who died were children. Ethiopia records the world's fifth highest number of deaths due to indoor air pollution (56,700 per year)[5] and the fourth highest number of deaths due to clinical pneumonia (more than China).[6]

PROJECT DETAILS

Project name: Energy-Efficient Stoves Project Assessment

Project start date: October 2009

Project end date: 30 September 2011

Funding source: Chid Sponsorship Reserve funds

Total funds remitted from Australia: US$316,000

product (from both a health and carbon revenue perspective)?

All three stoves work along the same main principles. They are all "rocket stoves" (see Snap-shot: Rocket stoves), however are made from different materials and hence have different life expectancies. Although the Tikikil stove clearly has the most local economic development impact of all three stoves, it is produced by hand and made of the lowest quality material (iron and clay). Producers are also unable to provide any certainty on the lifetime of the stove (estimates range from one to five years). This is an important aspect of the project, as a stove will only produce carbon credits when it is operational. If the stove lasts for two years, it will need to be replaced several times during the seven-year life of the carbon project. The StoveTec stove, while made of similar material to the Tikikil stove, is manufactured to a higher standard and hence may only need to be replaced once during the project. The Envirofit stove is sold with a five-year warranty, meaning that it may never need to be replaced during the life of the project. Each stove also comes with some different features. The Tikikil stove has an attached pot skirt, while the two imported models have pot skirts that can be detached. While a detachable pot skirt allows pots of all sizes to be used on the stove, not using the pot skirt reduces the carbon savings generated by the stove. The imported stoves are also heavily taxed by the Ethiopian Government, almost doubling their price. All of these factors, along with feedback from community members, stove users and producers, will be used in determining which stove is the most appropriate for the project to disseminate, at scale.

COOKING CULTURE – WILL THE STOVES BE USED?

One of the more difficult aspects of the project is ensuring that those who purchase a stove actually use it. Despite all of the positive benefits to utilising improved stoves, a three-stone open fire is still the most flexible option for householders. It can accommodate pots of any size; it can be used for baking, boiling, frying and roasting, as well as being able to cook the traditional Ethiopian flat bread "injera". The improved stoves can only accommodate up to 70 percent of cooking needs within households (depending on how much injera and roasting is undertaken within individual households, it can be as little as 30 percent), thus encouraging households to retain the open fire along with the improved stove.

The improved stove is also seen by some households as a luxury item, only to be used on special occasions or when cooking for guests. Several householders commented that they were very proud to have an improved stove. They used it in their main living area only (away from the kitchen) because it produced very little smoke and hence did not blacken the surfaces of the room, used very little wood (compared to the open fire), and cooked food or boiled coffee very quickly. They cleaned the stove thoroughly after every use, to ensure that it remained looking new. Because of this however, the stove in these households was used for only a small number of cooking needs, reducing both the development outcomes (improved health of users) of the project and the ability to generate carbon credits.

In order to overcome this, the project team is looking to utilise the women's cooperatives as a place to train and educate women on the use and benefits of improved stoves. It is also looking to work with government health and agricultural extension officers who can act as educators, with their role at the local level taking them from house to house within the community.

CARBON COMPLIANCE AND RISK

While energy-efficient stoves can enable access to carbon revenue, their introduction presents some challenges. In community consultation during the development and implementation stage of the pilot, it was important to explain the carbon component, but community members struggled to understand the concept. This could lead to unrealistic expectations about the level of income that may be generated through the sale of carbon credits, and what this income will be used for.

The CDM compliance requirements for the project are time-consuming and expensive requiring a series of technical steps to achieve carbon compliance. The main financial challenge is the time delay between upfront financing and revenue generation due to compliance hurdles. If compliance is achieved, revenue is generated to fund project activities or flow on to communities. The pilot project is undertaking vigorous testing of stove technology as well as employing a carbon methodology specialist to help manage the compliance risks.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT AND MARKET

In the past, stove projects have been implemented without proper assessment of the context or a participatory design

process. Stoves have often been provided to communities by manufacturers and governments, without analysing cooking techniques or user requirements.

There are usually a whole range of reasons behind a community's preference for a particular stove model. Many of these are very pragmatic: a particular model might seem steadier and safer, and reduce the risk of burns to children; another might sit low to the ground and allow women to sit while they cook; another might appear to reduce smoke more or use less fuel. People also make judgements according to how attractive or modern the stoves appear, or how much they think their household will be willing or able to pay for an improved stove. Although it is tempting to regard some of these issues – such as the appearance of stoves – as trivial, the reality remains that without enthusiastic uptake within target communities, stove projects will not succeed.

MAXIMISING BENEFITS FOR WOMEN

It is important to note that there is a distinct gender consideration in stove programs. As women and children spend time indoors cooking meals, they are much more likely to suffer the effects of smoke inhalation. Therefore, women and children will benefit significantly from such a project. An improved stove not only reduces the health risks associated with cooking, but also saves time and energy in procuring fuel. However,

social impact assessments should take into account that while stoves need to appeal to the women who are likely to be using them, it is often men who handle the family finances and who will approve the purchase of such a stove. This has meant that the pilot project has had to gain feedback from men, along with women, to ensure adequate consideration of gender roles.

MOVING FORWARD – WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The Ethiopia energy-efficient stoves project is designed in a way that promotes local ownership as a key principle, and aims to improve public health, reduce the impact of communities on the environment, and stimulate economic activity and technology transfer. All relevant stakeholders will be engaged in a dialogue on renewable energy, the advantages of energy-efficient stoves, the problem of land degradation, the various effects of climate change on the environment, and the impact of indoor air pollution on the health of mothers and children. This will not only create local awareness but also encourage behaviour change and joint action.

Although the major outcomes of the project are development-focused, the implementation of the pilot will help to generate information on the legal and financial aspects of tapping into the carbon market. This will help to create a self-supporting model for funding the dissemination of stoves, creating the potential for the project to be scaled up across the country.
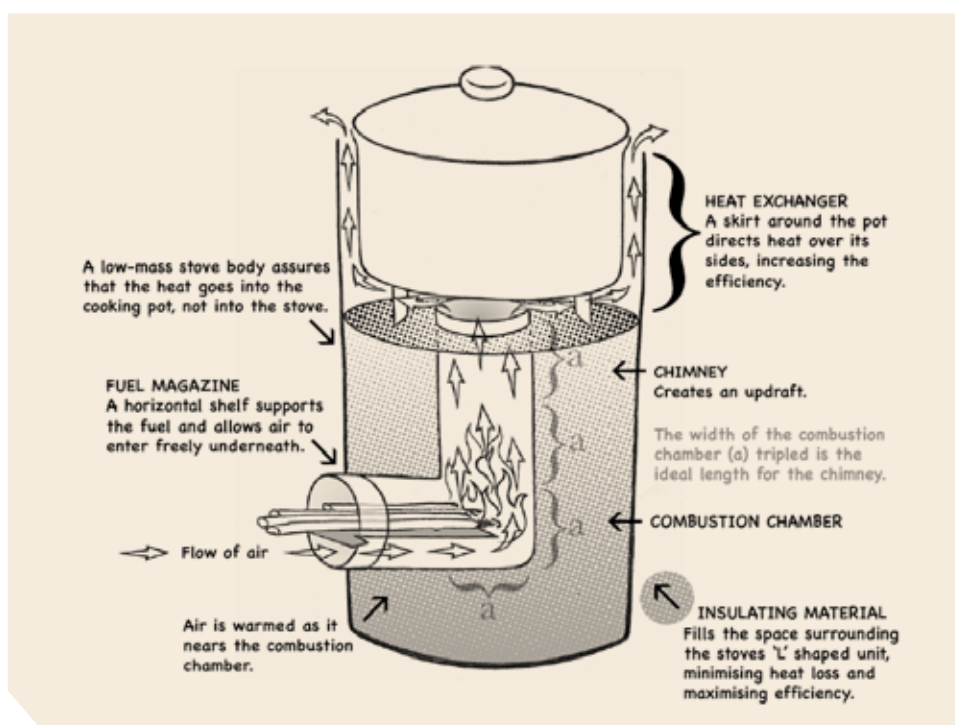
◀ *A diagram of rocket stove technology, demonstrating how it maximises energy creation and minimises fuel consumption.*

[3] REEEP (Renewable Energy and Efficiency Partnership): http://www.reeep.org/index.php?id=9353&text=policy&special=viewitem&cid=59, 28 Jan 2010

[4] World Health Organization: http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs292/en

[5] World Health Organization (WHO), Department of Public Health & Environment, Estimated deaths & DALYs attributable to selected environmental risk factors, by WHO Member States, 2002.

[6] World Health Organization: http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs292/en

HEAT EXCHANGER
A skirt around the pot directs heat over its sides, increasing the efficiency.

A low-mass stove body assures that the heat goes into the cooking pot, not into the stove.

FUEL MAGAZINE
A horizontal shelf supports the fuel and allows air to enter freely underneath.

CHIMNEY
Creates an updraft.

The width of the combustion chamber (a) tripled is the ideal length for the chimney.

Flow of air

COMBUSTION CHAMBER

Air is warmed as it nears the combustion chamber.

INSULATING MATERIAL
Fills the space surrounding the stoves 'L' shaped unit, minimising heat loss and maximising efficiency.

Give me the hard evidence

Mental health and psychosocial support in Haiti's earthquake response

▶ **ALISON SCHAFER**

On 12 January 2010, a major earthquake struck Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, causing massive destruction to buildings and already weak infrastructure. The number of fatalities is estimated to have exceeded 230,000. More than two million people survived the earthquake but the majority of these were displaced from their homes. It was clear that people needed immediate assistance, but they also needed support for reducing stress, restoring supportive networks and addressing psychosocial concerns.

Historically, the World Vision International Partnership's involvement in Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) programs has been during recovery, transition and development phases. As such, World Vision is still learning about its organisational capacities to work in this area. The Haiti earthquake was the first time MHPSS expertise was deployed in an emergency.

World Vision's MHPSS response in Haiti initiated debate about some important areas for the organisation to explore in the future. These include, for example, the disparity of expectations that occurred between community-based MHPSS activities and relief management, and the challenges associated with measuring impact. A significant question for consideration is does World Vision need to continue broad MHPSS work in future emergencies or do we begin to delve into a new area of targeted interventions.

WORLD VISION'S MHPSS RESPONSE IN HAITI

When beginning its MHPSS response in Haiti, World Vision focused on three main areas: interagency engagement; World Vision global activities; and direct field activities. Embedded within these were three aims:

1. To ensure World Vision's compliance with the IASC[1] Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Guidelines in Emergency Settings (IASC, 2007);

2. To pilot a training program in Psychological First Aid[2]; and

3. To ensure the Haiti MHPSS response remained small so that World Vision had an opportunity to review, document and learn from this experience.

World Vision engaged with the United Nations and other international agencies from the outset. Contributions included support to establish an Inter-agency MHPSS Working Group and editorial support for the IASC Guidance Notes for MHPSS Response in Haiti (IASC, 2010). World Vision also provided funding and administrative support to deliver 1,500 French translations of the IASC MHPSS Guidelines and field checklists to Haiti, as well as English training, which assisted more than 100 MHPSS service providers to work within the framework of the guidelines.

At the global level, World Vision provided remote MHPSS programming support to staff operating on the ground. This included contributions to strategies in

child protection, education and health; communications guidelines about MHPSS issues; and assistance in screening goodwill offers by various mental health professionals. By February 2010, the organisation had selected, trained and deployed an MHPSS coordinator to Haiti and provided continuous support for the implementation of the program.

The Haiti MHPSS program included the successful implementation of the Psychological First Aid pilot and all activities were compliant with the IASC MHPSS Guidelines. To keep the program small, the primary focus was on levels II and III of the IASC MHPSS Intervention Pyramid (see diagram 1). This included training in the psychological and social considerations in delivering basic needs; assisting people to re-establish community and family support networks; and raising awareness in communities about mental health issues.

Overall, the Haiti response achieved its aims and was well received by relief teams and local staff in-country. As a result, the program was approved for ongoing work that would enable more targeted interventions to take place during the recovery phase. However, permission to move forward with direct intervention activities may have been clouded by an underlying sentiment among relief management staff who wanted to see more "hard" outcomes from MHPSS activities. While World Vision documented many lessons from its MHPSS response, the biggest challenge was how to report its initial impact. This subsequently led to big questions for World Vision about what MHPSS approaches should be considered in future emergencies.

MEASURING IMPACT: THE BIG CHALLENGE

One of the biggest challenges for the MHPSS response was responding to persistent requests for outputs, numbers and case studies; for example, information about people whose specific mental health needs had been met. Such a request is understandable: World Vision is committed to transparent relief operations, which include detailed reports back to donors and the general public, as well as to the Haitian communities and government. However, this was especially challenging for the MHPSS program. Reporting "numbers on the ground" meant that important contributions, such as those made at inter-agency or global levels, remained unaccounted for. Most importantly, the rich qualitative interactions between staff trained in MHPSS could not be easily

measured or quantitatively represented. Seeking hard data was not a measurement approach that honoured the activities which underpinned the MHPSS program and ensured World Vision's compliance with the IASC MHPSS Guidelines. It was feasible for the program to report on numbers of staff trained, which might then be extrapolated to represent numbers of people those staff interacted with. This however could not be viewed as an accurate representation of people impacted by the training. It further raised the question of measuring what constitutes "an intervention".

When non-mental health staff are trained in psychosocial support, they are encouraged to ensure community involvement in the design, monitoring and evaluation of programming activities, to respect people's cultural needs and, if necessary, be supportive people who listen well and provide basic empathy. They are encouraged to always protect the rights of others and respect the dignity of people they are working with in their day-to-day interactions. Therefore, if a water and sanitation engineer went to a community, respectfully listened to the people's needs and spoke to them in a dignified and empathic manner, would this constitute an MHPSS intervention? According to the IASC MHPSS Guidelines, this is the impact that is sought. By World Vision's standards, though, this would be recorded as a water and sanitation achievement before an MHPSS intervention.

For World Vision it was evident that emergency relief management staff had minimal understanding of international MHPSS guidelines and what to expect from its program. While the MHPSS staff were unprepared for how to measure impact, there was also disparity between the expectations of World Vision relief management and the recommended approaches to MHPSS activities according to international guidelines.

World Vision eventually managed reporting demands by conducting a qualitative evaluation of the MHPSS response three months after its implementation, with largely positive results. The main learning that emerged was the importance of trying to train relief staff in pre-emergency phases to ensure more realistic expectations and achievements of MHPSS programming. It also emerged that the effects of disparate management expectations about MHPSS in Haiti resulted in a desire to see World Vision more involved in targeted mental health interventions, such as those usually delivered at levels III and IV of the MHPSS Intervention

▶ **SNAP-SHOT:**

ACHIEVEMENTS IN HAITI

When the World Vision mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) response was undertaken in Haiti, a range of in-country activities and outputs were achieved in the first three-month emergency relief phase. These included:

- Support for the development of multi-sectoral proposals to ensure psychological and social considerations were included in project designs. This helped to build World Vision's awareness about MHPSS being an important mainstreaming issue;

- Design and delivery of an Interagency Training and Harmonisation program (on behalf of the Haiti Interagency Working Group/Cluster) to assist more than 100 agencies working in MHPSS to operate from the same framework set out in the guidelines;

- Discussions with women's groups about MHPSS issues and self-care;

- Development of picture brochures and posters about positive coping strategies;

- Contracting a local drama group to deliver community awareness messages about MHPSS issues, where to go to for assistance and ways to support other people with psychosocial problems;

- Development of key topic training materials like: the psychosocial needs of children, stress reduction, managing difficult child behaviours, how to play with children (without money or resources);

- Development of a psychosocial training package to be provided to Haitian religious leaders (that also included psychological first aid); and

- Development of an MHPSS project design and proposal from July-December 2010 where World Vision would be providing more direct case management support for people with mental illness and Interpersonal Psychotherapy for Groups for people experiencing debilitating symptoms of depression and anxiety.

▲ A local drama group was engaged to deliver mental health awareness messages as part of World Vision's mental health and psychosocial support response in Haiti.

organisation has limited expertise in level III and no organisational experience in level IV clinical programs.

Level IV clinical programs are part of a highly specialised field, requiring professionally trained practitioners in the psychiatric, psychological and medical fields. Such programs exist for a small percentage of affected populations, often with severe and enduring mental illness. World Vision's organisational strategy does not engage in direct clinical services, hence our MHPSS programs do not have capacity or funding for such interventions. If World Vision wishes to engage in targeted MHPSS activities, the focus needs to be on increasing the organisation's capacity in level III of the IASC MHPSS Intervention Pyramid. Though it sounds relatively simple, this is plagued with challenges.

World Vision cannot engage in more targeted MHPSS interventions without an organisational strategy and commitment to do so. The organisation would need to invest funding and human capital to research a greater range of appropriate interventions to ensure we have a variety of approaches that could be transferable to differing emergency contexts. World Vision would also need to develop, fund and manage the needs of clinical supervision for staff practising interventions. Staff would need to be regularly trained and updated on best practice approaches. World Vision would need to considerably increase its structural support for MHPSS, particularly by way of qualified research and psychosocial expertise.

Even though significant investments would be necessary for MHPSS to move closer to a more direct intervention approach, there are clear advantages for the organisation in doing so. World Vision recognises that MHPSS is directly linked with its mission: to support children to experience life in all its fullness. World Vision is increasingly appreciating that both the tangible and intangible aspects of the human condition contribute to poverty and the disempowerment of children, families and their communities. By investing further in MHPSS work, World Vision would continue to strengthen an existing organisational interest. As well, donors are becoming more concerned about the psychosocial consequences of disaster, which suggests more funding may become available in future years. World Vision is already well established as an inter-agency partner in MHPSS. Further investments towards focused activities, building on existing collaborations, would ultimately contribute to improving humanitarian response internationally. In the case of Haiti, being more targeted in our

Pyramid. However, engaging in such clinical levels of MHPSS work is not something that can be instantly delivered. It requires careful consideration of what MHPSS work we will engage in (particularly in emergencies), the ethical consequences of implementing such programs and the resources required to reach that level of organisational capacity.

WHAT TYPE OF MHPSS PROGRAMS SHOULD WORLD VISION IMPLEMENT?

Over the past 10 years, World Vision has begun to master the implementation of Interpersonal Psychotherapy for Groups, working directly with people experiencing depression and anxiety symptoms. However, such an intervention requires a degree of contextual stability and would not be appropriate in a rapid-onset emergency response. World Vision has also worked on developing training for Psychological First Aid, however this is based on large-scale training and it is difficult to measure actual interactions, interventions and impact. Aside from these two approaches (and a few highly specialised programs like rehabilitation programs for former child soldiers or trafficked children), World Vision's main strengths in MHPSS work have been grounded in community-based psychosocial programming. For example, finding ways for community leaders to support children, training teachers or health staff about psychosocial issues, and providing input to children's programs such as child-friendly space activities or child protection programs. When working on the basis of the IASC MHPSS Intervention Pyramid, World Vision's current strengths exist in levels I and II. The

MHPSS interventions would have bridged the gap between management expectations and outputs and offered greater measures of direct impact.

There are obvious consequences to World Vision's MHPSS interest remaining small. The organisation's resources will remain limited, its capacity to respond in emergencies will need to maintain a focus on training and capacity-building initiatives, and its level of direct impact will continue to be difficult to measure. However, another lesson from Haiti was that MHPSS does not function as a lone sector. MHPSS issues are prevalent in all sectors, particularly in protection, education, spiritual nurture and health. By investing further in MHPSS, World Vision will simultaneously be investing in many other areas of work.

INVESTING IN MHPSS BENEFITS OTHER SECTORS

An observation noted in the Haiti evaluation was the natural inclination of staff to become intimately engaged with the communities they served and to quickly recognise a range of complex MHPSS issues affecting people. For instance, protection staff were involved with families with suicidal members and hygiene promotion staff became aware of domestic violence cases. While staff from other non-MHPSS sectors received some basic psychosocial training and management support, they did not have access to clinical supervision with mental health professionals. When a qualified clinical psychologist temporarily joined the Haiti MHPSS team, staff from all areas of the World Vision relief response utilised this opportunity to seek advice on specific cases, to glean ideas for interventions and to seek personal support as they faced the difficult task of working with very challenging cases. It demonstrated that an investment in MHPSS in emergencies will have flow-on benefits for other sectors. Given World Vision staff are more frequently facing complex psychosocial concerns, a further question to explore in the future might be whether World Vision actually has a responsibility to invest in more MHPSS resources and capacity.

LESSONS LEARNED

The most pervasive learning for World Vision in the Haiti MHPSS response has been the need to ramp up the organisation's preparedness, training and awareness about MHPSS, particularly for relief management staff. In the interim, this will serve to ensure reporting and programmatic expectations are better managed and greater kudos is given to the qualitative impacts of community-based MHPSS programs. It will also ensure support is provided in other ways, such as at inter-agency and global levels. Further, World Vision MHPSS staff need to keep working towards better measures of impact on such issues.

Lessons from the Haiti MHPSS response have raised important questions. World Vision needs to expand its thinking about how it wishes to engage in MHPSS programs in the future. World Vision has already begun to show strengths in delivering MHPSS programs, but if the organisation intends to become more directly involved in the provision of targeted mental health interventions, then greater financial and human resources will be necessary.

There may be many benefits to investing more in MHPSS; not just by expanding our ability to deliver MHPSS programs but also by increasing our ability to support work in other sectors where MHPSS issues inevitably exist.
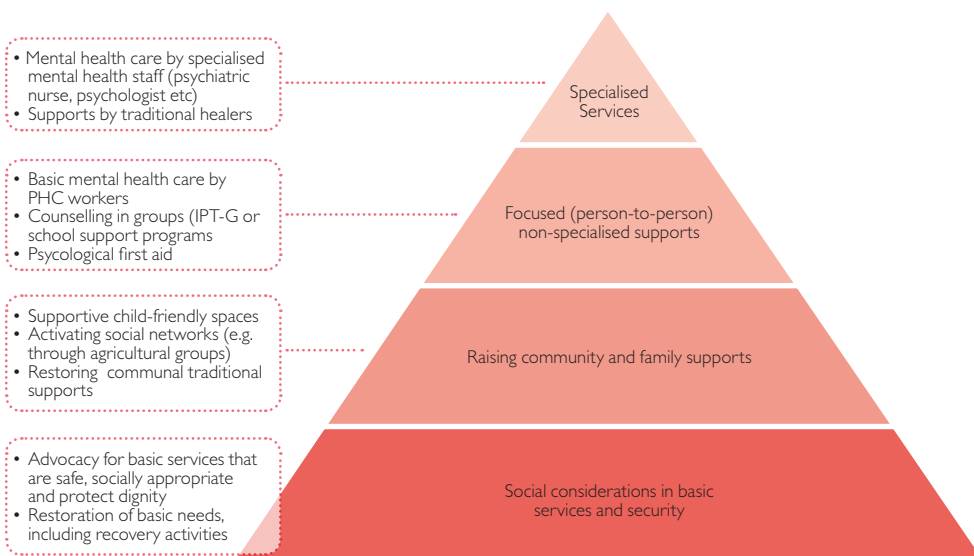
◀ **DIAGRAM 1: Intervention pyramid based on IASC Guidlines for Mental Health & Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) in Emergency Settings (IASC, 2007)**

• Mental health care by specialised mental health staff (psychiatric nurse, psychologist etc)
• Supports by traditional healers

Specialised Services

• Basic mental health care by PHC workers
• Counselling in groups (IPT-G or school support programs
• Psycological first aid

Focused (person-to-person) non-specialised supports

• Supportive child-friendly spaces
• Activating social networks (e.g. through agricultural groups)
• Restoring communal traditional supports

Raising community and family supports

• Advocacy for basic services that are safe, socially appropriate and protect dignity
• Restoration of basic needs, including recovery activities

Social considerations in basic services and security

Gen Y and rights in Rio

Young people, empowerment and public policy

▶ **BILL WALKER**

Like millions of marginalised urban youth around the world, many young people in Rio de Janeiro's sprawling favelas[1] experience denial of their rights to basic social entitlements. This contributes to high levels of economic and social inequality in their neighbourhoods. In the favelas, few economic opportunities exist for young people. Many become caught up in drug addiction, violence or crime, often joining gangs. Faced with these deeply intractable problems, young people can feel trapped and powerless. Even adults in their own communities are distrustful of the younger generation and ambivalent about their ability to change things for the better.

Social change to address this situation is badly needed, so that youth – and the marginalised communities they often live in – can realise legitimate aspirations and human rights. But how can increased human rights impact youth living in favelas? And how will this be achieved? After all, human rights typically depend on functioning justice systems. Yet in Brazil, levels of police corruption are high, and the courts remain mostly inaccessible.

Young people, however, are a growing political force in Brazil and the youth vote is increasing. Since the 1960s, young people have increasingly become key leaders in Brazil's social, political and environmental movements. Many young people think critically about the problems facing them, and use varied and sometimes innovative cultural forms, aided by new communications technologies, to press for societal change.

World Vision Australia became interested in an innovative approach to citizen advocacy that was pioneered successfully in Africa, known as Community Based Performance Monitoring (CBPM). This approach provides a means to empower communities to hold government decision makers accountable for the ways they provide services.

World Vision Brazil accepted World Vision Australia's offer to provide CBPM training to its staff. At the training workshop, however, there was some controversy. Some of the Brazilian staff expressed strong scepticism about CBPM. They had many questions: Was it applicable in the Brazilian context? Was the training approach, whereby the CBPM methodology was first demonstrated as a

package by trainers and then immediately applied in a local community, valid and appropriate? They engaged in a vigorous debate with the trainers. Some proposed that the planned field application of CBPM should be postponed to provide an opportunity for "contextualisation" of the approach and revision of the training methodology. In a specially-convened meeting, a consensus was achieved to proceed with the planned activity to allow World Vision Brazil's staff to immediately apply their learning about CBPM practice.

As part of the workshop they tested CBPM with marginalised communities living on the fringes of Fortaleza, a large city in northeast Brazil. The results were quite dramatic.

[1] Favela is Brazilian Portuguese for slum. It refers to shanty towns in Brazil. Many favela localities in Rio include steep hillsides, because the land is more unstable for dwellings and access.

Within a few weeks adults and youth were able to use the model to make progress on reforming local health services. In due course it helped a wider group of communities engage in participatory budgeting, with encouraging results. World Vision Brazil has further adapted and strengthened its practice to suit Brazilian political culture, history and diverse settings and re-named it Citizen Voice and Action (CV&A).

World Vision Brazil decided to apply CV&A to its work among marginalised urban young people aged 16-24. It began to implement the project in 2008 in three favelas in which World Vision Brazil was already working in Rio de Janeiro. This work – known as Youth Monitoring Public Policies (YMPP) – sought to create opportunities for young people to build their capabilities to reform local essential services, and thus claim human rights. This is far from an automatic or straightforward process. It depends heavily on building citizenship and awareness of public policies at community level, fostering awareness about human rights among youth, and encouraging them to exercise their political voice, while increasing credibility with their local communities. World Vision Brazil calls the set of formative educational processes which prepare youth for civic engagement, "socio-political formation".

REALISING HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE FAVELAS

During 2008-2009, water and garbage collection emerged as the two major issues of concern for local favela communities. Socio-political formation allowed the local youth to find out why water and sanitation were such pressing issues in their favelas. They found that some dwellings, particularly those higher up in their favelas, were not receiving publicly-distributed water despite having a right to do so. Although their municipality had a program to fund the building of two water reservoirs for the favelas, which would have significantly improved water supply, neither of these reservoirs had been built. So why had this program failed? Where had the money gone?

Meetings were again convened for favela dwellers at which community members agreed to take action to make the municipal government accountable for its obligation to provide water for all dwellings in the favela. Attendees decided to collect signatures from their communities, calling for government to implement the water program, and thus help to meet its human rights obligations. However, before collecting the signatures, youth leaders started a public awareness campaign about water. They staged a public event for the community, displaying placards to promote the benefits of clean water. Through this event, the youth leaders developed relationships with local children. Now, these children look to them as mentors, while the youth leaders actively involve children in community discussions.

The youth activists began collecting signatures to lobby for the community's water rights. But the local community didn't know who they were. Because it was an election year, community members mistakenly thought they were working for local politicians! To avoid getting caught up with local political campaigning, the youth leaders found another organisation willing to collect the signatures, and moved their focus to another burning issue.

This time they addressed garbage collection. They drew on their own growing understanding and experiences of socio-political formation, including examining budget allocation for sanitation programs. Further, they reflected on the challenges they were facing and appraised their strengths and weaknesses. This led them to focus on a different favela where the garbage problems were extremely bad. Drawing on their previous experience, the solution they found was to access a separate municipal fund available to favelas to address this issue. The youth activists started to promote discussion about garbage and sanitation policy. They researched public information about these policies, including

▼ *Youth leaders raised awareness and collected the signatures of local residents in their bid to secure community water rights.*

▲ *As part of the YMPP project, young people had the opportunity to discuss community concerns with a local legislator.*

discovered, the turnout was disappointing. Attendance by community leaders was particularly poor, because another community event being held the same day proved much more attractive than talking about public policy. Failing to achieve their objective of developing a plan of action for implementing the program was a real set back. They learnt that in future they would need to be more careful in selecting the right day for public meetings, and to work harder at mobilising the community to attend.

WHAT DIFFERENCE IS YMPP MAKING?

In 2009, I interviewed a group of YMPP youth leaders from the three Rio favelas. I asked what had changed in their lives and their communities as a result of YMPP; what they had been learning in the process; and about rights-based relationships between governments, local officials and citizens. The most significant changes were that youth had become friends with their communities, and had built friendships among themselves. They had now begun to see government policies afresh, and become able to think critically about them. Surprising new political capacities had emerged among their leadership, gaining them respect and the ear of local politicians. Many youth leaders had become mentors of children in their early teens, in local advocacy. In addition, the youth leaders have gained fresh, practical understanding of their human rights and how to achieve them.

After about two years of YMPP, it is too early to assess what its lasting impact will be. In the short to medium term it appears that youth-led processes could contribute to specific tangible outcomes in the community, such as the building of water reservoirs. Longer term, realising rights through citizen advocacy from below – as is happening in Rio – involves much more. It requires hard work to build community, persistence in pressing for reforms, changes in policy and budget transparency, and the ability to cope with periodic discouragements and setbacks of many kinds.

Questions remain about sustaining the progress achieved by the youth activists, especially because favela youth populations are mobile. Youth are naturally eager to take up scarce opportunities for paid work, which reduces the time available to be engaged in their community. Over time, there is a real risk that YMPP could lose momentum. Yet even if it did so, it could still leave a valuable legacy, an increased level of political awareness and engagement in the favelas.

the budget allocated for them. Next they started raising community awareness about the issue. This included awareness of reasons why garbage would pile up uncollected and smelly, posing health problems for the whole community.

They discovered that the community had misconceptions about the purpose of the favela garbage program. The community had accepted that they would have to live with pests and insects that transmit diseases because they thought the garbage problem could only be solved when another municipal program was implemented. To address this situation, the youth activists began to provide information to the community about the program, so now they know what it is for. This government program already has funding for garbage collection in 35 communities in Rio. The first thing youth leaders plan to do is to mobilise the community to claim their entitlement to services the program provides. The next step is to help community members understand how the program is supposed to be implemented. One of the eligibility conditions for this program is to have a well-organised association – a strong one! So a key activity youth are going to work on is mobilising the community to form such an association or to strengthen a suitable existing one.

The youth leaders have also had to face periodic disappointments while working to change public policies. After three months of research, chasing up information about the community and their right to the favela program, they organised a meeting and invited people from all three favelas to attend. Although they informed the participants about problems they had

One possible avenue for sustaining change lies in the strong relationships youth leaders have developed with each other, and with other youth in solidarity elsewhere in Brazil. By mentoring and tutoring children from their favelas in YMPP, they may have created the basis for intergenerational change while also earning the respect of adults in their community. How well they "pass the baton" of working for human rights on to future generations is yet to be seen. When World Vision winds up the project, can such processes of wider socio-political formation be sustained? This momentum still partly depends on World Vision and local partners as external catalysts, but there are some signs it is gaining a life of its own. However, it will be important to assess the ongoing sources of, and resources for, sustaining change when evaluating the YMPP project.

Experience from elsewhere, including in other parts of Brazil, suggests that supportive local organisations will play an important role in sustaining the momentum for change. Further, wider evidence suggests that the responsiveness of governments in meeting their obligations and genuinely listening to community concerns will be a major influence in encouraging ongoing processes of change. This responsiveness is likely to wax and wane as various politicians and political parties hold power. However, the well-established Brazilian traditions of vibrant political activism and commitment to popular civic education are likely to leave some form of political activism as their legacy.

Human rights are founded on the dignity and worth of all human beings, and thus on the respect owed to them. Despite struggles and setbacks it seems that YMPP has managed to foster a sense of self-worth and self-esteem among youth. It has also deepened respect from adults towards them for the practical roles they are playing in bringing desired social change into the community. By expressing the common human dignity of all community members, communities in three previously unconnected favelas have become united.

Whether YMPP can be built on this foundation is likely to depend on a second fundamental feature of human rights which the youths' experience amply demonstrates – human relationships which embody and seek justice for and within the community. It was surprising to them to find that friendship – both with each other, with their communities and with children – was so significant. But not so surprising when I reflected on how important strong human relationships are to human rights. It appeared that their friendships with their communities energised them. The sceptic may ask – can this last? Perhaps it will not last. Youth also recognised the importance of their relationships with politicians, but showed a healthy distance from their agendas and an ability to be quite critical of politicians' ignorance about key policies.

This case shows that claiming human rights also entails political empowerment of those whose human rights are affected. This empowerment is not party-political, as the youth showed by deliberately avoiding it. For some adults, jaded by cynical party politics, this may seem refreshing. Whereas for others, more hard-headed perhaps, it may be thought naive.

Lastly, young people, with the help of socio-political formation seem to have grasped that human rights is about changing social and political systems and structures to make them more just. That involves very practical, even mundane issues including: engaging with budgets, policies and technical issues for essential services whose design and delivery – however boring – is the stuff of practising justice and realising human rights.

For the youth involved with YMPP, human rights have ceased to be remote or conceptual, but instead have become practical and relevant to local issues of concern to them and their community. For World Vision Brazil, YMPP has provided an opportunity to see what it means for youth to engage in a form of rights-based practice where they become the central actors.

▼ *Youth are a growing political force in Brazil. World Vision's Citizen Voice and Action work aims to provide marginalised urban young people with the tools they need to pursue their human rights.*

CONTRIBUTORS'
BIOGRAPHIES

Contributors' biographies

Section 1:
Reflecting on practice

POVERTY IS A WOMAN'S FACE

Lessons for gender programming in Africa

Michelle Thomas is World Vision Australia's Gender Officer. She joined World Vision in 2008 and spent a year in the World Vision Burundi National Office working on gender and advocacy. Her educational background is in law, particularly international human rights law, and she is close to completing a Masters in International Development (Gender). She has published work in the area of human rights for women, and a publication on "gendered spaces" and community development is forthcoming.

Clare Seddon is Manager of World Vision Australia's Latin America, Middle East, Eastern Europe and Pacific team. Joining World Vision in 2002, Clare also worked in the Africa team, managing programs in Tanzania and Rwanda. Prior to joining World Vision, she worked with PALMS Australia in Kiribati. Clare is passionate about gender equality and the situation of girls and women. She holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Masters in International Development.

VALUE FOR MONEY OR HUMANITARIAN IMPERATIVE?

A financial crisis for darfur

Karen Alexander is a Program Officer in World Vision Australia's Humanitarian and Emergency Affairs team and her portfolio includes Sudan. Karen is studying a Bachelor of International Studies majoring in International Relations and Middle East Politics. Her interests include humanitarian protection, peace building and fragile states.

Alison Schafer is a World Vision Australia Country Program Coordinator with the Humanitarian and Emergency Affairs team. Her current portfolio focuses on countries in the Horn of Africa region, including Sudan. Alison's other interests are in the psychosocial area and she is currently completing a Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology at Swinburne University, focusing on cross-cultural issues in developing countries.

"NOT ANOTHER SERVICE PROVIDER"

Partnering for sustainability

Dr Mark Moran is Strategic Advisor (Indigenous Development Effectiveness) at World Vision Australia and Adjunct Associate Professor with the University of Queensland. Mark has an unusual combination of technical, social development and management skills with a degree in civil engineering and a PhD in social science. He has worked in indigenous and international development contexts, including Aboriginal Australia, North America, China, East Timor and Lesotho (Africa). His areas of technical interest include local governance, home ownership, participatory planning, appropriate technology, and village water supply and roads. Stakeholder management and developing sustainable partnerships are central to his work, often in highly politicised contexts, including policy uptake and advocacy campaigns with governments. Throughout his career, Mark has accumulated extensive experience in managing development projects, and more recently, in the management and business administration of NGOs. He has worked for World Vision Australia for three years.

Dr Teresa Hutchins has worked for World Vision Australia for two years and is currently a Regional Program Manager responsible for projects in the Northern Territory. Before joining World Vision, Teresa taught and developed courses in early childhood and community development both at post secondary undergraduate and graduate levels and undertook many action research projects in Australian Indigenous communities. In 2006, she was a key member of the team that conducted community consultations across the country on behalf of the Australian Government in relation to the development of a national childcare plan for Indigenous children and communities.

MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK

Harnessing a community's comparative advantage

Joseph Kamara started his career as an HIV and AIDS counsellor with World Vision Uganda in 1998. Since then he has held various positions addressing HIV and AIDS, has been Head of Humanitarian and Emergency Affairs for World Vision Mozambique, and has served on World Vision's Africa Regional Rapid Response Team. In 2007, he became a Country Program Coordinator for Burundi and Ethiopia at World Vision Australia. Joseph holds a Bachelor of Development Studies (Hons) from Makerere University in Kampala and a Masters in International and Community Development from Deakin University.

Chris Rowlands is World Vision Australia's Markets Analyst. Chris provides advice to World Vision's policy and programs teams on improving market integration in our projects. He also undertakes in-country research and delivers training. Chris has been at World Vision Australia since January 2008. Prior to this he undertook market analysis and strategy projects as a business consultant and also spent time in product management and marketing. Chris holds a Bachelor of Commerce with first class Honours from the University of Western Australia and is currently completing a Masters in International and Community Development.

SIZING UP YOUR OWN NEEDS

Global standards or local control in microfinance?

Roni Oracion is World Vision Australia's Microenterprise Development Specialist. Roni joined World Vision in 1994 and she has over 25 years of involvement in socioeconomic development. Roni provides specialist technical advice and training on microfinance and microenterprise development. She has built strong relationships with microfinance institutions and organisations, including the Australian Financial Inclusion Network, the Small Enterprise Education and Promotion Network, the Social Performance Management Network and the VisionFund network. Roni holds an Economics degree and a Masters in Development Management. She currently lectures on microfinance and development at RMIT.

THE SPACE BETWEEN

The dance of a Country Program Coordinator in the field

Stuart Thomson is a Senior Campaign Advisor for World Vision International based in Melbourne. A World Vision staff member since 2007, Stuart is passionate about field work and he has spent a number of years in Central America and Africa. Stuart's main interests lie in campaigning and advocacy and how to integrate these with traditional emergency response and development programs in the field. He has completed degrees in Nursing and Environmental Studies/Philosophy and holds a Masters in Environmental Science. Stuart is currently completing a postgraduate degree in Community Cultural Development at the Victorian College of the Arts.

Section 2:
Emerging practice

TAKING THE COUNT IN REAL TIME

The power of mobile phones

Gerard Finnigan is Manager of World Vision Australia's Health, Technical and Policy Specialist team. Over the last four years Gerard has managed a variety of specialist technical teams at World Vision Australia with a primary focus on increasing the impact of development assistance through the integration of specialist advice in program and policy functions. Prior to joining World Vision, Gerard worked as an epidemiologist in the private sector and on development projects in the Asia-Pacific region. He worked for over 13 years in the government sector on infectious disease control and management, environmental and public health. He holds degrees in Science, Public Health and Tropical Medicine, and International and Community Development.

Anueja Gopalakrishnan is the Public Health Analyst in World Vision Australia's Policy and Programs Health cluster. Anueja joined World Vision Australia's Public Policy team in 2006, moving into the Government Relations team prior to joining the health cluster in April 2008. She holds a Masters in Public Health, a Masters in International Law, and a Bachelor in Biomedical Science (Hons).

ACCESSING CARBON MARKETS

Getting a stove under the pot – and being rewarded for doing so

Andrew Binns is a Project Coordinator in World Vision Australia's Innovative Programs team. He is responsible for delivering key projects within the Carbon, Program Resourcing and Health teams. He has over seven years of professional and research-related experience in land administration, geographic and land information systems, and the international NGO sector, and he has worked on large land management projects for sustainable development. Andrew is interested in work that truly fosters the existing customs and cultures of indigenous communities.

GIVE ME THE HARD EVIDENCE

Mental health and psychosocial support in Haiti's earthquake response

Alison Schafer (See biography in Section 1)

GEN Y AND RIGHTS IN RIO

Young people, empowerment and public policy

Bill Walker is World Vision Australia's Governance and Citizenship Advisor. He has worked in various roles for World Vision Australia over a number of years, including extensive work on the Jubilee Debt campaign. Bill is currently completing a PhD on design of participatory governance, based on World Vision's Citizen Voice and Action practice. He has several Masters degrees and has published articles and contributed to books on governance and on debt.

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