

Annual Evaluation Review

A rapid review of 2011 evaluations

September 2012



Program Research & Advisory

International Programs Group

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We hope this report provides useful information on World Vision programming practices and we look forward to your feedback.

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Introduction

Since 2009, World Vision Australia has undertaken annual reviews of evaluation reports for all World Vision Australia-funded projects upon project completion¹. The purpose of the annual reviews is to assess the effectiveness of these programs in contributing to improved child wellbeing in the communities we work with. This year, a simplified “rapid” review of all projects ending in 2011 was undertaken. This document reports the findings of this rapid review on outcomes for communities, as well as evaluation quality.

Summary results

Ninety-five (95) evaluation reports were reviewed with the following findings:

- 89 projects reported positive change in the capacity of target communities to address the challenges they face, including improved community awareness, capacity or practice change (94 percent).
- Of these, 34 projects showed evidence of significant positive change that has enhanced child wellbeing through improvements in social, environmental, physical and economic conditions (36 percent).
- Reports showed significant improvements in evaluation quality – 81 of 95 evaluations included quantitative methods, 59 of these 81 (73 percent) showed change over time, comparing end-of-project data against baseline data collected at the beginning of the project.
- Increasingly, evaluations are aligned with World Vision’s design, monitoring and evaluation framework.
- Presentation and report writing has improved.

Evaluation status of projects ending in 2011

Three hundred World Vision Australia-funded projects ended in 2011 and of these 102 (34 percent) were evaluated. There were 95 evaluation reports available for review by July 2012. The breakdown of the evaluation status of World Vision Australia-funded projects ending in 2009, 2010 and 2011 is shown in Table I.

¹ The review includes evaluation of individual projects and programs, and of Area Development Programs. For ease of reporting we use the term ‘projects’ to refer to all of these.

Table I Projects ending, evaluated and reviewed in 2009, 2010 and 2011

| Financial year | Total number of projects ending | Projects evaluated | % | Reports available for review | % |
|----------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|-----|------------------------------|-----|
| 2009 | 222 | 82 | 37% | 46 | 21% |
| 2010 | 211 | 122 | 58% | 58 | 27% |
| 2011 | 300 | 102 | 34% | 95 | 32% |

The total number of projects ending in 2011 is substantially higher than in both 2010 and 2009. However, there has not been a corresponding increase in the number of projects evaluated. Nevertheless, as mentioned below, the quality of evaluations has improved substantially.

Outcomes for communities

As part of the first review process in 2009, World Vision Australia developed a unifying framework of change to assess the level of change observed in communities where we work. There are four levels in this hierarchy of change – the first being awareness, then capacity built, then practice change and finally change in social, economic, environmental and physical conditions. Each level of change is dependent on the achievement of the one below it in the hierarchy.

The principles underlying this framework are that the first step in development is to create awareness of an issue, the next step is to build capacity, and the next step is to achieve practice and behavioural change, resulting in the final step, which involves changes in social, economic, environmental and physical conditions. The percentage of projects that reported observing these levels of change in communities in 2011 is shown in Figure 1.

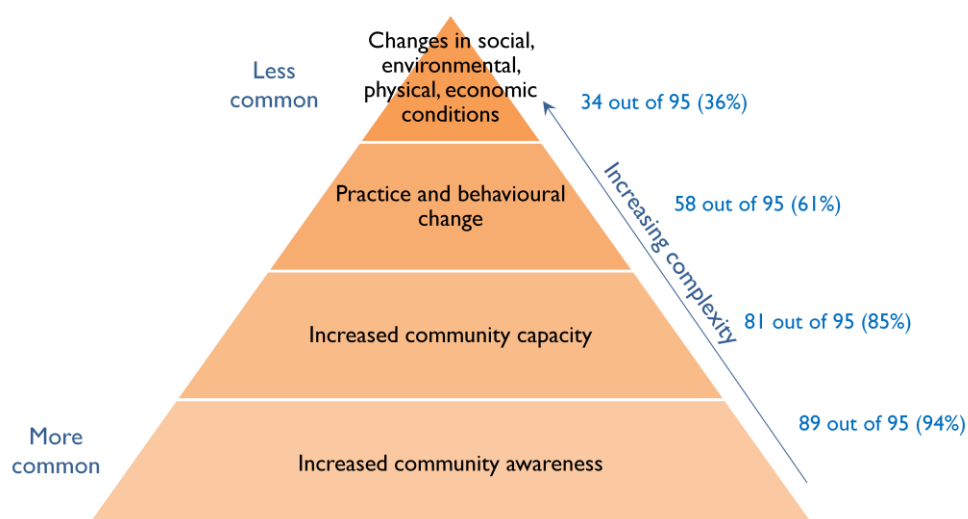


Figure 1 – Program outcomes through World Vision Australia’s unifying framework of change in 2011

Reflecting on results of this review process in 2010 and 2009, it is evident that the proportion of projects observing the highest level of change has been fairly static over the last three years: 39 percent of projects in 2009, 43 percent in 2010 and 36 percent in 2011 showed evidence of changes in social, economic, environmental and physical conditions (Figure 2).

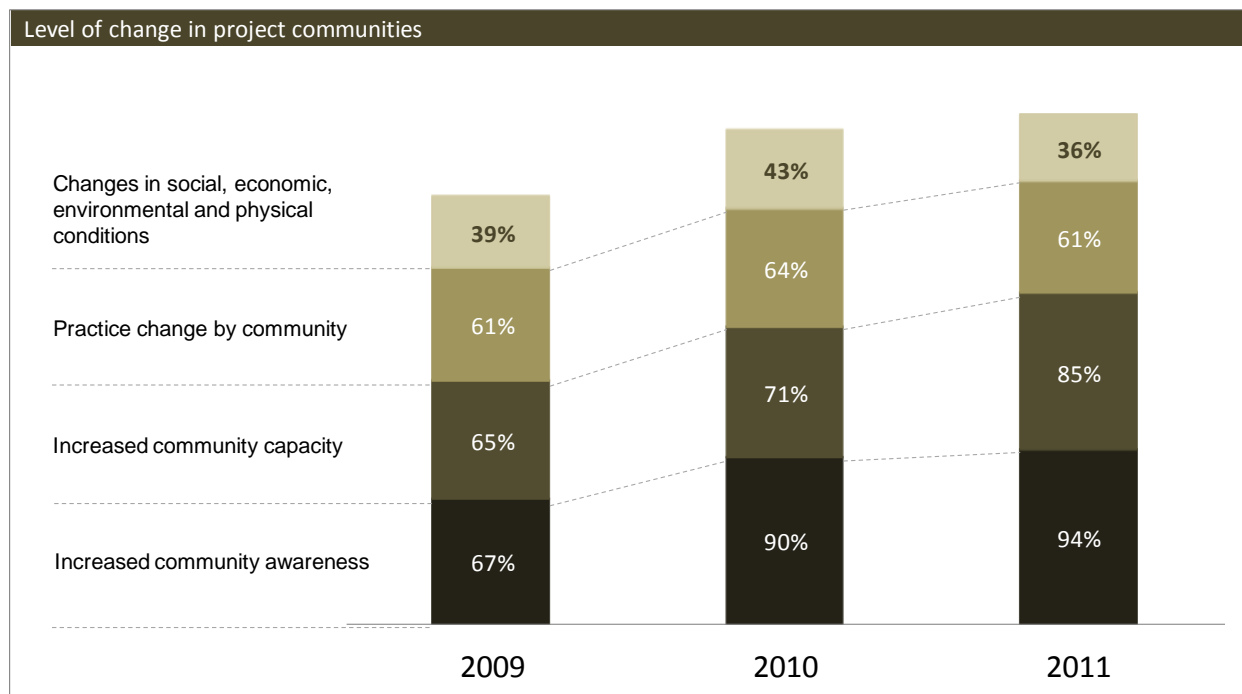


Figure 2 – Percentage of projects demonstrating evidence of change at community level

It is worth noting though that the actual number of projects observing the highest level of change has increased each year; 18 in 2009, 25 in 2010 and 34 in 2011.

It's also important to highlight that the changes observed are the result of a range of factors in communities. However, the evaluation findings suggest that World Vision project activities focused on awareness raising, capacity building, system strengthening and partnering with local communities play a vital role in the community change process.

Evaluation quality in 2011

A highlight of the review process was evidence of a significant improvement in evaluation quality and practice in the last three years. In the past, World Vision evaluations relied heavily on qualitative evaluation methods. But results for 2011 show that the majority of evaluations now quantify results and use mixed evaluation methods. In 2011, 80 of the 95 evaluations (84 percent) included quantitative and qualitative methods, 14 used qualitative methods only and in one case only quantitative methods were used. In addition, 63 percent of the evaluations in 2011 compared end-of-project values with baseline values.

The majority of evaluations reviewed were aligned with World Vision’s evaluation guidelines. Also the general presentation and writing of reports has improved. This reflects the organisation’s continued improvement in program quality. As in past years, there were a handful of evaluations and reports that fell short of desired quality. Table 2 shows the changes in evaluation methods from 2009 to 2011.

Table 2 Evaluation methods

| | 2009 | % | 2010 | % | 2011 | % |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Quantitative and qualitative methods | 19 | 66% | 38 | 66% | 80 | 84% |
| Qualitative methods only | 10 | 34% | 19 | 33% | 14 | 15% |
| Quantitative methods only | 0 | 0% | 1 | 2% | 1 | 1% |
| | 29 | 100% | 58 | 100% | 95 | 100% |

Another significant improvement in evaluation practice is an increase in end-of-project evaluations that compare end-of-project data with baseline data collected at the start of the project. Of 95 evaluations, 60 used baseline data. If we consider the group of 81 evaluations that used quantitative methods, 59 of these used baseline data (73 percent). This is a very welcome finding and a trend that will likely continue in future years. Table 3 shows the breakdown of evaluation methods used in 2009, 2010 and 2011 for all projects reviewed.

Table 3 Evaluation approach used

| | 2009 | | 2010 | | 2011 | |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Comparison of end project data with baseline data | 11 | 38% | 24 | 41% | 60 | 63% |
| End of project data only | 18 | 62% | 27 | 47% | 35 | 27% |
| Other method/approach | 0 | 0 | 7 | 12% | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 29 | 100% | 58 | 100% | 95 | 100% |

Conclusion

The rapid review of evaluation reports for projects ending in 2011 has been a worthwhile process. The progress made in evaluation quality is a positive result that will support World Vision’s drive towards improved reporting of its contribution to child wellbeing. When examining the outcomes or level of change for communities using World Vision Australia’s unifying framework, we are seeing similar patterns from year to year. This is encouraging because it increases our confidence in the measures. In the coming years we expect to see an increase in the proportion of projects that achieve the highest level of change.

A similar review of the results of World Vision Australia-funded programming in 2012 will be carried out in 2013 and will include additional data collection around the prevalence of reporting on World Vision's Child Wellbeing Outcome Indicators.

Appendices

Appendix I Approach and methods

Summary of methods and approach

The analyses presented in this report were based on a review of end-of-project evaluation reports for all World Vision Australia-funded projects ending in 2011. The total number of projects that ended in 2011 was approximately 300. Of these 95 had been evaluated, seven evaluation reports were pending and the remaining 198 were not yet evaluated. Each report was reviewed by a research and evaluation advisor using a specialised tool and given a rating, based on results reported against project goals and evaluation methods.

Appendix 2 Projects ending by region

| | Total projects ending | | | Project evaluated and report reviewed | | | | | | Evaluation report pending / in progress | | | | | | Project not evaluated | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|------|------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------------|---|-------------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------------|
| | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2009 | | 2010 | | 2011 | | 2009 | | 2010 | | 2011 | | 2009 | | 2010 | | 2011 | |
| | No. | No. | No. | No | % projects ending | No | % projects ending | No | % projects ending | No | % projects ending | No. | % projects ending | No | % projects ending | No | % projects ending | No | % projects ending | No | % projects ending |
| All regions | 222 | 211 | 300 | 46 | 21% | 58 | 27% | 95 | 32% | 36 | 16% | 64 | 30% | 7 | 2% | 140 | 63% | 89 | 42% | 198 | 66% |
| Africa | 109 | 66 | 126 | 23 | 21% | 24 | 36% | 37 | 29% | 21 | 19% | 16 | 24% | 2 | 2% | 65 | 59% | 26 | 39% | 87 | 69% |
| Asia Pacific | 73 | 109 | 112 | 14 | 19% | 26 | 24% | 37 | 33% | 11 | 15% | 34 | 31% | 2 | 2% | 48 | 66% | 49 | 45% | 73 | 65% |
| Latin America & the Caribbean. | 24 | 17 | 37 | 4 | 17% | 6 | 35% | 11 | 30% | 3 | 13% | 6 | 35% | 2 | 5% | 17 | 71% | 5 | 29% | 24 | 65% |
| Middle East, Eastern Europe & Central Asia | 14 | 19 | 17 | 4 | 29% | 2 | 10% | 9 | 53% | 1 | 7% | 8 | 42% | 1 | 6% | 9 | 64% | 9 | 47% | 7 | 41% |
| Australia | 2 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 50% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 33% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 50% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 67% |
| International | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 5 | 100% |