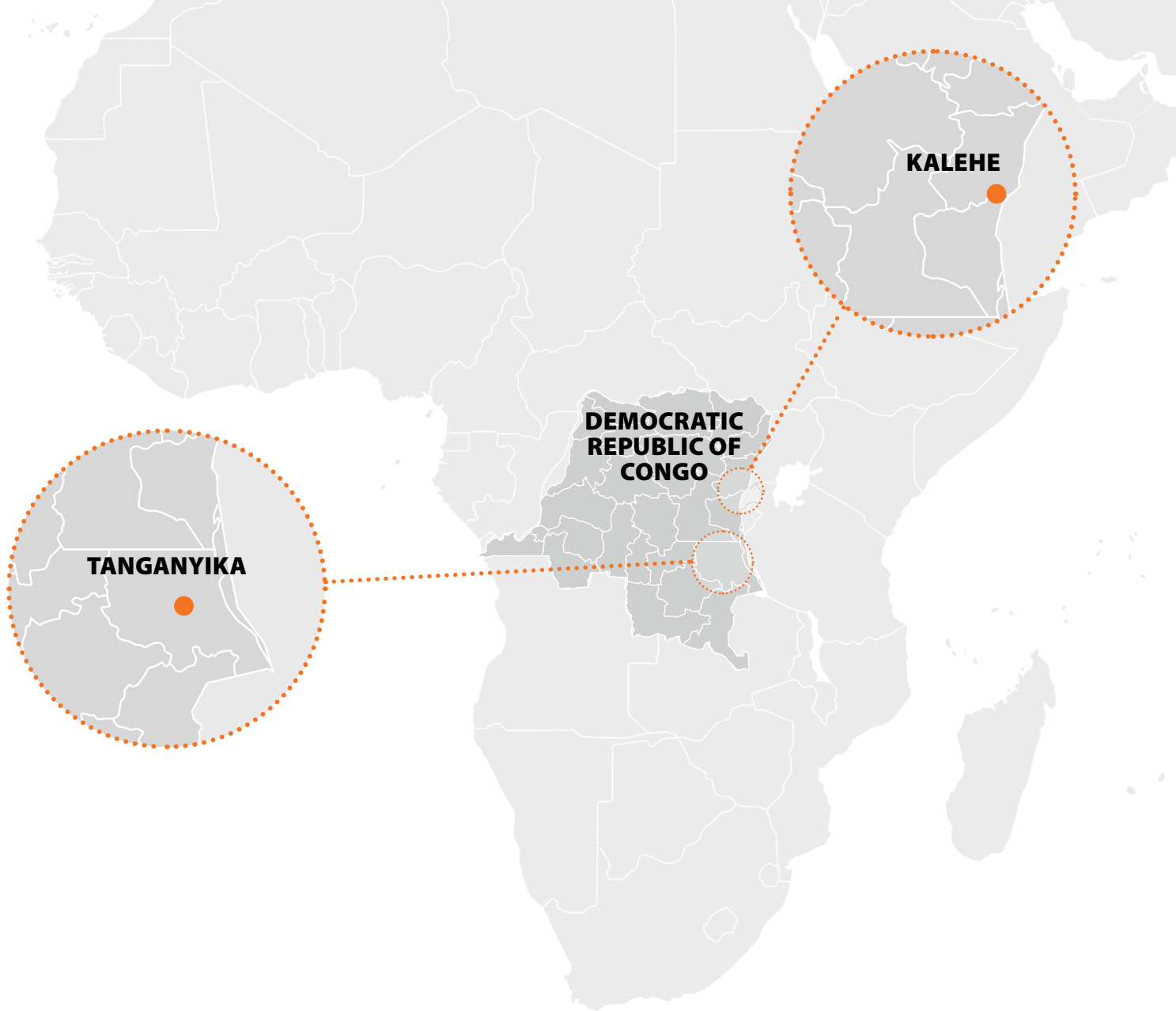




# INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE DRC

A World Vision perspective across two projects, Tanganyika and Kalehe



### **About this report**

This brief summarises the results from two mid-term reviews provided by independent consultant, Mayele Mazambi, under commission from World Vision Democratic Republic of Congo (WV DRC), conducted between January and June 2022 of the projects: Empowering Children and Communities in Tanganyika to Learn (2018-23) and Access to Quality Education in Kalehe Territory (2019-24). Mayele's team included Clovis Bubala and Joel Kyanza.

Further review specific to gender, disability and education as a sector was provided by Viktoria Midelauri, Disability Advisor, World Vision Australia.

Both projects are supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

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Front cover photo: Reading Club after school attracts children of all ages.



# BACKGROUND

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), 3.5 million primary-aged children are not enrolled in school. Of the ones that are, just two-thirds complete primary school.<sup>1</sup> Reasons for this are complex, ranging from damage to school buildings from long-term civil war through to poor teaching standards and accountability, crowded and unsafe environments, and violence against children, including sexual violence and early marriage.

Responding to this, World Vision is operating two inclusive education projects in DRC: Empowering Children and Communities in Tanganyika to Learn (2018-23) and Access to Quality Education in Kalehe Territory (2019-24). Both projects are supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

The projects are closely linked to DRC’s Education Sector Strategy for 2016 to 2025, which focuses on three key objectives:

- The promotion of an equitable education system
- The creation of necessary conditions for a quality education system
- The improved governance and management of the sector.



The projects contribute to SDG 4: Quality Education, as well as SDG10: Reduced Inequalities – through deliberately built networks of care for children with disabilities or other socio-economic vulnerabilities.

## HOW ARE THE PROJECTS CONTRIBUTING TO EDUCATION FOR ALL IN DRC?

The projects have similar, but not identical, approaches to inclusive education opportunities, with the goal to improve education access and quality learning achievements for girls and boys of all ages. The table below shows these approaches.

|                         |  | Tanganyika | Kalehe     |
|-------------------------|--|------------|------------|
| <b>In schools</b><br>   | Work through school committees on School Improvement Plans (buildings and infrastructure, inclusive practices, teacher accountability) | 40 schools | 30 schools |
|                         | Major works: buildings, toilets, water supply  | -          | 22 schools |
|                         | Teacher training on inclusive education, gender-based violence and child protection  | Yes        | Yes        |
|                         | Teacher training on teaching approaches for children of all backgrounds and abilities  | Yes        | Yes        |
|                         | School committees (teaching inspectors) monitor teaching standards   | Yes        | Yes        |
|                         | Health and hygiene, including menstrual hygiene  | Yes        | Yes        |
|                         | Trial of ‘Social Emotional Learning’, a form of psychosocial support for school children   | -          | Yes        |
| <b>In community</b><br> | MenCare / Fathers Groups to prioritise girls’ school enrolment and retention   | Yes        | Yes        |
|                         | Community-led Reading Clubs (teachers and parents supervise)   | Yes        | Yes        |
|                         | Community engagement (campaigns, events)   | Yes        | Yes        |
|                         | ‘Citizen Voice and Action’ to improve school governance, child protection and conflict resolution among local leaders                  | Yes        | Yes        |
| <b>In the home</b><br>  | Savings Groups for household economic resilience   | Yes        | Yes        |

1 Equivalent of Grade 6: source <https://www.usaid.gov/democratic-republic-congo/education>

## MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARDS QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL

In 2022, both projects commissioned a mid-term review including literacy testing (the STAR survey), surveys and interviews with children (in and out of school), teachers, committee members, savings groups, school principals, government coordinators and disability representatives.

In both locations, this review concluded the projects were on track to meet most of their outcome targets by the end of the project, with good likelihood of sustainability given the strong participation of community members in school committees, Citizen Voice and Action, child protection networks and MenCare gender discussions. Most notably, targets for reading, numbers and arithmetic improvements have already been met in both locations. Parents are better

able and more willing to pay the costs associated with their children's school attendance. In Kalehe, surveys also showed clear improvements in social cohesion and child protection understanding. However, significant challenges remain in moving towards total protection of children in the area and access to quality education. While school enrolment had markedly improved in Kalehe, it was not the case in Tanganyika. Both locations reported issues with retention and dropout, more so in Kalehe where security concerns have caused families to move temporarily or permanently. School closures due to COVID-19, followed by a series of teachers' strikes over non-payment, have also disrupted regular attendance in both locations.

|   | Tanganyika   |         |        | Kalehe       |         |        |
|---|--------------|---------|--------|--------------|---------|--------|
| Indicator   | Baseline     | Midline | Target | Baseline     | Midline | Target |
| % of children currently enrolled in and attending a structured learning institution (age range 6 - 17)                            | 76%          | 71.2%   | 87.4%  | n/a          | 87.5%   | 89%    |
| % of children in Grade 3 who can read a Grade 3 level passage (reading)   | 25.2%        | 55%     | 55.2%  | Not measured |         |        |
| % of children in Grade 3 who can read a Grade 3 level passage and correctly answer questions about it afterwards (comprehension). | 8.5%         | 21.9%   | 38.5%  | 23%          | 36.8%   | 50%    |
| % of children in Grade 3 level who can calculate (maths).   | 4%           | 30.7%   | 34%    | Not measured |         |        |
| Proportion of children who have dropped out of school   | 5%           | 9.3%    | -      | Not measured |         | -      |
| School retention rate   | 42%          | 54.7%   | 57%    | 61%          | 52.6%   | 81%    |
| % of households able to pay for their children's basic education.   | -            | 66.4%   | 100%   | 37%          | 57.5%   | 60%    |
| % parents with educational aspirations for their children   | Not measured |         |        | 88%          | 88.8%   | 95%    |
| % households reporting good social cohesion.  | Not measured |         |        | 32%          | 91.2%   | 75%    |
| % of households aware of child protection mechanisms in place.  | Not measured |         |        | 57%          | 85.2%   | 75%    |

In Kalehe, school rehabilitation has been key to enrolment results. The table below shows good progress but also the stark needs faced three years before, when most schools had no water, toilets, learning materials or menstrual hygiene support.

| Indicator  | Baseline | Midline | Target |
|--|----------|---------|--------|
| % target schools meeting policy standards (or similar) that have been selected and agreed. | 0%       | 36.8%   | 100%   |
| % target schools with a basic water source   | 3%       | 64.2%   | 100%   |
| % target schools with basic sanitation facilities.   | 32%      | 82.6%   | 100%   |
| % target schools with adequate menstrual hygiene facilities in place.                      | 0%       | 50.2%   | 100%   |
| % of Grade 1–3 Unlock Literacy classrooms with print-rich environments                     | 0%       | 76%     | 100%   |

## IMPACT INSIGHTS



### BETTER TEACHING METHODS

*“Teachers had been teaching like pastors preaching in a church. I had serious problems reading, writing and calculating and this caused me to repeat classes. My mother had me read and do math at home, something she never did before. This gave me a taste for it. [Now] I do my calculations without problems, without fear and I can interpret even the pictures. In class, my teacher uses materials to help us understand the lessons. I improved my school result... I am now going to grade 5 and I am confident I will also pass next year.” – Furaha, a schoolgirl in Kalehe.*



## READING CLUB

Reading Club takes place under a tree, Tanganyika. The need for better sheltered space was raised through community feedback boxes, leading to a recommendation for school principals and teachers to play a clearer role in these after-school events.

## COMMUNITY EVENTS



Leuven lives with a permanent disability in Kalemie. Here, he tells his story at a community event to commemorate the Day of the African Child. His parents were willing to enrol him at school, but getting there meant pulling himself along on hands and knees. This simple wheelchair makes it possible to transport Leuven to and around school, where he interacts, learns and plays games with other children. He says: "I am very happy to arrive at school every day clean like my friends. Before, I was always dirty because of the mud."

The projects used community gatherings like this in both locations as opportunities to share messages on child protection awareness, inclusion and response for children at risk.



### INVESTING IN CHILDREN

'I thank mama and her group for buying me a nice uniform and shoes I can wear and go to school like other children in our school. I'm no longer ashamed or thinking of quitting school,' says Uwezo (centre). Her mother is a savings group member who, despite her own illiteracy, has managed to start a small business from savings and loans through the group.



### BETTER SCHOOL BUILDINGS

With crumbling walls and ceilings, no toilets and no running water, along with large class sizes (top left), some parents preferred not to send their children to school for safety reasons. Now, with school buildings with doors and windows that close (top right), and clean, safe toilets that consider needs of girls and children with disability (left), the learning environment is more appealing.

# CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

## GENDER

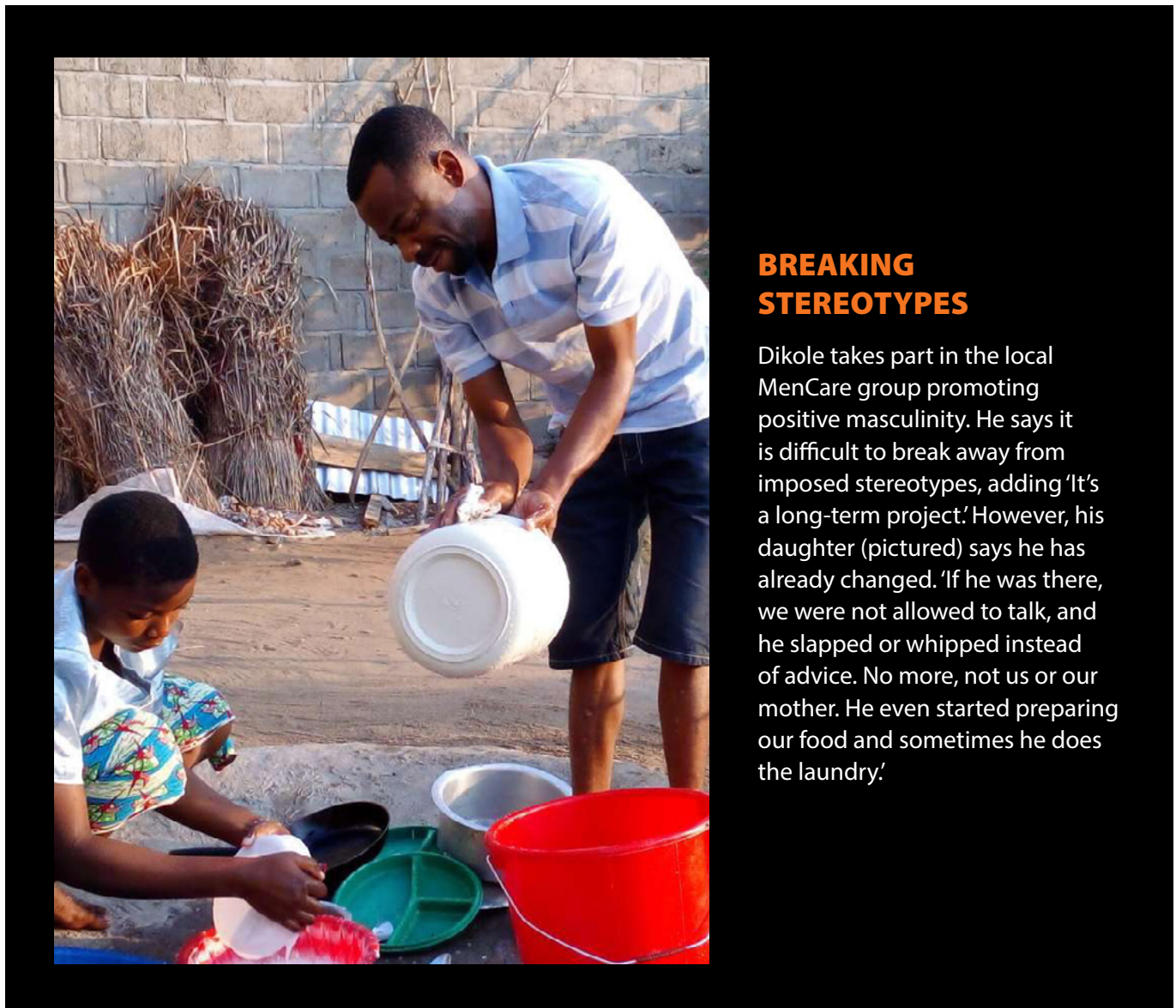
Cross-cutting goals to address gender inequality and violence against girls and women show strong results for children, and a starting point for future results for adults, though more is needed. The Kalehe mid-term review found that girls are experiencing education benefits about on-par with boys, and exceeding boys in some areas. However, in Tanganyika the retention rate is lower for girls (53.5%) than for boys (55.9%), with cases of school dropout higher for girls (9.9%) than for boys (8.7%).

*“Our teaching is currently of high quality, and we apply an inclusive and non-discriminatory education in relation to vulnerabilities.” – Teacher, Kalehe*

At school, boys and girls share a promising equality of roles across hygiene clubs, book clubs and class heads.

There remain some challenges to representation regarding women and girls in decision-making roles. For example, out of 19 schools contacted, there were no women leading parent committees, while only two schools<sup>2</sup> (10.5%) had women in charge of their management boards.

With only 29.8% of women surveyed believing they participate in decision making in the community, this remains another area of gender inequality that the project should focus on.



## BREAKING STEREOTYPES

Dikole takes part in the local MenCare group promoting positive masculinity. He says it is difficult to break away from imposed stereotypes, adding ‘It’s a long-term project.’ However, his daughter (pictured) says he has already changed. ‘If he was there, we were not allowed to talk, and he slapped or whipped instead of advice. No more, not us or our mother. He even started preparing our food and sometimes he does the laundry.’

2 PS Cibanda and PS Kalehe



## DISABILITY INCLUSION

| Indicator  | Baseline | Midline | Target |
|--|----------|---------|--------|
| Kalehe: % of households with a positive perception of inclusive education. | 63%      | 98.1%   | 90%    |

The project aims to promote equal access to education services and quality education, building education infrastructure focus that promotes accessibility, ensures provision of reasonable accommodation for individual students with disability (based on their needs), and contributes to attitudinal and behavioural changes of communities towards disability.

*“Though we have extremely limited resources, I prefer to send my child with a disability to school.” – Parent, Tanganyika*

There have been notable accomplishments, including increases in community perception that children should have the same chance of going to school regardless of their disability or gender. In Kalehe, this increased from the baseline of 63% to 98.1% at the time of the mid-term evaluation. Partnerships with local disability associations

have been key to results in this area and continue to be a priority for addressing often invisible barriers to full participation and rights.

The mid-term reviews found households with children with disability or parents/caregivers with disability are participating in project activities, but not at the same rate as those without disability. There remain challenges in relation to reducing mobility barriers for children living with disabilities, or specialised responses to other forms of disability. Learning outcomes in Tanganyika were also less for children with disability. The mid-term review found that children and parents/caregivers with disability lag behind in education outcomes, including reading (54.1% of students with disability have simple reading ability compared to 65.8% of students without disability) and reading comprehension (22.4% of students pass reading comprehension assessment compared to 15.8% of students with disability).



### OVERCOMING DISCRIMINATION

When Susan gave birth to Mbiya, her husband abandoned them both. Since then, Susan has had to shelter her daughter from extreme discrimination associated with albinism. She had never expected that Mbiya would be accepted to enrol at school and encouraged to learn by teachers there like any other child.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Mid-term reviews delivered a set of recommendations for both projects as they enter their final year and plan for handover to local partners and authorities.

| Tanganyika  | Kalehe   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide incentives for inclusive education, for instance sign language for parents and teachers of children with hearing impairment.</li> <li>• Push harder for women to take up positions of responsibility on school committees.</li> <li>• More teacher training, including computer courses, technology and life skills.</li> <li>• Continue to support schools in the construction and rehabilitation of classrooms.</li> <li>• More capital for Savings for Transformation (S4T) groups to improve their capacity to grant loans.</li> <li>• Revitalise Reading Clubs, starting with self-assessment, then formally defining financial systems and the role of school principals, parents and teachers in sustaining the clubs.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to raise awareness among parents and caregivers of children with disability on the importance of including them in the school system.</li> <li>• Engage principals in local advocacy (Citizen Voice and Action) to ensure competence and accountability (and avoid further teacher strikes).</li> <li>• Further strengthen local groups (Savings Groups, Child Protection outreach) and monitor for efficiency and sustainability of processes.</li> <li>• Link Savings Groups to other male engagement work, as a framework for adopting fairer power relations and reducing inequalities.</li> <li>• Secure commitment from school management and parent committees to operate reading clubs and maintain WASH facilities.</li> <li>• Teachers need computer training.</li> <li>• Complete the School Improvement Plans for classrooms meeting minimum standards: desks, chairs, sanitary infrastructure and so on.</li> </ul> |



Dada goes to school at Ephrata, a school for the deaf. At 14, she had never before been taught about sexual and reproductive health, including menstruation. She says 'With my disability, I never thought I would receive special attention like that. I am feeling privileged, honoured and lucky to be informed about my own body and menstrual hygiene. The training left me with the feeling that I am as important as any other girl.'

## For more information, contact:

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World Vision Australia acknowledges the support of the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).



**THIS MEANS THE WORLD**