

# Making IDA21 Work for Children

## World Vision's Priorities for IDA21 Replenishment

May 2024

Family by the Sea, Lebanon, 2023.  
Credit: Mark Abou Jaoude

As a multi-mandated, child-focused Christian organisation with over 70 years of experience in 100 countries, World Vision recognises the importance of IDA21 to address extreme poverty and advance the well-being of the most vulnerable populations in low- and middle-income countries, including children. IDA helps to improve the conditions of life for 1.5 billion people in the world's poorest countries and it provides critical services and protection for children in multiple areas such as education, food and nutrition, health and social protection. IDA21 will be a vital instrument for the World Bank's new mission to create a world free of poverty on a liveable planet and it requires ambitious, larger-than-ever donor replenishments and strong political commitments.

World Vision recommends the prioritisation of two key issues for the IDA21 replenishment: 1) Tackling the Food Security and Nutrition Crisis and 2) Addressing the Reversal of Child Well-Being. The final part of this briefing will cover our general recommendations relating to the IDA21 replenishment.

### 1) Food Security and Nutrition Crisis and IDA21

World Vision is particularly concerned about the unprecedented food security and nutrition crisis, with 330 million people facing acute levels of food insecurity. Today we are witnessing the largest global hunger crisis in modern history. This food crisis is having a disproportionate impact on children:

- Almost half of the 345 million people facing acute hunger were estimated to be children in 2022.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> World Food Programme, 2022. "A generation at risk: nearly half of global food crisis hungry are children, say WFP, African Union Development Agency NEPAD, The Education Commission and education partners."

- Over 148 million children under age 5 were affected by stunting in 2022.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2022, an estimated 29.6% of the world population – 2.4 billion people – were moderately or severely food insecure.<sup>3</sup>
- It is estimated that almost 600 million people will be chronically undernourished in 2030, with the most vulnerable women and children affected most.<sup>4</sup>

World Vision believes that the IDA21 replenishment has a critical role in addressing the current spiralling food security and nutrition challenges and calls on the development of an ambitious nutrition and food security financial package and strong IDA21 policy commitments.



The World Bank has taken a leadership role in addressing food security and nutrition crisis in multiple ways. In May 2022, the World Bank stepped up to commit \$30 billion to address food insecurity and in the subsequent 15 months, actually surpassed this by making \$45 billion available. The World Bank's food and nutrition security portfolio now spans over 90 countries and financial nutrition commitments have increased significantly since 2011. In the Evolution Roadmap, one of the key Global Challenges identified as a priority for the Bank's next season is food security and nutrition. Whilst World Vision recognises these vital efforts, we are concerned to see the lack of specific theme on food security and nutrition in the current IDA21 plans. Malnutrition is a root cause of nearly half of all child deaths and one in five maternal

<https://www.wfp.org/news/generation-risk-nearly-half-global-food-crisis-hungry-are-children-say-wfp-african-union>

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization, 2023. "Joint child malnutrition estimates."

<https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/topics/joint-child-malnutrition-estimates-unicef-who-wb>

<sup>3</sup> United Nations, 2023. "Zero hunger." <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/goal-02/>

<sup>4</sup> United Nations, 2023. "Global Issues: Food." <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/food>

deaths.<sup>5</sup> IDA needs increased, coherent and predictable funding that specifically addresses food and nutrition security rather than simply relying on funding that is nutrition-sensitive. This funding needs to have a more intentional focus on children. World Bank cannot be selective in addressing nutrition in isolated life cycles; the quality of every year of a child's life has ramifications on their long-term well-being. Nutrition needs to start at conception and be promoted proactively through adolescence and reproductive years. Special attention should be paid to children under 5 years as this is a critical window for establishing optimal health and development and addressing malnutrition.

### Recommendations:

- 1) Include strong focus on nutrition and food security within the IDA21 policy framework focus areas, relevant lenses as well as in the World Bank Corporate Scorecard.
- 2) Commit to increase IDA funding levels and increase the pace of disbursements towards food and nutrition security to address the ongoing food and nutrition security crisis.
- 3) Strengthen the critical role that nutrition interventions play within crisis prevention, preparedness and response within the proposed lens on Fragility and Crisis Response Window (CRW) and improve the use of Contingency Emergency Response Components for food security and nutrition related emergencies.
- 4) Use IDA21 investments to catalyse the health system strengthening required to comprehensively deliver Essential Nutrition Actions (ENA). Prioritise children's nutrition and food security (for instance under the IDA21 People Focus Area and within the proposed FCV lens). Increase coherence and coordination within the World Bank across the Global Practices by ensuring common approach and shared goals on food security and nutrition related issues across relevant departments within the Bank.



Bangladesh, 2023. Credit: Ben Adams

<sup>5</sup> World Health Organization, 2024. "Fact Sheets – Malnutrition." <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/malnutrition#:~:text=Globally%20in%202022%2C%20149%20million,age%20are%20linked%20to%20undernutrition.>

## 2) Reversal in Child Well-Being and IDA21

There are 2.4 billion children in the world today and they make up 30% of the world's population. This percentage is much higher in lower income countries that receive support from the World Bank. Children are twice as likely as adults to live in extreme poverty and currently, 356 million children in the world experience extreme poverty.<sup>6</sup> One billion children live in 'multidimensional poverty', meaning they lack access to education, health care, housing, nutrition, sanitation or water.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, certain children – especially girls, children with disabilities, and those who have been displaced or are refugees – face intersectional barriers to fully realising their rights. According to UNICEF, two-thirds of child-focused SDGs are currently off track.<sup>8</sup>

World Vision is concerned about the serious reversal in the well-being of children globally. This has been fuelled by the global pandemic, compounded by conflict and climate change, and is evidenced by setbacks in education, hunger, violence and overall measures of extreme poverty that disproportionately impact children.

Despite these clearly negative trends for children, we have not seen a concomitant increase in attention, response, nor in funding to children globally. New research by World Vision and EY shows that only a fraction of ODA (12%) currently benefits children, of which only 5 % is specifically targeting the welfare of children through improved access to child-specific needs and services (such as immunisations, education or addressing violence against children.)<sup>9</sup> This is concerning given that, on average, 46% of the populations in aid receiving countries are children. The research further found that a total social value of \$10 is generated for every dollar invested in children through ODA. This shows that in addition of being the right thing to do, investing in children also makes economic sense. It is clear that the World Bank's IDA financing and policy commitments can have a significant positive impact on children's lives. For instance, in FY23,



<sup>6</sup> Silwal,A; Engilbertsdottir,S; Cuesta Leiva,J; Newhouse,D; Stewart,D. 2020. *Global Estimate of Children in Monetary Poverty : An Update (English)*. Poverty and Equity discussion paper Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/966791603123453576/Global-Estimate-of-Children-in-Monetary-Poverty-An-Update>

<sup>7</sup> UNICEF. "Child poverty." <https://www.unicef.org/social-policy/child-poverty>

<sup>8</sup> UNICEF, 2024. "Using data to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for children." <https://data.unicef.org/sdgs/>

<sup>9</sup> World Vision International, 2024. "Putting Children First for Sustainable Development: The return on investment from child-related Official Development Assistance." <https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/Putting%20Children%20First.pdf>

25% of IDA financing went to social services including education, health, and social protection which play an important role in children's healthy development. Between FY2011-2022, IDA financing supported 437 million children to receive immunisations.

In previous IDA policy commitments, references to supporting children and their well-being mostly fall into immunisations and health, nutrition, and educational services provided to children. Over the course of the last decade and past five IDA replenishment cycles, there has been a positive trend towards a growing number of policy commitments that mention or prioritise children.

Children in conflict zones and regions of fragility are the ones who suffer the most. The number of complex, protracted crises is steadily increasing and forced displacement is at a record high. Humanitarian needs have doubled in just the last four years with 1 in every 23 people in need of humanitarian assistance just to survive: half of whom – 170 million – are children.<sup>10</sup>

- Worldwide, 43.3 million children remained displaced from their homes due to violence and conflict.<sup>11</sup>
- 8 million children under 5 in 15 crisis-hit countries are at risk of death from severe wasting unless they received immediate therapeutic food and care.<sup>12</sup>
- According to the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies, children in fragile, conflict-affected countries are more than twice as likely to be out of school compared with those in countries not affected by conflict.



Somalia, 2022. Credit: Peter Caton, World Vision

<sup>10</sup> UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2023. "Global Humanitarian Overview 2023." <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/world/global-humanitarian-overview-2023-december-update-snapshot-31-december-2023>

<sup>11</sup> UNICEF, 2023. "Number of displaced children reaches new high of 43.3 million." <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/number-displaced-children-reaches-new-high-433-million#:~:text=Of%20the%2043.3%20million%20children,displaced%20by%20conflict%20and%20violence.>

<sup>12</sup> UNICEF, 2022. "Global Hunger Crisis pushing One Child into Severe Malnutrition Every Minute in 15 Crisis-Hit Countries." <https://www.unicef.org/mena/press-releases/global-hunger-crisis-pushing-one-child-severe-malnutrition-every-minute-15-crisis>

We are encouraged by the World Bank's new commitments to addressing the needs of children and young people in fragile contexts.<sup>13</sup> The World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence 2020-2025 recognises children as a group that suffers disproportionately from the violence and economic disruption of war and who need improved nutrition, education and basic healthcare. The Bank also proposes a special focus on supporting the agency of children and recognises that youth should be mobilised as agents of change to contribute to less fragile and more peaceful societies.

World Vision believes that World Bank's IDA would benefit from a greater and more intentional focus on children, especially those in fragile contexts and places of extreme poverty. The commitments to put children at the centre of the IDA21 strategy, given their unique development needs, opportunities and challenges, could mean, for instance greater investments in early childhood development, maternal and child health, and efforts to tackle child hunger and malnutrition.

Furthermore, children themselves can provide important and unique insights which can make positive contributions to the World Bank's work, including in IDA21 consultations. Child participation is not only a right but an essential component to effective and participatory policy making which should be considered by the World Bank in its IDA21 policy making and other policy processes.

#### Recommendations:

- 1) IDA21 should be strategically directed at the most vulnerable populations. World Vision urges a particular emphasis on children in fragile contexts and places of extreme poverty and strengthened efforts to ensure that children in the poorest and most crisis affected countries have access to essential, transformative and accelerating services through IDA funding. The World Bank should consider a specific lens on youth and children, in addition to- or combined with - the currently planned lens on gender which we welcome.
- 2) Ensure that IDA investments and commitments, regardless of their objective, are child-sensitive by considering potential impact on children.
- 3) For the World Bank, include stronger focus on children as part of the IDA policy commitments and financing but also as part of its broader work, including in its core diagnostics such as Public Expenditure Reviews, Poverty Assessments, Country Climate and Development Reports, Risk and Resilience Assessments and Country Economic Memoranda. The consideration of children and their wellbeing should also be included in the key stages of the Country Engagement Cycle such as the Systematic Country Diagnostic, Country Partnerships Frameworks, Performance and Learning Reviews as well as Completion and Learnings Reviews. The World Bank could also explore strengthening its focus on children for instance by tracking child related IDA budgetary contributions more effectively. World Vision also recommends the development of a more comprehensive policy or strategy focusing on children and their needs.
- 4) The World Bank should actively seek to provide channels to incorporate the voices and experiences of children into its policy decisions and within processes of devising strategic priorities such as IDA21 replenishment and its country engagement processes.

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<sup>13</sup> Murthi, M. and Van der Heijden, K. 2024. "Investing in the future: Empowering children and youth in fragile contexts." <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/dev4peace/investing-future-empowering-children-and-youth-fragile-contexts>

- 5) We also encourage the IDA21 replenishment to recognise [the OECD DAC Nexus Guidelines](#) and embed these principles as part of the IDA21.



Guatemala, 2022. Credit: Ben Adams

### 3) General Comments

World Vision welcomes the World Bank's initial commitments to simplify IDA and maximise its efficiency as highlighted in the IDA20 Mid-Term Review Paper and in subsequent IDA21 meetings.<sup>14</sup> Yet, it remains essential that the simplification does not divert attention from the need for robust accountability mechanisms.

#### Recommendation:

IDA21 should include a strong focus on institutionalisation of citizen-led social accountability by including funds for adequate citizen engagement and stakeholder feedback mechanisms in country engagement processes and all Bank funded projects.

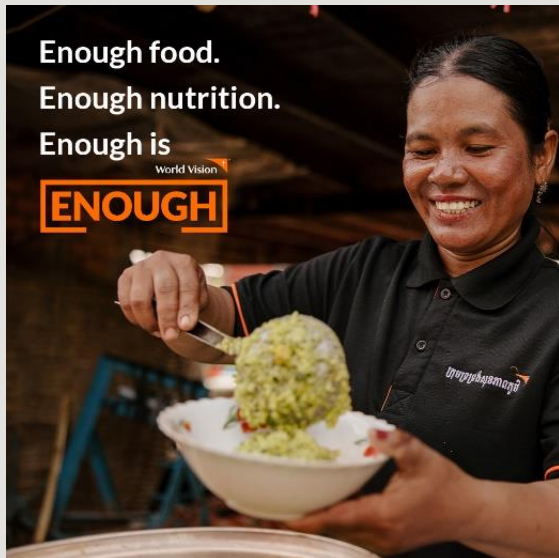
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<sup>14</sup> World Bank, 2023. "IDA20 Mid-Term Review: Implementation Update and Issues for Discussion (Omnibus Paper)." <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099012624183055952/bosib1dd6aceb20e61ba8d19253d964eb38>

Building partnerships and developing better fit for purpose mechanisms to partner with non-governmental actors including civil society organisations can help to increase the pace of disbursements and delivery of IDA, particularly in fragile contexts where these partnerships can be especially strategic. It also remains important that all the IDA priorities, including focus areas and lenses, financing mechanisms and policy commitments, will be determined in close consultation with both the IDA recipient countries as well as with local and international civil society organisations, faith-based actors and youth and child-led and focused movements and organisations. We welcome the World Bank's current initiative to organise regional consultations for IDA21 and look forward to engaging in these.

**Recommendation:**

IDA21 provides an opportunity to develop better fit-for-purpose mechanisms for the World Bank to work with non-governmental actors and to enhance collaboration with civil society.



World Vision recognises addressing the food security and nutrition crisis requires collective action. We have committed to investing \$3.4bn over three years into work that will reduce hunger and improve the nutritional status of 125 million children in 67 countries where they are suffering most. This commitment comprises \$1.2 bn in donations from private sources and in micro

finance loans given out by Vision Fund, plus \$2.2 bn from institutional donors like governments and UN agencies. [The global ENOUGH campaign](#) is World Vision's latest contribution to sounding the alarm and addressing the global hunger and nutrition emergency.