

GENDER EQUALITY, DISABILITY, AND SOCIAL INCLUSION - GEDSI | EAST ASIA

CAPACITY STATEMENT

Tackling gender and social exclusion in East Asia

In East Asia, millions of women, girls, and people with disabilities face persistent inequalities that limit their access to essential services and lifelong opportunities. An estimated **43 million children** in the region live with disabilities, many of whom are denied education and healthcare¹. Poverty forces nearly **1 in 10 children into child labour** across the Asia-Pacific region². Additionally, **1 in 5 girls are married** before their 18th birthday, hindering their education and increasing their vulnerability to poverty³.

World Vision addresses these inequalities through a holistic approach that includes **community-led transformation, systemic advocacy, and inclusive programming**. We collaborate with local communities, governments, and partners to create inclusive systems where people of all identities, abilities and background can thrive.

Children, especially girls, and those with disabilities face additional barriers such as stigma and discrimination, further restricting their access to education, healthcare, and social services. Boys are also affected, often forced into labour or dropping out of school to support their families.

Polycrises, including forced migration, disasters, climate change, and conflict, exacerbate these challenges.

Our Reach in 2023

Child Protection & Participation: over **1 million** vulnerable children and families reached

Safe Migration: **204,143** vulnerable children and families supported

Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaption: **287,326** vulnerable children and families impacted

Nutrition and Food Security: **632,995** vulnerable children and families benefitted

Map labels: MONGOLIA, NORTH KOREA, CHINA, MYANMAR, THAILAND, CAMBODIA, LAOS, VIETNAM

Other Sectors:

Community Engagement for Child Well-being 1,218,602	Livelihood 680,442	Water, Sanitation & Hygiene 80,026	Faith and Development 259,263
Education 690,732	Health 490,211	Youth Development 20,830	

1 Global Fund for Children: <https://globalfundforchildren.org/our-partners/where-we-work/asia/>
 2 UNICEF: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/child-labour/>
 3 Global Fund for Children: <https://globalfundforchildren.org/our-partners/where-we-work/asia/>

2023 Total Reach: 5,763,351



Girls

1,365,920



Boys

1,337,075



Women

1,670,866



Men

1,389,490

People With Disability (PWD) reach 29,367



Girls

7,901



Boys

9,564



Women

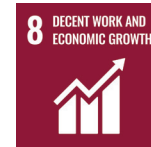
5,956



Men

5,946

SDGs CONTRIBUTED TO:



What makes our approach effective and sustainable

- **Inclusive** – we support those most excluded to exercise rights, agency and leadership
- **Community-led transformation** – we engage communities to dismantle harmful behaviours, norms, and attitudes linked with gender, disability, and social exclusion
- **Local to global advocacy and policy** – we work with community members and partners to influence policies, systems and structures to foster long-term change
- **Proven methods** – we use evidence-based models to tackle the root causes of inequalities and exclusion
- **Integration** – we prioritise equality and inclusion across all our work, ensuring that initiatives we undertake promote equal opportunities and access regardless of gender, ability, or background
- **Trusted partner** – Our deep-rooted presence and commitment enable us to work closely with partners at various levels to drive meaningful change.

We deliver comprehensive integrated programming to tackle the root causes of gender inequality and exclusion

We work across five change domains to ignite children's agency, transformation and empowerment

World Vision's Gender Equality and Social Inclusion theory of change recognises the importance of working simultaneously to propel access, participation, engagement in decision-making, and systems changes to contribute to the overall well-being of girls and boys.



1. ACCESS



Women Economic Empowerment – we work with women and young women, as well as the male community members and leaders, to foster equitable economic empowerment by equipping them with financial and vocational skills, equitable market access, and fostering income generation and savings.



Life-skills for girls – we help adolescent girls and young people become economically and socially active and confident to take control of their futures. We work through [Youth Impact + Clubs](#) to foster peer-to-peer support to equip youth with life skills encouraging them to become active engaged citizens with competencies, values, confidence, and social connectedness.



Strengthen protection systems – we strengthen protection mechanisms and systems to protect girls and boys from various forms of gender-based violence, including online sexual exploitation and abuse, child labour, and child marriage.

In China, World Vision, through World Vision *Community for All* project model, has been working on the rehabilitation and community integration of children with disabilities and providing support on pre-vocational preparation.



2. PARTICIPATION

Mobilising communities to drive systemic change – Through our [Citizens Voice and Action Model](#), we support citizens in monitoring government services and using evidence to advocate for accountability and improvements, ensuring services effectively address the needs of the most in need.



In Vietnam, World Vision's advocacy efforts have driven increased budget allocations for inclusive education, ensuring more children with disabilities can access schooling. Complementing this, the 2012 *Enabling Disability Mainstreaming Project* championed inclusion by enhancing health and education services, creating economic opportunities, and advocating for equitable policies for people with disabilities.

Fostering inclusive participation – We engage women, girls, and persons with disabilities, and other marginalised groups to ensure their voices are integral to decision-making processes, particularly in the areas of protection, and water, sanitation, and hygiene services, where they face significant challenges.



3. DECISION-MAKING

Mobilising communities to drive systemic change – Our [Men Engagement Approach](#) acknowledges the critical role that boys and men play in challenging and transforming gender inequalities. We collaborate with community leaders to equip them with the tools and understanding to challenge the social structures, institutions, and power dynamics that perpetuate gender-based disparities. Through this approach, we work to prevent child marriage, eliminate gender-based violence, and promote equal social and economic opportunities for women and girls.

4. SYSTEMS

World Vision engages with governments, interfaith leaders, and civil society to create enabling environments that foster inclusivity.

Shifting harmful norms through community and faith leaders

Through our [Channels of Hope](#) programme model, World Vision collaborates with community and faith leaders to challenge harmful gender norms and promote gender equality. Using faith-based strategies, we engage leaders from Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu communities to transform deeply rooted attitudes and drive concrete actions that advance gender equity and social inclusion.

Through our [Community Change](#) approach, we facilitate open dialogues to transform harmful norms and foster positive behaviours that embrace differences and diversity. This approach prioritises the inclusion and protection of those often most excluded, such as women, children, and individuals with disabilities, ensuring they are safeguarded from violence.

Our work in action

TOWARDS EQUITABLE COMMUNITIES AND SOCIETIES

In **Cambodia**, we work with the Commune Committee for Women and Children (CCWC) to create pathways for women and girls to participate in income-generating activities. We achieve results by raising awareness, identifying and removing barriers and promoting equitable engagement in economic activities. World Vision Cambodia has advocated relevant authorities at local and sub-national levels to allocate more budget for CCWC to promote gender awareness in their communities.

In **Laos**, World Vision supports children, particularly girls, in a consultation process by the National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children (NCAWMC) focused on Lao Youth Generation 2030.

Research Agenda

World Vision East Asia is committed to strengthening its efforts in generating data-driven research to enhance programme effectiveness and advocacy work. By prioritising evidence-based insights, we aim to better understand and address the evolving needs of the communities we serve, ensuring that our strategies are informed by reliable data to create lasting impact.

- In 2024, in partnership with the Stockholm Environment Institute, World Vision conducted the research "[Climate Change, Vulnerability, and Migration: Impacts on Children and Youth in East Asia](#)". The report explores how climate change, poverty, and migration intersect, highlighting the profound impacts on children, particularly in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. It emphasises the heightened risks for girls and women, who are disproportionately affected by climate-induced migration, including exploitation, disrupted education, and health risks.
- In 2022, World Vision, in collaboration with the Institute for Family and Gender Studies, researched the drivers and consequences of child marriage in Vietnam's ethnic minority communities with high early marriage rates. The study examined socio-economic factors such as gender inequality, limited education, cultural norms, and poverty. Findings showed that girls, particularly those with lower education, marry earlier, face health risks, and have limited agency in family and healthcare decisions. Education was identified as key in delaying marriage, with those attaining secondary or higher education marrying later. Early marriage is also linked to psycho-emotional distress, domestic violence, and poor healthcare access.



MAKING EDUCATION INCLUSIVE

World Vision East Asia collaborates with schools and caregivers to create accessible, welcoming, and supportive environments that embrace children in all their diversity. Through tested and proven initiatives, we aim to transform education systems to meet the needs of every learner.

Transforming school environments

We work with schools to ensure facilities are safer and more accessible for all learners by introducing barrier-free and disability-friendly classrooms, as well as improved sanitation and hygiene facilities.

Building Capacity of Teachers and Leaders

We collaborate with teachers, parents, school committees, and traditional leaders to transform attitudes and invest in inclusive curricula and teaching resources.

Early childhood education

Through our [Learning Roots](#) approach, we help parents and communities prepare underserved children, especially those with disabilities, for early childhood education, ensuring they develop foundational skills and confidence to start school successfully.

Addressing Harmful Social Norms

Partnering with communities, we challenge stigma against children with disabilities, girls, and others facing exclusion, fostering their active participation in education.

Continued Education: Resource & livelihood support

We provide economic support to families facing significant challenges, helping children remain in school, especially during the critical transition from primary to secondary education, when many children leave to work.

Achieving Literacy for All

Using our proven [Unlock Literacy](#) approach, we support teachers and school leaders build strong skills and classroom practices that help all children, especially those most disadvantaged, achieve literacy and numeracy within the first three years of school.

In **Laos**, our education programmes have reached over 25,000 people in 2022 to enhance literacy and numeracy outcomes, including the training of 87 teachers and 91 volunteers. We provided a leg-up to 120 of the most vulnerable students to stay in school as they transitioned from primary to secondary through conditional cash transfers. As a result, more children at risk of dropping out were able to continue secondary school, particularly girls, often compelled to discontinue their education.

In **Myanmar**, many children have missed critical years of education during COVID-19 and the escalation of violence in 2021. Our inclusive education programmes have helped children return to school and catch up on literacy and numeracy skills, reaching close to 30,000 people with literacy interventions. We fostered life skills with over 12,000 children and supported 30 communities to improve school environments, including water and sanitation systems, making them more child-friendly and accessible.

In **Thailand** World Vision trained 56,800 adolescents in life and vocational skills, empowering them to advocate for issues addressing their community. This included supporting young people to participate in drafting key child protection policy recommendations to the government on the Child Protection Act, National Children and Youth Development Act, Domestic Violence Victim Protection Act and ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence Against Children.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:



KEY DONORS AND PARTNERS



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