

# Big Goals: Our Work



Making  
Our Vision  
**REAL**

# Our Work: A compelling case for change



**To make our vision real** in the face of increasing global complexity, this section suggests that World Vision should fundamentally rethink and radically redesign the way it works. The two primary reasons for redesigning how the Partnership works are rapid growth and the shortcomings of a decentralised federal system.

*Do these arguments ring true for you in your context?*

## Introduction

Our work processes in support of the Vision and Big Goals journey have shown that there is a compelling case for fundamentally rethinking and redesigning the way World Vision works. World Vision's goal is to dramatically improve the impact on the lives of children through redesigning its work processes across the organisation. This is intended to free up more resources, unleash personal energies and capacities in order to transform lives. The impact on the lives of children could be dramatically enhanced through improvements in quality, service, efficiency, effectiveness, and cost of our ministry. This paper seeks to establish the case for work redesign.

### Assumptions for redesigning our work successfully

- A compelling strategic case for redesign
- Making work redesign priority No. 1
- Making and following through on commitments
- Sustained, visible, and committed leadership
- Nothing off limits for discussion or redesign
- A willingness by every individual to change as needed
- Honest, constant communication from management
- Broad participation with engagement of the right people
- A willingness to adopt a new vocabulary
- Addressing human resource implications up front

## Rapid growth

In 1950, the Rev. Bob Pierce founded a child sponsorship program for a few Korean orphans. Today, World Vision is a complex, global humanitarian organisation working with some 100 million people in 100 nations. Its donors sponsor more than 2.2 million children. Its annual revenue exceeds \$1.25 billion (US). It employs more than 20,000 staff. It has become the largest provider of emergency relief food. In less than a decade, its small loans to the poor have grown from nothing to over \$80 million.

## Taking on new challenges

World Vision began by providing board, room and spiritual care for orphans. Gradually, it grew to embrace larger development issues, partnering with communities to enable holistic, sustainable solutions to poverty. Today, World Vision does disaster relief, peace building, health care, education, child protection, micro-enterprise development, community organising, HIV/AIDS prevention and care, and host of other activities of service to the poor and oppressed. In recent years, World Vision has become a major global advocate on issues such as child trafficking, fair trade, economic justice, and HIV/AIDS.

## Growing out of old structures

Tremendous growth combined with new tasks and new agendas has stretched and exhausted World Vision's structures. Staff, donors, partners and communities – seeking help amidst war, disease, poverty and disaster – have placed significant pressure on World Vision's resources and managerial capability.

This pressure has been compounded by the nature of a federal Partnership of "independent yet interdependent" entities. The structure of the Partnership enhances local ownership and responsiveness in the field and support offices.



But within this structure, international, national and local staff note significant shortcomings:

- Long-term program integration, resource allocation and coordination suffer
- Waste, duplication and unbalanced efforts result
- Opportunities are missed or not addressed. (e.g., the Partnership could realise perhaps a \$20 million a year saving through combined purchase, storage, shipping, and maintenance of goods.)
- The aggregate impact of World Vision's work is difficult to measure
- Structures that should support community work instead place excessive demands on it
- Decision-making and consensus seeking are slow and costly
- The lines of authority are unclear and roles are confused
- Our organisational capacity to respond to the need has not kept pace with growth demands

## Addressing growth, complexity, and donor expectations

World Vision has undertaken numerous efforts to improve efficiency, streamline processes, and deliver more impact for those whom it serves. Public and private donors increasingly demand accountability and transparency. We want to deliver the maximum effect for their dollar, while being trusted partners in Transformational Development.

Until now, however, improvements have tended to be piecemeal, the work of one or more partners working semi-independently. Over the years, outside consultants have recommended wholesale change. But only with the advent of the Big Goals process has the Partnership been prepared to embrace it.

We are now calling for the biggest change in the way we work since World Vision reorganised from a US-dominated organisation into a full-fledged federal Partnership.

## A proposal for a thorough work redesign

In conjunction with the Big Goals process, we propose that World Vision systematically assess its work processes, management processes, and governance across the Partnership.

This effort is called "Our Work." Its purpose is to fundamentally rethink and radically redesign how we work so World Vision can achieve dramatic improvements in quality, service, efficiency, cost and impact on the lives of children.

### The ADP manager today

Imagine you're the manager of an Area Development Program (ADP) in a rural Africa. Your ADP has a high HIV infection rate. Because of AIDS deaths, hundreds of orphans and many child-headed households depend upon World Vision's assistance. There is a critical need for health care, education and micro-enterprise development.

Yet much of your long day is consumed by administrative tasks. You answer hundreds of e-mail requests from the Partnership Office, Support Offices and various individuals. You are asked to complete surveys, write reports, and provide information on a host of other topics. In recent years, the e-mail requests have grown dramatically. What is particularly frustrating is that several offices make virtually the same request. You are overburdened with all the demands and concerned that you cannot spend more time with leading staff and external partners, focused on moving the community's agenda forward. There has to be a better way.

### The Support Office analyst today

Now imagine you work in a large Support Office as an analyst. You're required to request data and information from national offices, either directly or through a regional coordinator. To satisfy donors and ensure quality work, you need information about sponsored children or statistics on emergency food distribution, HIV prevention or women receiving small loans.

Often, it takes months to collect this information. Sometimes it is incomplete and you have to enquire again. You wonder about the data itself. Is it sufficient for good decision-making? Is it accurate enough to share with donors or governments? Is it outdated by the time you receive it? You feel frustrated by this slow, unreliable process of information gathering, concerned that you cannot spend more time doing analysis. There has to be a better way.

This will not be an easy task. It means abandoning old habits and embracing new and perhaps unfamiliar ways of working. It will reshape jobs and offices. It will come with a personal and corporate price tag.

We are convinced, however, that such an effort is absolutely essential. We are also convinced that the Big Goals process cannot succeed without redesigning how the Partnership works. In fact, the Big Goals are closely linked with how we do work. They will set our work priorities.

Rethinking and redesigning our work will add value, improve performance, attract donors, empower our staff, commit more resources to our ministry, and increase benefits to children and families and our external partners. Doing our work well will move World Vision much closer toward achieving its vision of fullness of life for all God's children. The closer cooperation and coordination that will be required will move us to a new level of internal and external partnering.

## Building on the vision

Our vision of "life in all its fullness, the will to make it so" compels us to change. In announcing our vision last year, World Vision pledged to be a:

- Faithful messenger of God's love
- Trusted partner in lasting change
- Powerful motivator of caring
- Courageous promoter of justice and peace
- Inspiring model of co-operation

These five principles depend upon a Partnership that does its work faithfully, transparently, efficiently, wisely and with a maximum benefit to children.

### The ADP manager in 2010

You're still dealing with HIV/AIDS, health care, education and micro-enterprise development in the ADP in rural Africa. But time devoted to administrative tasks has shrunk dramatically. You complete a simple, standardised online report that is provided to all Support Offices. Information sharing technology is in place, meaning fewer questions are e-mailed to you. You are much more available to help the community identify its needs. You get a donor response in two weeks rather than six months.

You have online access to significant internal and external resources. In fact, you spend less than an hour a day on paperwork. You devote virtually all your time to facilitating the community's development, directly and through your leadership. You've always loved your job; now you love how you work.

### The Support Office analyst in 2010

Creation of a new Partnership-wide way of doing business has radically eased your work. Waste, duplication, lack of decision-making, poor accountability, and other frustrations have been eliminated. There's been consolidation, better information sharing, simplified lines of authority, clear priorities and processes. You feel empowered in your job.

You find that information in areas such as sponsored children, human resources, and program costs is collected easily and accurately. You report quickly and timely to governments and donors. You can make informed decisions based on good data. You feel that you really are spending your time creating "life in all its fullness" for children. You've always loved your job; now you love how you work.

