

PROGRAMME DOCUMENT

SAFER TOMORROW

**STRENGTHENING CHILD RIGHTS, HOPE,
AND RESILIENCE IN FRAGILE CONTEXTS**

Programme of World Vision Nordic 2026-2029



Contents

1. Executive summary	1
2. Programme rationale	2
3. Humanitarian programme	5
4. Development programme.....	8
4.1 Theory of Change	8
4.1.1 Child protection and participation.....	10
4.1.2 Youth employment and engagement	12
4.1.3 Climate resilience	14
4.2 Private sector and multistakeholder partnerships, innovation and research	16
4.3 Guiding principles and approaches	17
4.4 Cross-cutting themes	19
4.5 Development programme context and projects	21
4.5.1 Burundi	21
4.5.2 Ethiopia	24
4.5.3 Kenya.....	27
4.5.4 Rwanda.....	31
4.5.5 Uganda	35
5. Communications and advocacy	37
6. Quality assurance	39

Acronyms

CBO	Community Based Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CEFM	Child, Early and Forced Marriage
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CVA	Citizen Voice and Action
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion
IDP	Internally Displaced People
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
MFI	Micro Finance Institution
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
NFI	Non-Food Item
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PM	Project model
PMEAL	Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning
PSEAH	Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WV	World Vision
WV Nordic	World Vision Nordic
WVI	World Vision International

Figures and tables

Figure 1. The 2026-2029 Programme in Numbers.

Figure 2. Theory of Change of the Humanitarian Programme.

Figure 3. Theory of Change of the Development Programme.

Table 1. Key assumptions underlying the Theory of Change for World Vision Nordic's development programme

1. Executive summary

World Vision Nordic is part of the World Vision Partnership, a global child rights and humanitarian organisation dedicated to improving the lives of children, families, and communities. World Vision focuses on addressing the root causes of poverty and injustice, advocating for children's rights, and providing humanitarian assistance in crises. The organisation partners with communities, authorities, and other stakeholders to create lasting change and support children's development.

World Vision Nordic's 4-year Programme Safer Tomorrow – Strengthening Child Rights, Hope, and Resilience in Fragile Contexts addresses these challenges through development cooperation and humanitarian work alongside local advocacy efforts. The development work focuses on advancing children's and youth rights by creating safe, resilient, and inclusive communities in East Africa. The Programme also provides essential humanitarian assistance in East Africa to people affected by conflicts and disasters, ensuring they have improved health, dignity and inclusion. It promotes gender equality and the inclusion of persons with disabilities, ensuring that they are not excluded from opportunities. The Programme supports local civil society actors in influencing governance, promoting human rights, and ensuring that community voices, including children and youth, are heard in decision-making. Additionally, WV applies the Triple Nexus approach when working with refugees and host communities.

The humanitarian component builds on WV Nordic's humanitarian programming during the past decade. WV Nordic implements its humanitarian work primarily in the context involving internally displaced people (IDP) and refugees, assisting both refugees and host community members. The focus is on disability-inclusive water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and psychosocial support. The work focuses on the crisis in Sudan. If the humanitarian needs in Sudan change, WV Nordic redirects aid to other acute humanitarian crises and needs.

The development cooperation component builds on the previous Programme (2022–2025) set-up and lessons learnt. The development part of the programme continues to include three results areas: child protection and participation; youth employment and engagement, and climate resilience. The rationale is based on the idea that climate-resilient, inclusive, and safe communities provide a stronger foundation for the realisation of the rights of vulnerable children and youth to build a better future. The work will continue in five countries: Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda, and contains nine projects.

The Programme promotes partnerships with the private sector and collaboration with Finnish and local civil society organisations (CSOs). Projects are designed to align with the Human Rights Framework, Finland's development policy priorities, World Vision's country strategies, and the global WV Enough campaign, which aims to eradicate child hunger and malnutrition, including by promoting school meals.

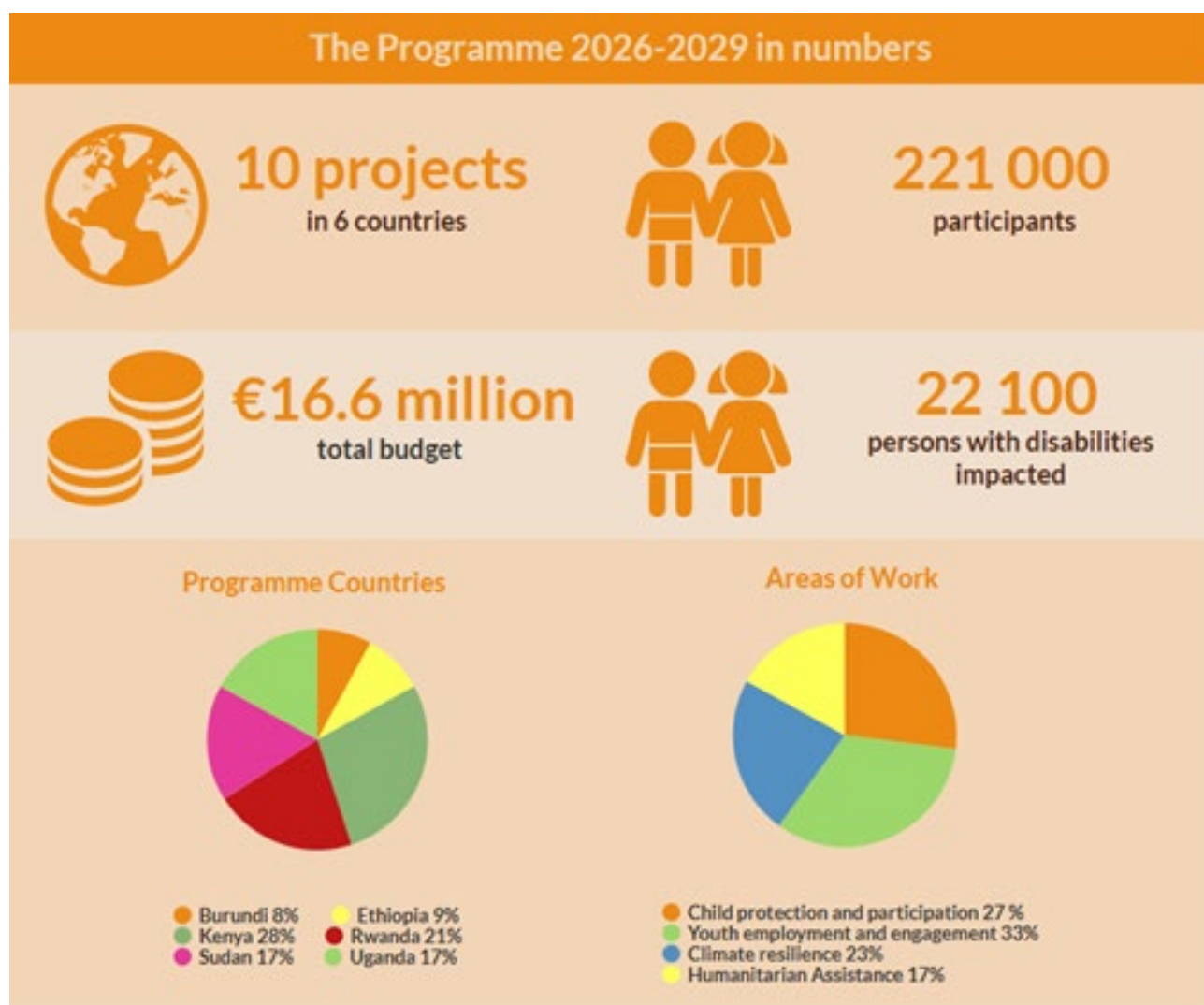


Figure 1. The 2026-2029 Programme in Numbers.

2. Programme rationale

There are currently more state-based conflicts and displaced people in the world than at any time since 1946. The year 2024 was the warmest on record, and current global progress falls far short of what is required to meet the SDGs. The global food crises continue affecting the poorest countries in the world. East Africa continues to be in a poly-crisis, facing numerous challenges, including conflicts, climate-related shocks such as floods, droughts, landslides, heatwaves, and disease outbreaks. In 2024, 62 million people in East Africa were classified as food insecure, while 10 million people were internally displaced due to the conflicts in Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan.¹ Many challenges concern specifically the least developed and fragile countries that experience poor and uneven economic growth and are characterised by limited civic space and participation, and by weak governmental structures that exacerbate inequality and exclusion. Children are often the first to suffer from poverty and climate change as parents may resort to negative coping mechanisms that undermine the realisation of children's rights. Women, girls and persons with disabilities are particularly vulnerable in crises

¹ UNHCR. [No Escape: On the frontlines of climate change, conflict and forced displacement](#) | UNHCR. 2024

and poverty². In line with World Vision's global Our Promise strategy, the Programme will target the most vulnerable groups in the most fragile contexts.

The implementation of the Programme is guided by the Triple Nexus approach, linking development and humanitarian assistance to peace at the local level. When resources are scarce in fragile communities, promoting peace and social cohesion is essential to avoid conflicts within and between communities. Such tensions are often caused and exacerbated by factors such as climate change, environmental degradation, or poor governance. By supporting communities to work together towards their development goals and empowering them to advocate for their rights, the Programme enhances the role of civil society in democratic processes and development, even in challenging environments. This contributes to more inclusive, safe, just and resilient societies. The Programme is designed to be implemented in challenging contexts in the greatest need. Nearly all planned development and humanitarian projects are in States of Fragility, and two countries are extremely fragile according to the OECD index.³ Almost all of the countries are among the least developed.⁴ Taking advantage of WV's trademark of being the 'first in, last out', the Programme draws on WV's long experience in both humanitarian and development settings and applies approaches and tools developed over many years. At the heart of WV's Fragile Contexts Programme Approach⁵ is the agility to shift from meeting immediate humanitarian needs to addressing root causes even in the context of continued fragility. This adaptability enables us to support transformative change whenever possible, helping communities build long-term resilience to future shocks.

In fragile contexts, WV's reputation as a trusted partner is a key asset, as local actors can trust WV's commitment. WV, being the partner of choice for many UN agencies, including WFP and UNHCR, brings added value to the Programme's efforts to promote school meals in target countries and project locations. Child protection is WV's speciality. Despite being a smaller office within the partnership, with flexible funding, WV Nordic can pilot new approaches and innovations and share the knowledge and learnings with the wider partnership at the country, regional and global level. Finland's and the Programme's focus on East Africa enables WV Nordic to continue building partnerships with Finnish companies and organisations, thereby enhancing the Programme's impact. The Programme also reflects Finland's emphasis on the rights of persons with disabilities and aligns with WV Nordic's growing interest in mental health support in crises setting.

The Programme's development cooperation builds on the previous 2022-2025 Programme and on strong partnerships with WV's East Africa Office, national and local actors, authorities, civil society, private sector and academia. The new development Programme is structured around the same three results areas as the current Programme, which have been found to be vital to achieving positive changes and contributing to the impact. The Mid-Term Evaluation

² World Vision. [Breaking the cycle – the cost of malnutrition to girls](#). 2024.

³ OECD. [States of Fragility](#). 2022.

⁴ OECD. [ODA recipients: countries, territories, and international organisations](#). 2023. ⁵ World Vision. [Fragile Contexts Programme Approach – A brighter future for children in fragile context](#). 2019.

⁵ World Vision. [Fragile Contexts Programme Approach – A brighter future for children in fragile context](#). 2019.

findings highlighted the importance of this work and its role in driving positive change and impact.

The incorporation of the lessons learnt, enhancing results, expanding interventions, and ensuring evidence-based and sustainable development has been done in the Programme design. Local ownership, social accountability, and constructive engagement between duty-bearers and rights-holders are key to the Programme's sustainability approach. The role of Community-Based Organisations (CBO) and faith-based actors is invaluable and considered as one of the key drivers of sustainability. Disability inclusion is a cross-cutting theme in the Programme. Persons with different kinds of disabilities and their families are key participants across all results areas of the humanitarian component. To promote and address disability inclusion, the Programme will work with Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (ODP). Programme implementation relies on WV's tested project models and on the expertise of local staff and volunteers, ensuring the overall quality.

The central objective of the Programme's development component is to eradicate all forms of violence against children in the target locations. In addition to enhancing child protection structures and mechanisms and participation and agency of children, addressing root causes through sectoral interventions is essential. The economic and social empowerment of youth has been identified as one of the key elements complementing and contributing to child protection. Children and youth have enormous potential to drive changes in the communities and society when they are not marginalised, excluded from decision-making, and denied their rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). As WV's youth programming continues to evolve, this Programme can contribute to its development with a strong emphasis on disability inclusion.

In strengthening communities' climate resilience, one of the Programme's most significant added values is World Vision's acclaimed land restoration technique, Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration. It provides low-cost, scalable, community-led solutions to restore ecosystems, improve land productivity, and strengthen livelihoods, which are vital elements in building climate resilience. By improving livelihood opportunities and access to funding, markets and value chains, the development part of the programme contributes to economic development and strengthens the operating environment of the private sector at the local level. The programme places a strong emphasis on women's economic empowerment, enabling their participation in decision-making at household and community levels and beyond.

WV Nordic's humanitarian work is primarily implemented in refugee contexts, providing aid to refugees, IDPs and host community members. All humanitarian operations are implemented as part of World Vision's broader, already established humanitarian responses. Through WV's global footprint in crisis-affected areas, existing activities can be quickly scaled up or shifted toward humanitarian response interventions. Being pre-established in these regions often means that access negotiations and arrangements have already taken place, ensuring a swift response.

By adopting a multiannual humanitarian strategy, WV Nordic can plan and implement projects with a longer-term perspective, allowing for the development of comprehensive interventions that address immediate needs while building community resilience. This approach facilitates the establishment of durable solutions, such as strengthening local capacities, enhancing

infrastructure, and promoting economic recovery, measures that are crucial to reducing dependency on external aid over time. Moreover, multiannual funding commitments enable better resource allocation and programme continuity, reducing the inefficiencies associated with short-term funding cycles. This stability allows World Vision to invest in sustainable projects that can adapt to evolving needs, ensuring that assistance remains effective even as the context changes.

3. Humanitarian programme

The goal of humanitarian work in the Programme is to ensure that people affected by conflict and crisis experience improved health, dignity and inclusion through inclusive WASH services and strengthened psychosocial well-being. Building on the proven experience from previous projects supported by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Finland and other humanitarian portfolios, this Programme focuses on two key results areas: 1) disability-inclusive water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), 2) mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and reduction of disability-related stigma and discrimination.

The Theory of Change (ToC) is designed around these results areas, addressing essential needs that IDPs and host communities face in target locations. The first pathway of change focuses on inclusive WASH services. The provision of accessible water sources, sanitation facilities, and hygiene items, alongside community awareness campaigns, aims to improve hygiene and reduce the incidence of waterborne diseases. Key assumptions include the availability of qualified WASH service providers, the existence of sustainable solutions for clean water, and the adherence to disability accessibility standards in both WASH infrastructure and service delivery.

The second pathway of change addresses mental health and psychosocial support, as well as the reduction of stigma and discrimination against persons with disabilities. Through the provision of MHPSS services and referrals for specialised care, the programme aims to equip individuals with tools to manage stress and trauma. Additionally, raising awareness about disabilities in the community will help reduce stigma and improve social inclusion. This pathway contributes to the Programme's goal of promoting strengthened psychosocial well-being. Assumptions include the availability of qualified MHPSS-trained staff from World Vision and local partners, as well as the existence of specialised MHPSS service providers for referrals. It is also assumed that stigma surrounding mental health issues will not prevent individuals from seeking support.

**People affected by conflict and crisis
are safe, resilient and their
basic needs are met**



Figure 2. Theory of Change of the Humanitarian Programme.

This humanitarian work will focus on Sudan, under World Vision Sudan Crisis Response. Sudan is among the highest priority crises in World Vision's global humanitarian categorisation, and WV Nordic has already experience in carrying out similar humanitarian action in Sudan. In the event that humanitarian needs change during the Programme implementation period, WV Nordic redirects aid to other acute humanitarian crises and needs.

WV adheres to its Disaster Management Partnership Policy, which articulates WV's performance expectations, policies, tools and best practices in relation to disaster preparedness, response and transition. The Response's Disaster Declaration Group is the key mechanism for determining both the disaster severity and response mode. It will be established within 12 hours of a high severity rapid onset disaster. A Response Declaration will be launched within 24 hours, and a Response Activity Plan within 72 hours. In responding to new crises, WV coordinates with other humanitarian-development-peacebuilding actors, as much as possible, to leverage and contribute to existing or shared disaster risk data before conducting its own disaster risk assessments and establishing standalone systems. As needed, WV conducts additional rapid needs assessments that involve crisis-affected people of different genders, age groups and backgrounds to understand their needs as well as their capacities. Based on the assessment information, WV engages local government, local partners, and community leaders and other relevant stakeholders to prioritise interventions that are most urgent and appropriate in crisis response.

Name and location	Disability Inclusive WASH and Protection Humanitarian Response in Sudan
Total budget 26-29	EUR 2,160,000
Participants	56,000
Results areas	WASH, Protection, MHPSS
Description: The project strives to support people affected by conflict and crisis to experience improved health, dignity and inclusion through inclusive WASH services and strengthened psychosocial well-being. IDPs and host community members will have better access to clean water supply as well as to sanitation and hygiene services. Children and adults will get better access to MHPSS services and disability related stigma and discrimination will be reduced. The project implementation starts in Red Sea State which is home to many internally displaced people (IDP).	
Partnerships: Local implementing partner NGO called Child Development Foundation (CDF). CDF is experienced in working with people with disabilities. Government of Sudan, particularly the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources and the State Water Corporation. WV Sudan also participates in OCHA coordinating meetings and in monthly WASH cluster coordination forums at both federal and state levels.	

4. Development programme

4.1 Theory of Change

The overall objective of the development part of the programme is to ensure that the rights of children and youth are upheld by safe, resilient, and inclusive communities in East Africa. In this Programme, this means that children are protected from all forms of violence; parents and youth have the means to provide for their children and mental resilience to cope with adversities, trauma and stress; nobody is discriminated against; and communities are prepared to face natural and man-made disasters. Three results areas contribute to achieving this impact objective: 1) Child Protection and Participation, 2) Youth Employment and Engagement, and 3) Climate Resilience. Each result area includes specific pathways of change to achieve the overarching goal of ensuring the rights of children and youth, with children and youth themselves acting as agents of change.

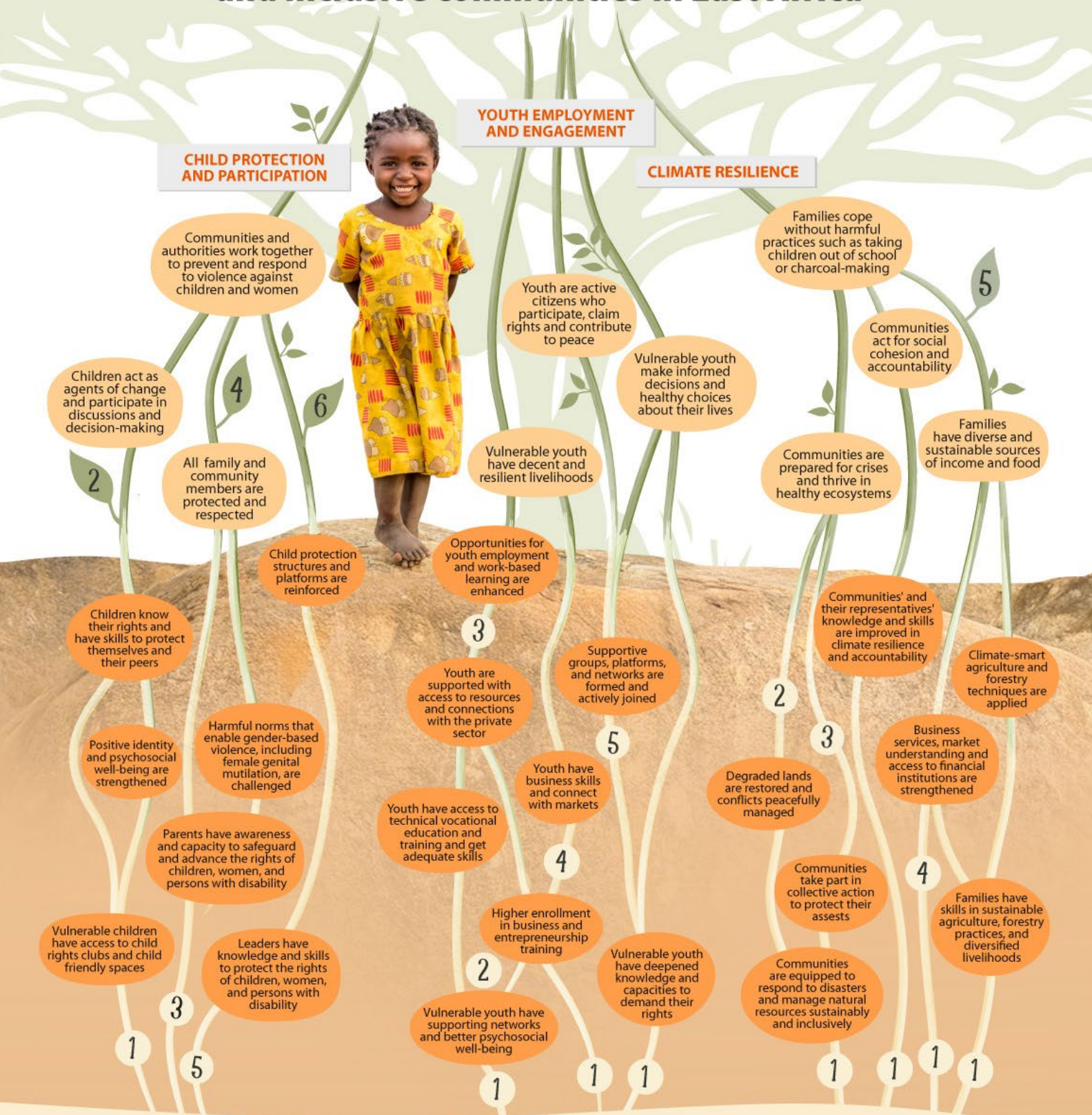
The Programme's development ToC is based on three main assumptions on how the results areas contribute to the impact and how they are interconnected and reinforce each other. First, it assumes that children who are empowered with knowledge of their rights will be able to protect themselves and their peers while advocating for the respect of child rights and child protection in their families and communities. When given the right platforms, they contribute to creating safer and more inclusive communities. Second, it assumes that youth who have financially and socially fulfilling lives are more likely to take action to make their families and communities safer for children. Third, it assumes that resilient families and communities are better able to care for, nurture, and protect children, including shielding them from the direct and indirect effects of disasters and harmful coping mechanisms that jeopardise child rights.

The results areas are interconnected. Child protection and youth employment are interlinked, as the violence children experience is likely to have long-term consequences for their well-being and behaviour, including difficulties in learning, finding employment, and interacting socially. Child protection is seen as the foundation for youth employment and engagement. On the other hand, youth who have sufficient income to sustain themselves and provide for their families are more likely to have protective, positive, and caring relationships with their younger siblings and with other children, thereby contributing to the creation of peaceful societies where children are safe.

Child protection and climate resilience are also interlinked. Communities and families with increased resilience, coupled with sustainable livelihoods, are better able to protect children from all forms of violence. Improved child protection capacity contributes to stronger family relationships and better social protection structures, which in turn enhance family and community resilience, social cohesion, and inclusivity.

Resilience and youth employment are interconnected as well. Resilient families and communities provide an enabling environment for youth to access and sustain employment and livelihood opportunities and are better able to promote and protect youth inclusion and participation. Youth with employment and livelihood skills, knowledge, and financial inclusion help build family and community resilience, while their improved life skills, empowerment, and participation contribute to increased social cohesion and peace.

The rights of children and youth are respected by safe, resilient, and inclusive communities in East Africa



- Train children in their rights and support advocacy.
- Train parents in child rights, positive parenting, gender equality, and mental wellbeing.
- Support and train community child protection groups.
- Facilitate Alternative Rites of Passage and support at-risk girls and survivors of harmful practices.
- Advocate and train leaders to protect and promote human rights.

- Train youth in life skills, rights, TVET, and entrepreneurship.
- Strengthen cooperatives, savings groups, and advocacy platforms.
- Facilitate market assessments, internships, career counseling, and mentoring.
- Support to financial services and market opportunities.

- Train and advocate for sustainable and inclusive landscape management and disaster preparedness.
- Support the forming of community groups and other supportive networks.
- Train farmers on climate-smart agriculture and forestry techniques.
- Train communities on business, markets and savings, and facilitate connections.

Figure 3. Theory of Change of the Development Programme.

Assumptions		
Child Protection and Participation	Youth Employment and Engagement	Climate Resilience
1. WV can access schools and establish cooperation with teachers and parents.	1. Youth have time and motivation to participate.	1. Policies are in place that support the objectives and means of the programme.
2. There are platforms and spaces for children and adult decision-makers to meet.	2. Trainings are of good quality, targeted and inclusive.	2. Communities are motivated to maintain the constructed protective structures and restored ecosystems and to work collectively.
3. Parents are willing to attend training, motivated to learn, and ready to change their attitudes about sensitive issues.	3. Employers are willing to be inclusive in their employment practices to hire youth and provide internships.	3. Technical expertise from WV and government are available to support effective landscape level efforts and their sustainability.
4. Local communities are willing to learn and adapt.	4. Access to financial services and companies is available.	4. Financial services are available for remote and vulnerable persons and groups.
5. Stakeholders are willing to work with WV, and it is recognised and accepted as a partner and an expert.	5. There are platforms and positive spaces where youth can engage, create, act, and interact with duty-bearers.	5. Communities are willing to stop using unsustainable livelihoods when alternatives are available and culturally accepted.
6. Adequate legal frameworks, policies and political will are in place, and local actors have sufficient resources to act on their improved knowledge and skills.		

Table 1. Key assumptions underlying the Theory of Change for World Vision Nordic's development programme.

4.1.1 Child protection and participation

The first result area of the Theory of Change focuses on strengthening and promoting child protection in target communities, following World Vision's systems approach by working across child, family, community, and system levels. This includes empowering children with knowledge about their rights and skills to protect themselves and their peers, transforming the attitudes and behaviours of parents and communities, and fostering improved collaboration among informal and formal actors, including duty-bearers. Effective and sustainable child protection requires changes across different domains and levels.

The development part of the programme emphasises empowering children to become influencers and change agents within their families, peer groups and communities. When

children understand their rights and know how to report violations to trusted adults or duty-bearers, they are better equipped to protect themselves and others from abuse, whether intentional or unintentional. This change also involves shifting children's behaviour to avoid risky actions and ensuring they treat others, including children with disabilities, with respect, compassion, and dignity. Schools and Child-Friendly Spaces in fragile contexts play a vital role in this transformation, offering safe physical, emotional, and psychological environments while also providing platforms for training in life skills, child rights, and protection. Similarly, schools are important for promoting children's participation in advocacy and decision-making processes related to their rights and protection. Efforts to increase school enrolment and retention, such as offering school meals, are directly linked to child protection, particularly for girls and children with disabilities.

Transforming the attitudes and behaviours of parents and caregivers is another critical element for ensuring that children are protected and treated with respect. Empowering parents with knowledge of child rights and positive parenting skills helps in creating safe and supportive environments for children's growth and development. When parents understand their roles in child protection, they are more likely to actively participate in community-based child protection initiatives and challenge harmful societal norms that violate child rights. Faith and religious leaders, who hold moral authority in many communities, are essential partners in driving this transformation. By collaborating with and empowering these leaders, the development part of the programme works to address the root causes of violence against children, domestic violence, and Gender Based Violence (GBV), including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

To eradicate harmful practices like FGM and child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM), the programme development component employs two core strategies: addressing the root causes of these practices and supporting survivors and those at risk. Both practices are often driven by harmful gender norms, poverty, and a lack of economic opportunities, and communities view these practices as protective measures for girls. The programme development component aims to tackle these underlying causes holistically, focusing on improving economic conditions in households and communities, and engaging boys and men in the conversation. Educating and involving community members, including local leaders, village elders, men and boys, is crucial to succeed in changing harmful traditional practices. Approaches like the Alternative Rite of Passage are tailor-made for addressing FGM in a culturally sensitive way that preserves the positive parts of the Rite of Passage tradition, including the celebration of the girl moving into womanhood, while ending the human right violation of the mutilation.

WV's systems approach involves empowering both formal and informal local actors to collaborate and strengthen the protective environment for children. While formal elements like legislation and social welfare services are assumed to be in place, WV works to engage local authorities, police, community-based organisations, and religious and traditional leaders to reinforce child protection efforts. A key part of this approach is building communities' capacity for social accountability, ensuring they can demand quality services and support from local service providers and duty-bearers, as well as advocate for stronger laws and accountability at various levels.

Several factors are assumed (figure 4) to be necessary for the changes to occur. Educating children about their rights and protection mechanisms is typically conducted in schools, which is why it is essential that World Vision has access to schools, with the cooperation of teachers and parents. In promoting children's participation in decision-making, it is vital that local communities and authorities provide opportunities for children to voice their concerns and be heard. Furthermore, it is assumed that parents and communities will be motivated to attend meetings and training sessions, and through this learning, they will be willing to change their attitudes toward child rights and culturally sensitive issues such as FGM and CEFM. Lastly, it is critical that local duty-bearers are willing to work with World Vision to improve child protection efforts.

Measuring the change

As described in the Results Framework (annex), the progress toward improved protection of children and their enhanced agency is tracked through three outcome-level indicators. The first one relates to children's participation in advocacy for child rights and in decision-making in general, reflecting the objective of strengthening children's agency in their communities. Secondly, the progress of this result area is measured through the changes in parents' attitudes and practices on some key child rights (including FGM, CEFM and disability inclusion) in each context because of sensitisation, training and mental health and psychosocial support they have received. Thirdly, progress is monitored through progress in people taking action to address violence or negligence, reflecting their knowledge, courage and means to seek assistance to prevent further issues or to resolve their situation. This indicator also reflects the availability of addressal mechanisms.

4.1.2 Youth employment and engagement

The second result area of the Theory of Change focuses on enhancing sustainable livelihoods and the active participation of vulnerable youth. The target group consists of youth who face significant barriers to development, such as poverty, conflict or displacement, disabilities, marginalisation, gender-based violence, single parenthood, or exclusion from education or employment. The development part of the programme follows World Vision's holistic Youth Ready model, which combines foundational life skills, such as literacy and social competencies, with work readiness and technical skills, employment preparation, and entrepreneurship. The project model is adapted to address the specific needs of urban, rural, and refugee contexts.

Young women and men face different challenges in the job market. Women often experience discrimination, limited education, and cultural expectations that prioritise domestic roles, making them more vulnerable to gender-based violence. The programme supports them through skills training, mentorship, and economic opportunities, helping to build confidence, enhance participation, and prevent early marriage and FGM. Young men, under financial pressure, often accept low-skilled or hazardous jobs with little future security. The programme offers education, vocational training, and positive networks to help them find sustainable employment and avoid exploitation, including recruitment into violent groups. It also addresses the needs of marginalised groups, such as youth with disabilities, at-risk girls, and survivors of GBV, protecting them from CEFM, sexual violence, school dropout and child labour.

Promoting youth employment requires the involvement of various stakeholders. Local governments play a key role in improving infrastructure and creating conditions for job creation, while businesses contribute by offering internships, apprenticeships, job opportunities, mentorship, and training to youth. Educational institutions help youth acquire practical skills and internships. Community organisations further support youth by offering counselling, mentoring, and networking opportunities, helping them connect to job prospects.

Youth employment training focuses on vocational skills and work-life coaching. Business training, mentoring, and financial support encourage entrepreneurship. However, success depends not only on technical expertise but also on personal development. Career coaching, life skills development, and attention to psychosocial well-being are especially important for vulnerable youth in disadvantaged areas. Support networks, including families, mentors, and communities, play a key role in building resilience and guiding career goals. Employer and community connections further help youth access job opportunities, particularly in regions with limited employment services. Life skills training integrates both practical and personal growth, while foundational skills such as literacy, financial management, and digital literacy prepare youth for career advancement. Finally, work readiness skills like teamwork, problem-solving, and communication enhance employability and workplace adaptability, helping youth build sustainable careers.

To ensure the sustainability of youth employment initiatives beyond the project's completion, WV builds strategic partnerships, strengthens local capacity, and promotes financial independence. By collaborating with the private sector and vocational training providers, WV creates lasting opportunities for youth even after external funding ends. Close cooperation with businesses, educational institutions, and authorities ensures that training meets sector-specific needs. Trainers of various professions offer vocational courses tailored to labour market demands. WV also partners with vocational schools and technical colleges to provide accredited training and recognised certifications. In addition to the education sector, strategic partnerships with the private sector are essential for successful youth employment, offering job opportunities and internships and providing youth with valuable work experience that boosts their employment prospects. These partnerships also help sustain the activities by providing financial support and expertise. Collaboration between educational institutions and businesses ensures that youth acquire the skills and qualifications employers seek.

Market assessments guide the design of training programmes to ensure that youth employment programmes remain relevant and responsive to market demands. The projects help youth access financial services and market opportunities, supporting the creation of cooperatives and savings groups that promote financial independence and business development. Promoting financial independence through savings groups, cooperatives, and microloans also helps young entrepreneurs establish sustainable businesses.

As youth develop life skills, assert their rights, and engage with support networks, they are more likely to become active members in their communities. Engagement is especially crucial in refugee contexts and urban areas where youth face exploitation and instability. The projects strengthen youth advocacy platforms, enabling them to make informed decisions and adopt healthy life choices, including those related to sexual and reproductive rights. Youth savings groups promote financial independence while fostering social cohesion and self-confidence. By empowering youth as human and child rights advocates, the projects contribute to

peacebuilding, social cohesion, and resilience, particularly in conflict-prone areas. Integrating education, employment, civic engagement, and conflict prevention through the Triple Nexus approach reduces vulnerabilities and promotes sustainable development. This approach enhances youth resilience, encourages positive community engagement, and reduces the risks of exclusion and despair.

For the programme to achieve its goals, it assumes (figure 4) that youth will be motivated to actively engage in opportunities to enhance their employment and social involvement. The success depends on the availability of high-quality, inclusive, and targeted training that meets the diverse needs of vulnerable youth. Moreover, providing platforms and safe spaces for youth to collaborate and engage with decision-makers is essential. It is also assumed that employers will implement inclusive recruitment practices and provide opportunities such as internships and employment. Finally, access to financial services and business networks is critical for promoting youth entrepreneurship and creating sustainable livelihoods.

Measuring the change

According to the Results Framework (annex), the progress of this result area is monitored through three outcome indicators. These indicators measure the amount of youths who have successfully increased their income or developed sustainable livelihood sources through programme development activities. Finally, the third indicator evaluates whether youth opinions are considered in decision-making processes. In addition to these outcome indicators, output indicators track the number of youths enrolled or trained in life skills, employment, or business skills, their access to resources to strengthen their businesses, and their engagement in participating in groups or projects.

4.1.3 Climate resilience

The third result area of the Theory of Change aims to build the climate resilience of the most vulnerable communities who are already experiencing the severe impacts of climate change. This effort aligns with World Vision's Regreening Communities project model with its tools and guidance for implementation in fragile settings. Climate change, land degradation, and unsustainable practices have left many communities with depleted natural resources and increased risk in the face of future disasters. These communities often experience food insecurity, high poverty levels, and vulnerability to climate-related shocks. Social instability, such as conflict, migration, and inequality, is becoming more common, partially driven by the ever-decreasing natural resource base. Marginalised populations, including women and girls with or without disabilities, feel these impacts most acutely, as climate change amplifies existing inequalities related to gender, age, ethnicity, disability, and landlessness. Climate change and unsustainable practices, interlinked with lack of secure tenure, are degrading ecosystems and contributing to deforestation, degradation, and conflict. These are threatening children, youth, and their families' right to a safe and healthy environment and resilient livelihoods.

When conflict and climate change-induced disasters converge, the effects are devastating, often reinforcing negative coping strategies with both environmental and social consequences. To address this, the Programme focuses on providing the most vulnerable households, such as women-led households, families with disabilities, and unemployed youth, with alternatives to

replace environmentally and socially unsustainable livelihoods. These alternatives aim to reduce harmful practices, including CEFM, child labour, illegal activities like charcoal production, or selling essential agricultural inputs. By promoting sustainable natural resource management, the work strengthens inclusive community structures, distributes benefits equitably, and builds social cohesion. It is important to improve the knowledge and skills of duty bearers, including community-level elected representatives, to comply with the rights of the farmers – women and men – and their collectives.

A key component of building resilience is protecting and restoring forest and grassland ecosystems, as well as constructing simple yet effective soil and water management structures. Increased vegetation cover, combined with these structures, protects communities from disasters, while supporting food and energy security and provides climate change mitigation synergies. The development part of the programme supports regenerative agriculture and land restoration techniques, such as Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration, which provide low-cost, scalable, and community-led solutions to restore ecosystems, improve land productivity, and strengthen livelihoods, all essential elements of climate resilience.

Inclusive, child-centred disaster risk management is important in building resilience. By establishing and supporting community disaster management committees, the Programme enhances local capacity to assess climate risks and develop strategies to reduce vulnerabilities and exposure. It is also necessary to invest in strengthening early warning systems, including means for the information to reach the most vulnerable.

Financial resilience is another essential element. The Programme's development component supports the provision of alternative, diversified and improved climate resilient livelihoods. Key strategies include increasing financial inclusion, improving market access, developing value chains, and supporting cooperatives, unions and producer associations. Additionally, strengthening farmers' capacities in climate-smart agriculture practices – such as agroforestry, conservation agriculture, water harvesting, crop diversification, erosion control and use of climate information services – enhances their resilience to future shocks and increases farm productivity. In rural settings where the natural resource base is severely limited, off-farm employment becomes a transformative means of reducing vulnerability. Empowering communities economically and diversifying livelihoods are critical to ensuring that families remain financially viable and can support their children. This approach also contributes to sustained food security during times of crisis, supporting the holistic resilience of families and communities.

In the context of risk, uncertainty, and fragility, building resilience is foundational for the protection of the most vulnerable children, youth, and their families. By enabling them to influence their communities and secure sustainable livelihoods, resilience-building efforts address climate-related risks while fostering long-term social stability and sustainability. The programme development part emphasises inclusivity, ensuring that the rights of children, women, and persons with disabilities are respected, and that project activities are tailored to address their specific vulnerabilities and adaptive capacities. A community-based approach is essential for achieving these goals, as it empowers communities to act, ensuring that tangible results are achieved while promoting behavioural change. This approach encourages

cooperation at the local level and across interconnected landscapes, further enhancing resilience.

The result area builds on key assumptions from WV's similar efforts. It is assumed that the communities WV works with are motivated to maintain restored ecosystems and protective structures and to work collectively, that technical expertise is available from WV and government to support landscape-level efforts and their sustainability, and that communities are willing to stop unsustainable livelihoods when alternatives to are available and culturally accepted. It is also assumed that financial services when facilitated are available for remote and vulnerable people and groups. Additionally, a supportive policy framework is crucial for the success of this work.

Measuring the change

In the Results Framework (annex), progress towards increasing the climate resilience of families and communities is measured using three outcome indicators on coping mechanisms, livelihoods and social cohesion. These are focusing on measuring the key elements of the designed change of this area to allow the projects to make needed adjustments based on the annual monitoring data. These indicators are supported by output indicators focusing on tackling the volume of people with increased knowledge, skills, and their collectives to build resilience.

4.2 Private sector and multistakeholder partnerships, innovation and research

The important role of the private sector and multistakeholder collaboration and partnerships in achieving the SDGs has been recognised, also by WV Nordic since the creation of WV Nordic's Weconomy model in 2015 (in partnership with Aalto University) for collaborating and co-creating with the private sector. In the new Programme, WV Nordic will continue engaging with the private and other organisations and institutions, including academia to find and create new sustainable and more effective ways of achieving development results and impact.

WV Nordic has several partnerships with Finnish actors planned to continue or start in 2026 onwards. These include a partnership with Lytefire Oy on the productive use of clean energy in East Africa. This combines WV's field expertise with Lytefire's solar equipment to develop local economies through entrepreneurship and youth training, with linkage to school meals, in Kenya and Rwanda. In addition, the partnership with Logonet Oy on Finnish baby aid kits will continue in Rwanda. The partnership also continues with Tespack Ltd. on their Smart solar media system. This kind of collaboration is invaluable for the Programme and projects in terms of knowledge transfer and particularly in promoting youth employment. Companies can, for example, increase their understanding of different contexts and countries, and establish connections through partnership with the Programme.

To identify opportunities for partnerships with private sector and other actors, WV Nordic continues to participate actively in different networks, platforms, and events such as those organised by Fingo and its Shared Action, and by Finnpartnership. WV Nordic will continue engagement with Finland's Embassies and Business Finland, as well as companies. In line with WV's focus on promoting school meals, WV Nordic is part of the Finnish network for export of school meals expertise and seeks to establish partnerships with companies and institutions in the network. WV Nordic is well positioned to partner with Finnish institutions of higher

education and provide linkages between them and those in the target countries in sectors and themes that are mutually interesting and can contribute to the achievement of the desired impact.

World Vision is often the biggest international non-governmental organisation (NGO) in the operating areas with extensive presence, good connections at various levels of administration and good sectoral and thematic knowledge, bringing a lot of additional value to partnerships and collaboration. Being part of an international NGO, WV Nordic has access to the WV partnership network covering more than one hundred countries, which provides opportunities for sharing and promoting innovations, solutions and practises beyond the projects and target countries. The Programme can also engage in regional research and innovation initiatives, including with Response Innovation Lab (RIL) - a collaborative initiative between World Vision International and other international NGOs. In this programme, the RIL collaboration focuses on Uganda.

Private sector and multistakeholder partnerships and collaboration are integrated with the development projects, humanitarian assistance and the three results areas and cross-cutting themes to fully allow the use of existing expertise, connections, and resources. WV Nordic can also consider partnership with companies and other stakeholders in other themes and countries, if this is otherwise in line with WN Nordics broader Programme strategy and criteria for partnership is met Partnerships and collaboration will be selected carefully to align with the impact objectives and certain guiding principles are followed when working with communities, such as collaboration between communities and WV's partners must be rights based so that communities' and participants' ownership is guaranteed from the start to finish, it is ethical and ecologically sustainable, and based on understanding of the grassroots demand and needs. When this kind of collaboration, aimed at creating, testing, and piloting technological or social innovations, etc., is done, it will always be aligned with SDGs, and the Principles of UN Global Compact will be followed.

4.3 Guiding principles and approaches

The guiding principles and approaches of the development part of the programme include Finland's development policy, the human rights-based approach (HRBA), the Triple Nexus, strengthening the local civil society, local ownership and sustainability, and social accountability.

The programme is aligned with Finland's development policy and its key documents, including the Government report on Finnish foreign and security policy and the Report on International Economic Relations and Development Cooperation, as well as Finland's Humanitarian policy. The development part of the programme aligns with Finland's 2250 Youth, Peace and Security agenda as they both emphasise children and youth's agency and intersectionality. This programme aligns also with Finland's 1325 Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan, which mentions climate change, loss of biodiversity and environmental degradation as the biggest security threats of our time; the adverse effects hit the most vulnerable the hardest. Finland and WV are both committed to the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies initiative.

WV Nordic's work has its foundation in Human Rights, especially the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In line with the Guidance note for HRBA by the MFA of Finland⁶, human rights are used as a basis for setting the objectives for the Programme's development component and are prove a framework for the project design. Generally, the development projects are categorised as Human Rights Progressive. The development work's objective is that the rights of children and youth are respected by safe, resilient, and inclusive communities in East Africa. This objective is to strengthen the realisation of human rights, as it will result from an inclusive, participatory, and non-discriminatory process and requires active participation of both rights-holders and duty-bearers. The programme's development component's objective is to help Most Vulnerable Groups (MVGs), especially Most Vulnerable Children (MVC). Empowering the participants to demand their rights, structured advocacy and capacity-building for duty-bearers ensures structural change towards better realisation of human rights.

In this development part of the programme, the Triple Nexus approach is further strengthened compared to the previous WV Finland's Programme. The programme development component is informed by OECD DAC Recommendation on the Nexus, World Vision's Fragile Contexts Programme Approach, as well as the MFA Guidance to the Triple Nexus. The Triple Nexus has become a more mainstream approach in refugee contexts, and the role of peacebuilding is necessary in fragile contexts. At the heart of WV's approach is the agility to shift from meeting immediate humanitarian needs to addressing root causes even in the context of continued fragility to support transformative change whenever possible, so that communities can build resilience to shocks in the long term. These contexts include refugee areas in Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi. Under peacebuilding, WV focuses on Positive Peace, which refers to the attitudes, institutions and structures known to create and sustain peaceful societies, by focusing on the just distribution of sustainable resources, creating a culture of good governance, facilitating coalitions across boundaries, transforming relationships, and supporting community capacities that generate hope. Building positive peace is integrated into each of the three development cooperation results areas.

An active civil society is a requirement for the fulfilment of human rights, overcoming human rights challenges and addressing broken relationships between citizens as rights-holders and authorities and states as duty-bearers, but also for promoting child protection, youth employment and engagement, and climate resilience and ensuring sustainability. The development part of the Programme contributes to developing the space for civil society in the countries of operation. The work covers the individual, organisational and system levels of the capacity-building needed in strengthening civil society. Most project areas are extremely fragile, underlining the importance of an active civil society. Weak governmental structures increase the risk of corruption, while a vibrant civil society promotes good governance. Most projects include support to the establishment and training of CBOs and CSOs, including organisations of persons with disabilities, in the spirit of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. WV's local staff work alongside existing local groups and organisations, and with WV's support, they can advocate and collaborate with local authorities as well as amongst themselves and provide avenues and platforms for communities to engage

⁶ Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. [Human Rights Based Approach in Finland's Development Cooperation. Guidance Note](#). 2015.

in dialogue with duty bearers on the provision and development of services, holding them accountable. WV's partnership and coordination with authorities, officials and duty bearers are close and include dialogue, training and capacity building.

WV builds sustainability in all interventions through five drivers of sustainability: local ownership, partnering, social accountability and local and national level advocacy, transformed relationships, and household and family resilience. To ensure local ownership, the development work focuses on using locally led structures and locally grounded policies. Through exploring and understanding the underlying issues in their community, local stakeholders are more likely to believe that the outcomes towards which they are working are the right ones and to see themselves as mutually accountable for sustaining them. Ownership extends through the initial problem analysis to project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. After WV's exit, the relationships that are built and the skills provided to local partners enable a systemic learning process that reinforces the protection of rights. WV seeks to build on and reinforce values and practices that support well-being in families and communities, including actions to alleviate discrimination, harmful social and cultural practices, misuse of power, and unfair distribution of resources. Without empowered communities, the results of the work are unlikely to be sustainable.

Social accountability is a key element in the development work, and the support for structural change is considered in all project designs. Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) is WV's primary model for community-level advocacy and supports the HRBA. CVA aims to address inadequate essential services by improving the relationship between communities and government and empowering communities to hold the government accountable. The idea of CVA is to educate citizens about their rights and equip them with a simple set of tools, such as citizen scorecards, designed to empower them to protect and enforce those rights. Using the CVA model, WV creates safe spaces where citizens gather for dialogue, strengthen governmental institutions, encourage political will, open access to services for vulnerable people, and re-establish service delivery systems that have been undermined. Developing local capacities, facilitating the formation and strengthening of inclusive community-based accountability systems, and ensuring local ownership are central components of each development cooperation project.

4.4 Cross-cutting themes

The cross-cutting themes of the Programme's development component are gender equality, disability inclusion, environment and climate, and conflict sensitivity. The Results Framework has specific indicators for measuring the progress of cross-cutting themes, while most of the indicators provide data disaggregated by gender and disability.

All World Vision offices are committed to the Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) policy and implementation guidelines that outline key standards to mainstream GEDSI in programming and operations, while the PMEAL Handbook provides support and instructions for mainstreaming, monitoring and evaluating gender equality and inclusion at the project level. Furthermore, GEDSI is established as a core competence for programming staff, which includes training. Every National office has a GEDSI focal point who is responsible for building GEDSI competence among staff, ensuring GEDSI mainstreaming in designs and programming, and leading the office's GEDSI agenda. All projects in the development part of the programme

will conduct a GEDSI analysis that identifies the barriers to the inclusion of women and other marginalised groups. The local offices are responsible for carrying out the assessment, and WV Nordic is there to ensure its quality and the implementation of its recommendations.

The development projects contain objectives and activities specifically to address gender inequality, including the promotion of women and girls' rights and ensuring participation, inclusion and leadership and addressing their specific vulnerabilities. WV disaggregates indicators by sex, age and disability, and tracks gender equality indicators to understand the impact each project has on promoting gender equality. The development part of the Programme includes WV's gender mainstreaming project models, such as Channels of Hope for Gender for community dialogue on gender and the Men Care Model, which includes establishing men's groups and identifying male role models who will stand out against harmful practises.

WV Nordic strives to promote, protect and ensure the full enjoyment of the rights by persons with disabilities. WV's disability inclusion programming is guided by its Disability Inclusion Strategy and Programming Guidance for the Inclusion of Children & Adults with Disabilities. These are compliant with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and include instructions for including persons with disabilities at every stage of programming. Children as well as adults with disabilities, are viewed as full and equal members of society and are included as right holders and active agents within the programme. In addition to the rights being protected and promoted, also the dignity of persons with disabilities and their family members is supported and restored, and stigma and discrimination reduced.

All projects are required to carry out an analysis that identifies the barriers for persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups. The projects include objectives and activities to specifically address discrimination and harmful norms that prevent the realisation of the rights of persons with disabilities. The overall target for the proportion of persons with disabilities among participants of all development projects is 10%. WV staff adhere to the principles of disability inclusion, with training being a key component. WV Nordic supports and monitors the adherence of all project teams to the principles of disability inclusion.

Many of the development projects focus on vulnerable communities that are impacted by climate change and environmental degradation. WV has an environmental management policy and guidelines which outline how programming takes responsibility for managing the environment and it seeks to challenge and change activities, which by design or unintentionally, do harm. WV recognises that in addition to environmental degradation and climate change, manmade disasters and human interaction through conflict, displacement, and instability affect the environment, requiring WV's programming to halt further environmental degradation and restore damaged environments. In addition to the environmental and climate screening of all the projects and the objectives and activities under Result Area 3 about Climate resilience, the projects mainstream environmental and climate considerations through awareness raising, green jobs and value chain development. Integration of biodiversity aspects is also an important element to be addressed and monitored with restoration and agroforestry activities.

The development cooperation component is built on the notion that interventions that apply conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding lens are more efficient, sustainable, and impactful. Conflict sensitivity has for years been an important element in WV Nordic supported projects, and a conflict sensitivity analysis is required of each project. Conflict sensitivity means understanding the impact a project is having on a conflict, particularly in relation to the connectors and dividers that exist between parties, and then, as needed, making changes aimed at preventing escalation and promoting a peaceful resolution to the conflict. An essential element of conflict sensitivity is the Do No Harm framework and recognising that any intervention in a conflict setting becomes a part of that conflict and has the capacity to build either conflict or peace. Conflict sensitivity allows WV to operate in fragile contexts through rigorous risk and security management combined with access and approaches through local staff, partner agencies and intentional work with local stakeholders of influence, such as community, traditional and faith leaders.

4.5 Development programme context and projects

4.5.1 Burundi

With over 13.6 million people, Burundi is one of the world's most densely populated countries. The economy relies on subsistence agriculture, employing 80-90% of the population, contributing to its status as one of the world's poorest nations in GDP per capita. Poverty affects an estimated 62% of the population. The provision of basic public services does not meet the population's needs, with only 48% of adolescents enrolled in secondary school and 30% of girls out of school.⁷ Human Development Index places Burundi in the low human development category - positioning it at 187 out of 193 countries and territories. Burundi has ratified key international human rights treaties. The Constitution emphasises democracy and human rights, but enforcement gaps undermine these principles. The Constitution provides for ethnic quotas in government positions and mandates equality and protection under the law for all citizens, regardless of language, religion, or ethnic origin. However, these laws and principles are not effectively enforced.⁸

Decades of ethnic conflict have shaped Burundi's socio-political dynamics, and ethnic violence and political unrest continue to affect Burundi's stability. Armed groups and state actors are often involved in human rights violations.^{9 10} Over 255,000 Burundian refugees live in neighbouring countries, with about 210,000 repatriated since 2017 under UNHCR's so-called voluntary repatriation programmes. Due to protracted crises, there are 102,824 IDPs in the country.¹¹

The political situation in Burundi's neighbouring countries remains unstable, particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In December 2024, Burundi hosted over 90,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)¹², and this number is constantly rising.

⁷ World Bank. [Burundi](#). 2023.

⁸ U.S. Department of State. [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Burundi](#). 2023.

⁹ Mouvement Inamahoro, SOS-Torture Burundi, FORSC, Ligue Iteka et FOCODE. [La situation des droits de l'homme au Burundi. Rapport trimestriel d'analyse conjoint](#). 2024.

¹⁰ ACAT Burundi. [Rapport sur le Monitoring des Violations et atteintes aux droits de l'homme commises au Burundi](#). 2024

¹¹ IOM. [Burundi Crisis Response Plan 2024-2026](#). 2024.

¹² UNHCR. [Refugees and asylum seekers from DRC](#). 2024.

Nearly 40% of them reside in urban areas, while the majority live in five UNHCR-managed camps in the eastern and northeastern regions.¹³ The project area covers Ruyigi, Cankuzo, and Muyinga provinces of eastern and northern Burundi with Congolese refugees and the host communities. The law provides for asylum or refugee status, and the government has a protective system for refugees. Although the law grants refugees' freedom of movement, those living in camps must obtain exit permits to travel beyond their host communes. Refugees have the legal right to work, but restrictions limit their ability to do so even after their status is officially recognised. The UNHCR and other organisations implement livelihood programmes and promote income-generating activities, but these efforts remain severely insufficient given the large number of people in need.

According to CIVICUS, Burundi's civil society operates under significant constraints and is currently categorised as repressed. Political opposition is heavily suppressed, and there is no free media. Human rights defenders face arbitrary arrests, imprisonment, and torture. CSOs encounter legal and administrative restrictions and strict regulations, limiting freedom of expression, association, and assembly.¹⁴ Despite these challenges, CSOs play a crucial role in delivering services, advocating for marginalised groups, and holding authorities accountable. WV Burundi (WVIB) can operate as the government considers it a reliable partner. By forming strategic partnerships with local authorities and community leaders, and by building trust with local communities, the WVIB successfully navigates restrictive civic spaces.

In Burundi, the three major obstacles to social cohesion are land disputes, economic inequalities linked to youth unemployment, and the consequences of climate change.¹⁵ These challenges are evident in the project implementation area. Similarly, since the presence of refugees in a community can significantly impact host populations, refugee-focused projects must also address the needs of host communities to prevent conflicts. Burundi faces severe environmental and climatic challenges, including deforestation, soil erosion, and the impacts of climate change, like increased rainfall and rising temperatures. Over-reliance on agriculture exacerbates land degradation, while extreme weather events threaten food security. Burundi is highly vulnerable to climate-induced catastrophic events that impact development efforts and key economic sectors. Recent projections show that dry seasons are intensifying, leading to more frequent and severe droughts. Additionally, Burundi will continue to face reduced and increasingly variable rainfall, further exacerbating the vulnerability of both the population and ecosystems.

Climate-related hazards are already a major cause of displacement and the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the country. Ninety-three (93%) of IDPs are displaced due to natural hazards. The increase in the intensity and frequency of these hazards, directly linked to climate change, affected more than 300,000 people (54% women and children) between October 2023 and March 2024. In this context, women, children, and persons with disabilities face multidimensional vulnerabilities and risks of exploitation. An assessment of the project area highlights the significant vulnerability of households to climate change and natural disasters,

¹³ UNHCR. [Burundi](#). 2025.

¹⁴ Civicus Monitor. [Burundi](#). 2025.

¹⁵ Catholic Relief Services. Étude d'apprentissage sur l'impact du projet Dukire Tubane pour la cohésion sociale. 2024.

identifying high household vulnerability, frequent shocks, reliance on negative coping strategies, and widespread food insecurity.¹⁶

In Burundi, GBV is widespread, driven by patriarchal norms, poverty, and conflict. While laws prohibit rape, domestic violence, and sexual harassment, weak enforcement leaves these issues unresolved. Child protection issues, including child, early and forced marriage (CEFM), are prevalent. Despite the legal marriage age at 18 for girls, economic pressure drives forced marriages, with 19% of girls marrying before adulthood.¹⁷ Additionally, the government's recent "campaign against concubinage" has led to evictions and severe mistreatment of women and children. Women also face legal and economic discrimination, as well as barriers to education and economic participation. According to Burundi's inheritance and property laws, women do not inherit their father's land. There are stark gender disparities in the project area: men focus on productive activities, while women handle reproductive responsibilities working longer hours.¹⁹ Decision-making remains male-dominated, with societal norms limiting women's leadership and public roles. CEFM, parenthood, lower school enrolment, higher dropout rates, and other harmful social norms further restrict the development of Burundian girls. They are expected to master household chores to prepare for their future roles as "good wives", while boys are encouraged to engage in income-generating activities.

Persons with disabilities encounter significant barriers to inclusion, ranging from social stigma to inadequate infrastructure, along with limited access to critical services like education. While Burundi has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), progress toward achieving full social inclusion remains slow. Employment discrimination is common, and accessible communication services are still lacking. In the project area, persons with disabilities are often perceived as dependent on their families and are not expected to engage in income-generating activities. This reinforces their economic marginalisation and further restricts their opportunities for self-sufficiency.¹⁸

The project collaborates with numerous partners across various sectors in Burundi. To meet the impact objectives, WV Nordic is also exploring partnership opportunities with FIDA International to promote youth employment and strengthen child protection in the project area.

Name and location	Ejo Heza, Child Protection and Youth Engagement Project, Phase II, implemented in Ruyigi, Cankuzo, and Muyinga provinces of eastern and northern Burundi
Total budget	1,080,000 EUR
Total participants	17,480
Results areas	Child Protection and Participation; Youth Employment and Engagement
Description: While the primary target group consists of Congolese refugees, the project will also engage rural communities around the camps to promote social cohesion. The project will address challenges in the country's child protection system and strengthen child protection by developing and reinforcing child protection mechanisms. Furthermore, the project will provide vocational training and livelihood support to vulnerable youth in refugee camps and surrounding host communities. Special attention will be given to women and persons with disabilities. Additionally,	

¹⁶ WVI Burundi. Ejo Heza Baseline Report. 2022.

¹⁷ The Child Marriage Data Portal. [Eastern Africa, Burundi](#). 2017.

¹⁸ WVI Burundi. Mid-term Evaluation Report. 2024.

youth from refugee camps and host communities will receive psychosocial support, life skills training, vocational education, and entrepreneurship training. The project will also enhance digital skills and create platforms for digital learning in partnership with FIDA International. Finally, the project will promote sustainable farming practices and develop adaptation strategies to help participants cope with the impacts of climate change.

Partnerships: CBOs; National Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (ONPRA); The Union for Cooperation and Microfinance Development (UCODE); Training for Development (FODEP); Fida International; Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS); Ministry of National Solidarity, Social Affairs, Human Rights and Gender, CBOs, local leaders

4.5.2 Ethiopia

Ethiopia is the second most populous nation in Africa, and the economy remains largely dependent on the agricultural sector. The areas where this programme will be implemented include the most under-served districts located in the southern regional state. It is estimated that more than twenty percent of the population of Ethiopia is facing food insecurity and inequality has increased in recent years. Furthermore, conflicts in various parts of Ethiopia risk undermining the economic and social development progress the country has achieved. Ethiopia was long considered a cornerstone of stability in the Horn of Africa. Political unrest and the hostilities between ethnic subgroups have increased and resulted in armed conflicts across the country triggering a humanitarian crisis and displacing millions. According to CIVICUS, Ethiopia's civil society space has narrowed down, and it is currently categorised as closed. This includes significant restrictions in civic space freedoms affecting especially the media but also leading to a more difficult context for NGOs and CBOs to operate.

Ethiopia is vulnerable to floods, droughts and periodic rain shortages, resulting in heightened periods of food insecurity. Climate change is already aggravating these phenomena further. Despite the projected increase in rainfall, higher annual temperatures will result in heightened evaporation rates that may threaten the success of crops. Droughts are expected to occur more often and with increased intensity, giving the country less time to recover in between dry periods, reducing agricultural yields and contributing further to mass food insecurity.

According to IOM, 70% of Ethiopians are youth (15–29-year-olds), and the youth population is expected to grow by 10 million in the next twenty years. Youth unemployment is a significant socio-economic challenge, and the economy will need to produce around two million new jobs per year to keep the pace of this growing young workforce. The rate of new job creation is currently well below this figure. The unemployment rate is higher for women than for men, and, similarly, women with disability are more often unemployed than men.

WV's assessment report underscored the staggering scale of youth and women unemployment in the project areas to be targeted with youth employment activities in West Oromia, as 63% of youth and women lack access to job opportunities. Landless youth, school dropouts, unemployed university and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) graduates, returned migrants, IDPs, and violence and climate-affected youth are struggling the most to succeed in the labour market. Youth lack adequate economic opportunities, such as vocational, business, and entrepreneurial skills, to enable them to become self-reliant. Those engaged in agricultural activities face several challenges, including difficulties accessing land, agricultural inputs, and financial services, as well as a lack of business, management, and entrepreneurial

skills to engage in on-farm and off-farm activities. They face significant barriers to market access, including a lack of knowledge about how markets work and lack of information about prices. Young women face a wide variety of additional challenges due to their gender. Access to land and markets presents a significant barrier. Additionally, participation in government projects is skewed heavily towards male youth also in the project areas. Furthermore, district job creation and TVET facilities lack resources and training to fulfil their function in the labour market ecosystem. There is also an overwhelming population affected by displacement and emergencies due to the ongoing conflict in Western Oromia, which continues to undermine livelihood opportunities for local communities, including youth and women. WV assessment also disclosed that in the targeted districts, the reasons youth are joining armed groups include deep-rooted economic problems.

Ethiopia has signed and acceded to several significant human rights instruments, including the ICCPR, CEDAW, and CRPD.¹⁹ Ethiopia also has national action plans for women and persons with disabilities. Yet the human rights situation remains complicated. Gender inequality is a significant issue, with women and girls facing economic and sociocultural discrimination. According to UNICEF, Ethiopia has, however, made progress on several dimensions of gender equality and women's empowerment, although disparities between rural and urban areas and across regions have persisted, and conflicts have influenced the situation in some parts drastically.

The areas where protection interventions are implemented have been selected because of their challenges regarding different forms of violence, and abusive or exploitative relationships resulting in a high rate of sexual abuse both on children, women, persons with disabilities and marginalised community groups. The major child protection issues identified during the WV's assessments are child trafficking, child labour, domestic violence against children, rape, abduction, and CEFM. Children, especially girls, often work as housemaids after they are trafficked from their place of birth to urban centres. Gender inequality in the target communities is to the extent of considering women and girls as property in a household that dehumanises them. Stereotypes related to gender social norms and roles significantly hinder girls' education.

FGM remains common in Ethiopia with high regional differences, while attitudes towards FGM have improved over the years. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission reported in 2023 that FGM is widely practised in one of the programme areas, Shashego district, underlining that FGM is inflicted upon adult women in this district, driven by a traditional healing practice. In addition, sexual harassment and exploitation, and other forms of GBV are commonplace in the project areas. Polygamy is widely practised in some of the communities.

Despite government efforts, the situation of persons with disabilities in Ethiopia is weak. Due to this stigma combined with low accessibility and few economic resources, the great majority of persons with disabilities lack access to essential health, education and social services that could help reduce their dependency and facilitate their independent living with a sustainable livelihood. Consequently, more than 95% of all persons with disabilities and their families in Ethiopia live in extreme poverty. They are deprived of opportunities to access socio-economic services on an equal basis with others and be included in the development efforts alongside

¹⁹ UN Human Rights Treaty Body Database. [Ethiopia](#). 2025.

other citizens. 20 According to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the rights of women and girls with disabilities are not respected in Ethiopia. The existence of harmful practices, such as FGM, also includes women and girls with disabilities. Furthermore, regarding children with disabilities, there is a lack of specific legislation to address and ensure the protection of the rights of children with disabilities against violence and abuse.

Discrimination against persons with disabilities is part of the community norms. Children are mostly affected by these discriminatory attitudes and practices in which they can be deprived of basic needs and rights, including food, clothing, medication, school and civil registration.

There are minority groups in Ethiopia, including the project areas, that are socially outcasted and suffer from discrimination and exclusion because of their social identity and livelihood activities they undertake. There are also indigenous people who are outcasted from many social support systems and who do not have access to farmland and are seen as second-class citizens. The women and girls from these minority groups mainly engage in exploitative domestic work for the families of the majority groups. Children of marginalised groups are prone to suffering from extreme child labour exploitation, neglect, and abuse.

Finland's ongoing country programme (2021-2025), including projects that continue into the next programme period and its focus on women and girls are well-aligned with WV Ethiopia's programming and the projects included in this Programme. Especially REILA III has synergies with the Programme. The planned local partners, including organisations of women with disabilities, are among the trusted partners of Finnish CSOs, and there are shared efforts to strengthen civil society in addition to strengthening the Programme with their specific expertise.

Name and location	Accountability, Livelihood, and Empowerment for Resilient Transformation (ALERT, Gamo Zone, Kamba and Zala districts, Southern Ethiopia)
Total budget	680,000 EUR
Total participants	27,944
Results areas	Climate Resilience
Description: The project area was affected by massive landslides during late 2024, receiving global attention highlighting the Ethiopia's severe situation with land degradation and climate-induced water erosion. The project aims to ensure that families and communities are protected by resilient ecosystems through improved landscape management and effective disaster preparedness, and that they have increased, diversified income and inclusive climate smart livelihoods opportunities on- and off-farm; and that communities have improved capacities and structures for accountability.	
Partnerships: Government offices and sectors; CSOs; CBOs; MFIs; Organisations of persons with disabilities	

²⁰ Bridging the Gap. [Beneficiary Countries Ethiopia](#). 2021.

Name and location	Kindo Koyisha assisted farmer managed natural regeneration for sustainable livelihoods, Wolaita zone, Kindo Koyisha district, Southern Ethiopia.
Total budget	440,000 EUR
Total participants	4,257
Results areas	Climate Resilience
Description: Ethiopia has long grappled with the challenge of feeding its rapidly growing population amid widespread land degradation, poverty, and climate vulnerability. Kindo Koyisha District, located in the Wolaita Zone of Southern Ethiopia, exemplifies these national struggles, facing acute environmental and socioeconomic pressures that threaten food and nutrition security. The project builds on the work conducted during the previous Programme. The project aims to create a sustainable, inclusive framework for managing natural resources while addressing the needs of vulnerable groups. Communities have established eight legally recognized institutions that will take the lead in mobilizing communities and local resources, planning and implementation of project activities, overall management and governance of their resources, and establishing networks and partnerships with different actors. The project will continue training on FMNR method and to utilize established community nurseries for the multiplication of agroforestry seedlings and developing the value chains of moringa and honey. The emphasis is on the development of diversified and resilient livelihoods for rural farming households, particularly targeting youth, women, and PWDs. The project will enhance households' economic stability and sustainability by improving agricultural productivity through an approach to building sustainable livelihood, market access, expanding financial services, and building business management skills. Partnerships: Government offices and sectors; cooperatives; unions; MFIs; Organisations of persons with disabilities	

4.5.3 Kenya

Kenya, with a population on 53 million, is considered one of the African countries with the highest development potential, and its economic growth has been good in recent years and decades, contributing to social development.²¹ Kenya also performs well in the Global State of Democracy framework assessment, for example, regarding parliament's effectiveness and civic engagement, and has experienced significant improvement regarding elected government and absence of corruption.²² Despite the recent positive developments, the main development challenges of poverty and inequality still exist, and Kenya is listed in the OECD's States of Fragility report. The poverty rate is still 35% with significant regional differences, and the Human Development Index puts Kenya in the Medium human development category - positioning it at 146 out of 193 countries and territories.²³ The new political and economic governance system introduced with the passage of the new constitution in 2010 has been one of the key elements contributing to regional economic and social development, and political stability gains over recent years. In Kenya's devolved system of governance, 47 counties have

²¹ World Bank. [Kenya](#). 2024.

²² International IDEA. [Kenya](#). 2024.

²³ UNDP. [Human Development Report 2023-2024](#). 2024.

policy and legislative powers in many sectors, while other levels of administrative structures play a critical role in development and child protection.

Kenya's vivid civil society has played a significant role in the development of the country. However, according to CIVICUS, the civic space is currently 'repressed', and characterised, for example, by disruptions to peaceful assembly, police harassment, brutality, and killings during the anti-Government protests in 2024. At the same time, the commencement of the civil Public Benefits Organisations Act, which was passed in 2013 but remained frozen, was announced in 2024. The new civil society law is considered progressive and replaces the controversial NGO Act of 1991, which provided a lot of discretion to authorities to interfere with organisations.²⁴

Kenya's constitution provides the legal framework for the Government to fulfil women's rights, but for example, the constitutional gender equality gains, including the 2/3 gender quota, still need to be advocated as women face challenges in participation in decision-making at different levels of the system. Women are more vulnerable to external economic and climate-related shocks, as over 80% of them are engaged in smallholder farming, but only a few percent of them own land and have access to agricultural credit. Female poverty is exacerbated by GBV and traditional practices governing inheritance and acquisition of land and benefits accruing to land produce that continue to favour men. Women suffer from polygamy, CEFM, and harmful cultural and traditional practices reflecting patriarchal culture that is deep-rooted, particularly in rural areas. It is estimated that 45% of women aged 15–49 have experienced intimate partner violence, while 42% women and 36% of men believe beating is justified under certain circumstances.²⁵

Both FGM and child marriage have been illegal in Kenya since 2001 under the Children's Act. Other laws, such as the Sexual Offences Act, 2006, the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, 2011 and the Marriage Act, 2014, should protect girls. However, both practises continue as they are manifestations of deeply rooted social and gender norms that sustain inequality, including poverty and women's limited access to appropriate services. It is estimated that 21% of women and girls, aged 15–49, in Kenya have undergone some form of FGM which mostly affects girls and women in the Northeastern (98%), Nyanza (32%), and Rift Valley (27%). Girls who are the least educated, poorest and living in rural areas, are at the greatest risk of FGM, which is mostly performed by traditional cutters. 93% of women in Kenya believe FGM should be discontinued.²⁶

The FGM prevalence is at 76% in West Pokot County, where the Alale anti-FGM project is implemented, and about one in four girls aged 15–19 report that they have been cut, twice the national rate. The continuation and support for FGM reflects deep-rooted inequality between the sexes and links to poverty. As a cultural rite of passage, it is explained to signal the transition from childhood to adulthood and hence readiness of the girl for marriage while ensuring "purity" and thereby the family honour and dignity. In West Pokot, FGM is considered a requisite for marriage and exchange of dowry, the traditional "bride price", which often decreases with the age of the bride, creating another economic incentive for CEFM. The median age to marry for girls and women is 15 years, and in areas like Alale, 10–14-year-olds

²⁴ Civicus Monitor. [Kenya](#). 2024.

²⁵ UN Women. [Kenya](#). 2024.

²⁶ UNFPA. [FGM Dashboard: Kenya](#). 2025.

can be married off. FGM and CEFM end girls' childhood as well as their education, and impact girls' retention in school and transition to secondary education level, resulting in high illiteracy levels and disempowerment of girls and women. In West Pokot, the share of women aged 15-49 with no formal education is 30%, almost three times higher than that of men, and much higher than the national average (6%).²⁷

FGM has an indirect impact on teenage pregnancy in West Pokot, which stands 36%, coming second after Samburu, and more than twice the national average of Kenya. Also, the total fertility rate is more than double (6.9) higher than the national average (3.4)²⁹. As livelihood options are limited, families are heavily dependent on income that every family member can help generate, including children, but particularly girls. According to the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Assessment Report (2021) by World Vision, in West Pokot County, the poverty is estimated at 69% and 69% of girls and boys are estimated to be deprived. In addition to the traditional harmful practices, the Pokot community in Alale adheres to pastoralism and various forms of child labour, including tending cattle and gold mining, which affect more boys. Incidents of insecurity are reported in some pockets of the Alale ward bordering Turkana in Kenya and Karamojong community of Uganda, the main contributing factor being cattle rustling. FGM also has a cross-border dimension between Kenya and Uganda, particularly in Alale ward, which will be addressed by the Alale project.

Kenya is still a very rural country, as 69% of the population lives in rural areas, relying on subsistence farming. However, with an annual urbanisation rate of 4.3%, about 50% of Kenyans would be living in urban areas by 2050. Currently, most of the urban population is between 20-34 years, and in Nairobi, up to 60% of urban dwellers live in informal settlements. Kenya's population is young, as 75% are below 35 years of age. Out of all unemployed Kenyans, 80% are under 35 years, and among young men, the unemployment rate is 30% and among young women 50%.²⁸ It is estimated that annually about 1,000,000 youth enter the labour market in Kenya, creating huge demand for jobs but, also training in skills, including digital skills demanded by markets and industry.

In Kenya, the work is aligned with sectors and themes that have been supported by Finland's country programmes: enhancing the rights of girls and women with a focus on protecting them from GBV and FGM and supporting youth with improved technical and vocational skills for gaining decent employment with focus on work-based learning and engagement with the private sector. WV Nordic continues cooperation with the International Solidarity Foundation, which also does anti-FGM work in Kenya. The Programme contributes to all four pillars of Kenya's UNSCR 1325 National Action Plan, as well as the Youth, Peace and Security agenda. The Programme will actively coordinate with other Finnish actors, especially in Nairobi, where it has been agreed to explore synergies with YMCA Finland, Taksvärkki, The Deaconess Foundation and FCA Kenya. Possible cooperation has been discussed with Physicians for Social Responsibility – Finland (Lääkärien sosiaalinen vastuu), working to promote SRHR of persons with disabilities. Over the years, WV Nordic has collaborated with a number of Finnish companies interested in Kenya markets, and this will continue during the programme period.

²⁷ Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. [The 2022 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey](#). 2022.

²⁸ The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. [Kenya Population and Housing Census](#). 2020.

Name and location	Alale Anti-FGM Project in West Pokot County, Alale Ward, Kenya
Total budget	1,200,000 EUR
Participants	18,674
Results areas	Child Protection and Participation
Description: The project supports child and youth-led education and active engagement in ending FGM and CEFM in Alale, especially through Alternative Rites of Passage, and life skills and SRHR training. High-risk girls' and survivors' skills and resilience are developed through asset development including access to educational and vocational training opportunities. Economic development and the transformation of traditional attitudes, including harmful practices, are enhanced through community change programs. Communities and targeted households (HHs with at-risk girls, reformed circumcisers) are supported with alternative livelihoods, productive assets, and access to savings and financial services. Child protection system at different levels is strengthened by supporting community-based reporting and referral mechanism, child protection information management, and capacity of duty bearers to enforce laws and provide services that protect girls and boys. Collaboration between child protection actors at grassroots along the borders of Uganda and Kenya in Alale is also supported.	
Partnerships: West Pokot County Government; Department of Children Services; Community Health Promoters and Voluntary Children Officers; Kenya Anti-FGM Board; National Government line ministries and agencies; National Police Services; faith-based organisations and CBOs; TVET institutes; Pokot Council of Elders	

Name and location	Youth Employment Project, Nairobi County, Kenya
Total budget	760,000 EUR
Participants	2,000
Results areas	Youth Employment and Engagement
Description: The project will address the challenges faced by vulnerable youth living in informal settlements in Nairobi by providing access to TVET (government and private institutions) and work-based learning, entrepreneurship training and business support, and life skills training and psychosocial support. The project also provides training in digital skills and platforms for digital work and develops TVET institutions capacities for disability inclusive learnings, in partnership with Finnish Vocational Special Education College Live. Peer support including in SRHR and supporting the youth to form groups and engage in decision making are also key activities in the project. The project has targets for gender and youth with disabilities.	
Partnerships: Nairobi County Government; Ministry of Information, Communication, and Digital Economy/Ajira Digital Program; Sub- County authorities and chiefs; CBOs; Live Vocational Special Education College (Finland)	

Name and location	Ngoswet Area Program, Elgeyo Marakwet County, Keiyo South Sub County, Kenya
Total budget	1,600,000 €
Participants	36,000
Results areas	Child Protection and Participation; Youth Employment and Engagement; Climate Resilience
Description: The project is implemented in semi-arid Kerio Valley where half of the population live in the dry floor of the valley and half in the semi-tropical escarpment rising above 1,800 metres. This creates challenges and vulnerabilities to the communities addressed by the project that integrates holistically the result areas with strong focus on strengthening community-based child protection and climate and financial resilience of the communities. Communities are supported to develop value-chains in climate smart agricultural production including irrigation, while their preparedness for natural disasters is supported by planning and training. The project works closely with local authorities, while supporting the capacities of the communities to duty-bearers accountable through CVA work. Advocacy work relates, for example, to the promotion of school meals, that will be supported at school level as well (school gardens, nutritional education). Youth are provided with access to TVET and business support for agriculture. The project includes partnership with Lytefire Oy on the productive use of clean energy. Description: National and County governments; Ministries of Health, Education, Agriculture, and Water; Environment and Natural Resources; Kerio Valley Development Agency; Cheptebo Rural Development Centre; Lytefire Oy (Finland)	

4.5.4 Rwanda

Rwanda, with a population of about 13 million and the highest population density in Africa, has maintained its political stability for the past 30 years and enjoyed strong economic growth in recent years. The growth, however, has not been inclusive or sufficient for creating jobs, and the poverty rate is estimated at 48%. World Bank's Human Capital Index, which measures the amount of human capital that a child born today can expect to attain by age 18, places Rwanda at 160th out of 174 countries²⁹. Main challenges to child-wellbeing in Rwanda continue to be stunted growth, poor quality of education and high dropout rates, and violence against women and children.

Rwanda performs in the low range across all four categories of the Global State of Democracy Indices framework, and there has been a significant decline in some categories³⁰, while CIVICUS rates the state of Rwanda's civil society as 'repressed'. In 2024, incumbent President Paul Kagame was re-elected with over 99% of the votes, while political opposition continues to face severe restrictions on their right to freedom of association, along with threats, arbitrary detention, killings, and enforced disappearances. Independent civil society and the media also face attacks, intimidation, harassment, and reprisals for their work³¹. In general, the civil society in Rwanda remains in an embryonic state. While human rights organisations are being

²⁹ World Bank. [Rwanda](#). 2024.

³⁰ International IDEA. [Rwanda](#). 2024.

³¹ Civicus Monitor. [Rwanda](#). 2024.

monitored closely, NGOs that operate within the government's political and development plans are free to do their work.

Rwanda has a long history of receiving refugees, and according to UNHCR, as of 30 September 2024, it hosted 144,000 refugees, mainly from the DRC and Burundi. The country has five refugee camps; Mugombwa with 11,000 refugees, is in WV's Umurava Area Program's target area in Gisagara district, in the Southern Province³². Gisagara district has a population of about 108,000, with about 60% of the resident population being under 25 years. The district is among the poorest in Rwanda, with an extreme poverty rate at 26% compared to 16% at the national level, while 56% of the population is poor (national rate 38%). In the three sectors covered by the Umurava Area Program, extreme poverty rates are between 24%-32%. Of the households, 34%-43% are female-headed. In Rulindo district in the Northern Province, where the Tare youth employment project is to be implemented, the extreme poverty is 23%, i.e. higher than the national rate³³.

Unemployment, especially youth unemployment, is one of the biggest challenges in both Gisagara and Rulindo districts. 3% of the youth in Rulindo have never attended school, 58% attended only primary school, and 22% have attended lower secondary education. The high percentage of those who did not complete secondary education underscores a major problem. The employment rate among youth is low at 43% in Rulindo district level, while in the locations targeted by the Tare youth employment project, rates are lower. At the same time, the youth literacy level in the Rulindo district is very good at 87%. 35 These figures highlight critical gaps in educational attainment and the skills mismatch of the youth and underscore the need for vocational skills development. To promote TVET, a TVET Board was established under the Ministry of Education in 2020 in Rwanda. There are over 417 TVET schools spread across Rwanda, catering to a diverse range of industries, but there is a marked limitation in the variety of trades offered, and a significant oversight in disability inclusion. Many TVET schools focus predominantly on conventional trades such as carpentry, masonry, and automotive repair, and lack the facilities and programs necessary to accommodate students with disabilities.

Rwanda has made progress over the years in developing policies and plans to address the human rights of vulnerable groups such as women, youth, children and IDPs. These policies include the Women's Charter, the National Youth Strategy, Human Rights and Children's Rights Acts, the National Disability Act, National Gender Policy and Social Protection Policy. The legal and conducive policy environment has greatly contributed to gender equality and the empowerment of women across different sectors, while a combination of deep-rooted social norms, prevailing customary law and capacity at the local government level makes it difficult to implement national policies regarding gender equality. Rwanda has a strong political commitment and a comprehensive institutional gender machinery consisting of the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, the Gender Monitoring Office, the National Women's Council and the Rwanda Women Parliamentary Forum for mainstreaming and monitoring gender equality and women's empowerment. The country is famous for a high level of women's political participation. However, at the domestic level, women often have limited decision-making power in several issues, including rights to own and control land, and almost half of the

³² UNHCR [Rwanda](#). 2024.

³³ National Institute of Statistics. [Rwanda](#). 2023.

women reported in 2020 having experienced intimate partner violence, indicating patriarchal norms and inequality between women and men.

Rwanda ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990. In its latest observation in 2020, OHCHR's Committee on the Rights of the Child draw attention to the recommendations concerning cooperation with civil society, sexual exploitation and abuse, children with disabilities, adolescent health, children in street situations and administration of child justice, and physical and sexual violence³⁴. According to the Umurava Area Program baseline assessment (2022), 3% adolescent males and 16% adolescent females reported exposure to sexual violence in the last 12 months, while 9% of girls and 7% of boys (aged 9-11 years) had experienced child labour issues. In the Gisagara district, 83% of children aged between 6-11 years were currently attending school, 15% had never attended school, while 2% had dropped out of school.

According to the 2022 census data, 3,4% of the population has a disability. A thematic report on the socio-economic status of persons with disabilities shows some of the challenges that children with disabilities face. 64% of them were attending school, compared to 81% of those without disabilities, while 24% had never attended school, compared to 8% of children without disabilities. Further, the census results also show that in rural areas, children with disabilities are three times more likely not to have attended school compared to those without disabilities (8%).³⁵ This might reflect discriminatory cultural norms regarding children and persons with disabilities, manifested in limited access to opportunities and high levels of stigma, increasing their vulnerability to violence and exploitation, especially in some rural settings.

Climate-related hazards such as floods, landslides and droughts, as well as windstorms and severe rainstorms, have struck Rwanda in recent years with devastating effects on the population³⁶. REMA's 2018 climate vulnerability assessment revealed that Rulindo was among the districts with medium vulnerability to climate change. The district is characterised by steep hills, and it lies at an altitude of 2,438m above sea level, while rivers have a steady flow into low-lying valleys all year round. Therefore, the area is prone to disasters such as landslides and flooding during the rainy season due to its topography, coupled with land degradation.

While WV Nordic is not aware of other actors working with MFA funding in Rwanda, there are number of private sector actors and educational institutions working or interested in working in Rwanda. WV Nordic will continue discussions with them to identify synergies and opportunities for partnership. These include the continuation of partnerships with Finnish Logonet Ltd. on Finnish Baby Aid Kits to promote maternal health and with Finnish Live Vocational Special Education College to enhance disability inclusion in the TVET sector in Rulindo district.

³⁴The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. [Rwanda](#). 2020.

³⁵ National Institute of Statistics. [Rwanda](#). 2025.

³⁶ Rwanda Environment Management Authority. [Our work](#). 2024.

Name and location	Umurava Area Program in Kigembe, Kansi and Mugombwa sectors, Gisagara district, Southern province, Rwanda
Total budget	1,600,000 EUR
Total participants	30,000
Results areas	Child Protection and Participation; Youth Employment and Engagement; Climate Resilience
Description: The project will strengthen community-based child protection and work closely with local authorities. Provision of school meals will be promoted through advocacy work and supporting school gardens, while conducive, secure and inclusive environment including WASH to boost learning and educational outcomes will be enhanced. The resilience of participants is built through mindset change approaches, skills training and provision of productive assets for livelihood improvement and sustainable household income and food security thereby addressing chronic poverty holistically. Youth are empowered with essential life and vocational skills and resources for improved livelihoods in both refugee and host communities.	
Partnerships: Local government at district level; Ministry in charge of Emergency Management: Ministry of Local Governance; WFP; UNHCR; Refugee camp management committees; Association Mwana Ukundwa; Collectif des Lignes et Associations de Défense pour le Droit de l'homme au Rwanda; African Enterprise Rwanda; Rwanda Rural Rehabilitation Initiative; Extractive Workers Union; Vision Fund; Logonet Ltd (Finland)	

Name and location	Tare Youth Employment Project in Northern Province, Rulindo District (Bushoki, Tumba, Kinihira and Rusiga Sectors), Rwanda
Total budget	1,120,000 EUR
Total participants	4,000
Results areas	Youth Employment and Engagement
Description: The project targets vulnerable youth, including those with disabilities, who have dropped out of school at primary or secondary level by providing access to TVET and skills training and supporting them to pursue relevant livelihood pathways. The project provides life skills and SRHR training for the youth. To address the lack of facilities and programmes necessary to accommodate students with disabilities at TVET institutions, the project supports improvement of disability inclusion in training institutions and TVET-authorities. The project will cooperate with official youth stakeholders to strengthen their capacity and ensure ownership for improved livelihoods and skills development amongst young people. The project also enhances community resilience to climate change impacts through youth-led initiatives. The project will include activities to sensitise communities about environmental protection and possible risks and mitigation efforts and engage youth in income generating tree planting, terracing to prevent soil erosion and disaster preparedness, and mitigation approaches with the communities.	
Partnerships: Ministry of Youth and Arts; National Youth Council; Rulindo District authorities; Sector officials; Rwanda Technical and Vocational Education Training Board; TVET institutions; Rwanda Environment Management Authority; Vision Fund Rwanda; Live Vocational Special Education College (Finland)	

4.5.5 Uganda

The majority of the population of just under 50 million belongs to several different ethnicities. Uganda is one of the world's largest recipients of refugees because of its open refugee policy and its proximity to several violent conflicts. The programme area in Adjumani, North-Eastern Uganda by the South Sudanese border is the country's largest refugee receiving area. CIVICUS classifies Ugandan civil society as repressed³⁷, which means that civic space is significantly constrained and those who demand their rights risk surveillance, harassment, intimidation, imprisonment, injury and death. Uganda is classified as "not free" given the state of political rights and civil liberties.³⁸ The Global Corruption Index ranks it 141st out of 180 countries.³⁹ Ugandan authorities severely restrict the rights to expression, association and peaceful assembly.⁴⁰ There are reports of arrests of and threats to government critics and demonstrators.⁴¹ The enactment of the Anti-Homosexuality Act tightened the civic space, as activists have been accused of homosexuality to turn the public opinion against them and to silence them.⁴²

Uganda has signed all the international human rights conventions, such as CRC, CRPD, CEDAW and African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children, and there are several national frameworks that are relevant for WV's work in Uganda such as the National Child Policy. Uganda is a state party to the UN Refugee Convention. The Refugee Act and Refugee Regulations grant refugees many of the same rights accorded to Ugandan citizens, including rights to work and open business, freedom of movement, access to government services and elementary education. The implementation of these human rights positive policies is insufficient and inconsistent. Uganda has a strong Constitution and policies for protecting and promoting women's rights, but gender inequality is sustained by norms, beliefs and practices about roles in community, land and property ownership, needs for education, succession, inheritance, finances and values attached to gendered roles, which contribute to women's marginalisation. Gender inequality persists, especially in rural areas and agriculture. Men exercise the power and control over resources like land, seeds, credit and savings and loans associations and hold key positions in communities. Only 27% of the land is owned by women. Women work on average for 16-18 hours a day due to household and care work, whereas men only work 10-13 hours.

The South Sudan refugee crisis has caused heavy burden and vulnerability on women as heads of most of the households in Adjumani settlements. Community reports indicate that men have stayed behind because of security reasons and as a result, many women, aside from caring for others fend for their families. In Adjumani, only 19% of the refugee women are engaged in income generating activities due to low literacy and skill level, lack of access and cultural norms restricting women and girls.⁴³ Women and children face protection risks. Inadequate services, lack of knowledge, language barriers, culture and distance to service points contribute to the lack of access to services for women and girls. Women are often

³⁷ Civicus Monitor. [Uganda](#). 2024.

³⁸ Freedom House. [Freedom in the World 2024: Uganda](#). 2024.

³⁹ Transparency International. [Uganda Corruption Perceptions Index](#). 2024.

⁴⁰ Amnesty International. [Uganda 2023](#). 2023.

⁴¹ Human Rights Watch. [Uganda Events of 2023](#). 2024.

⁴² Caroline Kimeu, The Guardian. ['I can't stop now': Uganda's anti-LGBTQ+ law forces climate activist into exile](#). 2024.

⁴³ World Vision Uganda. Safety Audit report Adjumani 2024.

involved in production, postharvest handling and marketing of small volumes of produce, while men engage in trading of large produce volumes, transporting and product processing. A gender analysis reveals that discrimination against women limits their participation in decision-making, constraining their access to climate-smart practices, technologies, and relevant agricultural, weather, and climate information and services.

The Constitution of Uganda prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities. Uganda is one of the few countries in the world to recognise sign language in its Constitution. The Persons with Disabilities Act (2020) provides for the respect and promotion of human rights for persons with disabilities, but the implementation is inadequate. In Adjumani, public services are not inclusive for persons with disabilities and their families and have very few affirmative actions available. A survey identified 12% of population has a family member with disabilities.⁴⁴ Women with disabilities experience intersectional discrimination and due to social norms, have limited access to land and are exempted from selling family assets. Persons with disabilities are often called names, which affects their self-esteem and level of participation. Children with disabilities are considered as low-valued people, misfortune to the family and a burden.

Uganda is the largest host of refugees in Africa, sheltering 1,77 million refugees in October 2024. Uganda has hosted refugees from neighbouring countries for nearly 50 years. Wars, violence and persecution in the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes Region have been the main drivers of forced displacement into Uganda, in particular the South Sudan conflict; insecurity and ethnic violence in the DRC; and political instability and human rights violations in Burundi. South Sudanese make up over half of the refugee population, followed by one third of refugees from the DRC, and much less from Somalia, Burundi and Eritrea. More than 40,000 refugees from Rwanda, Ethiopia and Sudan have lived in protracted exile in Uganda for the past three decades. Refugees are mainly hosted in thirteen districts, and the vast majority (94%) live in settlements alongside the local communities.

Around 13% of the total refugee population in Uganda is hosted in Adjumani; about 80% of them are women and children from South Sudan living in rural settlements alongside the locals. Adjumani promotes the government's refugee settlement model that allows refugees to interact freely and set up investment. Mirroring local governance structures, the settlements are divided into zones and managed by Refugee Welfare Councils that are elected by the refugees. Many refugees rely on food aid as the land received from the government is insufficient for crop production. The government guarantees each refugee household a plot of land of 30x30 meters, regardless of their size. Only 24% of the population engages in stable livelihoods, and a significant proportion of refugee households are not self-reliant as they lack the necessary income to meet basic household needs and safety nets. The distance and time required to reach the farmland are key barriers. 85% of refugee households cite financial constraints as a key barrier to accessing additional land, and the situation is worse for women. Refugee households have limited access to finance through formal financial systems as they are seen as unstable and risky clients. Generally, the refugee and host communities enjoy a cordial relationship, but increased competition over scarce resources increasingly affects

⁴⁴ WV Uganda's GEDSI Survey in Dzaipi, subcounty in Adjumani.

peaceful coexistence. 6% of host households in Adjumani have reported having conflicts with refugee households over land.

In Adjumani, the majority of host households practice subsistence agriculture that is characterised by low yield due to minimal use of improved inputs despite fertile soil. Access to quality input is a challenge for both refugees and nationals. Climate change is a major threat to Uganda's sustainable development, causing unpredictable weather patterns, prolonged droughts, floods, landslides, crop diseases, and pest outbreaks. In Adjumani, climate change negatively impacts the availability of water, agricultural productivity, and the capacity of both refugees and host communities to adapt. The scarcity of resources has resulted in harmful practices that have led to deforestation and a high rate of bush burning, severe degradation of forest cover, soil erosion, reduced soil fertility, biodiversity loss, and increased water stress for crop production. Northern Uganda relies heavily on locally sourced firewood and charcoal for everyday fuel needs. The situation is exacerbated by using inefficient traditional cookstoves. Wood consumption in and around the settlements surpasses natural replenishment, leading to deforestation and forest degradation.

There are several other projects in the Adjumani area, by WV as well as Finnish and global organisations, as it is a vast refugee area with severe needs for external assistance. These include the UN, the Finnish Refugee Council, as well as the Lutheran World Federation, which has development, peace, as well as humanitarian projects there.

Name and location	Adjumani Child Protection, Livelihoods and Environment Project (ACLEP) Phase II, Uganda
Total budget	2,200.000 EUR
Total participants	25,000
Results areas	Child Protection and Participation; Youth Employment and Engagement; Climate Resilience
Description: The project location is a refugee-receiving area by the South Sudanese border and project participants are 50% refugees, 50% members of host community. This is a nexus project. Firstly, the project aims to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence and protection systems function. Secondly, the project will increase youth's access to decent employment, economic opportunities and improve their ability to influence development in their communities. Thirdly, the project will increase families and communities' socio-economic and environmental resilience by strengthening market linkages and strengthening people's entrepreneurship capacities and ability to build sustainable livelihoods and prepare for crises. Partnerships: Local district governments; Office of the Prime Minister; the UNHCR; the Police; the Livelihood Sector Working Group; Protection Sector Working Group; Adjumani District Persons of Disability Union; Environmental Management Committee; community-based child protection structures; humanitarian and development partners.	

5. Communications and advocacy

The Programme's communications focus on increasing awareness and understanding of child rights in the context of global development and humanitarian assistance, with the aim of enhancing the support and action for their realisation. Children's own voices will be brought

forward, providing opportunities for them to share their views and experiences. The main target groups for communications include existing and potential supporters of WV Nordic, journalists and the media, the communities the Programme works with, and duty-bearers in Finland and in the countries of operation.

A steady flow of engaging content is produced and tailored for WV Nordic's own communication channels and shared within WVI, increasing the Programme's visibility. Innovative means and partnerships with other NGOs and actors will be explored during the programme period. Three larger communication and advocacy campaigns are produced annually with a thematic focus on girls' rights, school meals/hunger and humanitarian aid. WV Nordic will focus on engaging with the media and will provide news and background information, utilising research data and reports produced by WV Nordic and WVI. Media work will include press releases and opinion pieces, journalist briefings and media and content gathering trips.

Each project has its own communications plan, using tools like radio, video clips and digital storytelling on social media and local media to share information and project results and updates with the local communities and stakeholders. National offices boost the visibility of these materials in their own channels. In all communications materials, donor visibility is ensured, and the World Vision logo will be visible project on sites, events, and facilities.

Through its advocacy work, WV Nordic works to improve the foundations and conditions for enhancing the well-being, protection, and opportunities of vulnerable children, in line with the Programme's overall objectives. The focus is on three key themes: 1) girls' rights, especially FGM and other forms of GBV, and SRHR, 2) school meals and global hunger and 3) child rights, especially of children with disabilities, in crises caused by climate change and violent conflicts. WV Nordic shares information on child rights, the challenges children are facing and the solutions needed to address them. In relation to girls' rights, WV Nordic pushes for stricter enforcement of laws banning CEFM and FGM, conducts community-based campaigns to promote girls' rights, raises awareness of existing laws and legislation and empowers youth to advocate for their rights and lead local change. WV Nordic advocates for the fulfilment of child rights in conflicts, in refugee crises and in climate-related disasters, all situations which put millions of children at risk of exploitation, violence, and lack of basic needs. WV Nordic advocates for increased funding for child-focused humanitarian aid, addresses climate change to reduce disaster risks and strives to ensure children's rights are prioritised in global humanitarian standards.

The main target groups are other experts and stakeholders in the Programme's themes in Finland, and duty-bearers in Finland, as well as in the countries and regions of operation. The Programme will conduct advocacy at different levels and platforms through briefings with duty-bearers, distribution of research reports and policy recommendations as well as participation in hearings and relevant working groups. WV Nordic will organise 1-2 seminars or other types of events annually and actively participate in seminars and events as a speaker or participant when the Programme's themes are discussed. The key networks in Finland for advocacy include Fingo and other development and humanitarian NGOs, whose campaigns and initiatives WV Nordic can participate in, when found appropriate. WV Nordic is an expert member of the Development Policy Committee. With increasing advocacy resources in this Programme compared to previous years, WV Nordic can increase the visibility of its work and

expertise and follow closely and influence developments in the field of development cooperation and humanitarian work.

World Vision's national offices are engaged in national-level advocacy related to child rights and protection, but also to other sectors. Regular dialogue with governments and duty-bearers provides opportunities for policy influencing that is based on evidence from the ground. In many cases, WV forms thematic coalitions with like-minded NGOs to increase effectiveness. As an international partnership, WV brings views and voices of civil society and communities to the national level and further to the global level and this gives a channel for WV Nordic to bring forward the priority themes of this Programme, such as the rights of children with disabilities. WV Nordic aims to raise awareness on the importance of school meals among duty-bearers and the public, to promote Finnish support for sustainable school meal programmes and to support school meal programmes in the Programme countries in partnership with the governments and communities. The focus is especially on Kenya and Rwanda and follows up on the commitments from the Governments to support school meals programmes. It will also mobilise support through partnerships with donors, private sector actors, and Finland's MFA and Embassies.

Measuring the change

WV Nordic's communication plan and performance are measured quantitatively and qualitatively through social media and media coverage monitoring, newsletter and website performance tracking and supporter and magazine readership surveys, as well as surveys conducted by partners. The outcome and output indicators for communications outlined in the Results Framework (annex) are tracked as part of the annual reporting. Success in advocacy will be monitored and evaluated by assessing the number and types of commitments and the increased knowledge of duty-bearers.

6. Quality assurance

WV is dedicated to improving the well-being of the most vulnerable children through a results-based management approach. This commitment is embedded throughout each WV office and reflected in how programmes and projects are planned, monitored, and evaluated to achieve measurable impact, while simultaneously ensuring sufficient flexibility to adapt as context demands. This Programme has its own detailed PMEAL plan, and WV's new Annual Impact Monitoring and global Design, Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks are also considered.

The nine development projects, most of which continue from the previous programme and the new ones have now been prepared for this Programme, are aligned with the objectives of the Programme as well as the respective national strategies and adapted to the local context. The continuation of the projects strengthens existing approaches and results. The humanitarian projects are based on needs assessments. WV often works as part of a large international response, usually led by a UN agency and including the government, and typically, initial assessments have already been conducted by the time WV joins in. WV then, as needed, conducts supplementary or rapid needs assessment, for example, focusing on a certain sector or group of beneficiaries. WV's humanitarian projects complement existing WV humanitarian responses and fill in the gaps in ways that are aligned with the objectives of the Programme.

The alignment with national strategies is important because it ensures that technical expertise can be found at the national level. The commitment to child wellbeing and agency is a universal theme at WV, but projects align with sub-themes such as school meals, nurturing healthy relationships between genders or within families, breaking inter-generational cycles of poverty and building community resilience against climate change and environmental degradation. In humanitarian programmes, children with disabilities are a special focus group. Once programme funding has been confirmed, the planning phase continues with detailed project plans, followed by baseline assessments and the setting of targets.

WV implements standardised evidence-based WV Core Project Models (PM) to increase the quality, effectiveness and impact of the projects. They consist of processes and interventions proven to be effective across various contexts in designing and implementing cost-effective programmes that achieve sustainable results. Most of the projects also use Enabling Project Models alongside Core PMs to improve and deepen the outcomes. The most common WV PMs employed in this Programme are Child Protection & Advocacy, Savings for Transformation and Youth Ready, and Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration and Regreening Communities. Using Child Protection & Advocacy PM, most of the projects will mobilise joint action between formal and informal child protection actors in the communities and society to strengthen the protective environment for children and to empower local communities to assess risks, develop local solutions, and address the root causes of violence using evidence-based methods. Through Saving for Transformation, savings groups will produce solutions to accumulate and convert cash into savings that can later be lent to their members as credit. Impact+ is a life skills PM for engagement contributing to transforming adolescents, especially the most vulnerable ones, as active citizens empowered with competencies, values, confidence and social connectedness. Employing Channels of Hope, the projects produce capacity building of faith leaders to impact sociocultural norms, beliefs and practices in targeted child well-being issues and mobilise faith groups to take collective action to support child well-being. The Men Care PM promotes men's equitable and engaged involvement for the eradication of GBV, achievement of gender equality and promotion of family health and well-being. While Peace Road Curriculum is a life skills project model empowering adolescents to protect themselves, respect others, promote peace, and contribute to their communities, as well as build capacities of local partners to work with youth.

Each project is monitored by an assigned expert following a monitoring manual. Thematic evaluations will be conducted annually, mostly as self-evaluations, and a final evaluation will be commissioned from an external evaluator in early 2029. In terms of accountability and transparency, WV is accountable equally to the individuals, communities and stakeholders it serves as well as to donors. Accountability means the quality of the work that WV does, including the planning and implementation of projects and programmes, as well as quality of the management and good governance. Learning in this programme includes peer learning, inter-project learning events such as the Impact Seminars and learning through the international partnership.