

52
Years of
Hope, Joy, and Justice
For All Children

World Vision 



**ANNUAL
REPORT
2023**



OUR VISION

Our vision for every child, life in all its fullness.
Our prayer for every heart, the will to make it so.



5-YEAR STRATEGIC GOAL



Bringing Fullness of Life for 28.2 million (4.1 million directly and 24.1 million indirectly) of the Most Vulnerable Children



through transforming hard-to-reach communities and



addressing the root causes of multi-dimensional poverty and injustice

HOW WILL THIS GOAL BE ACHIEVED?



Demonstrating Impact



Operational Excellence



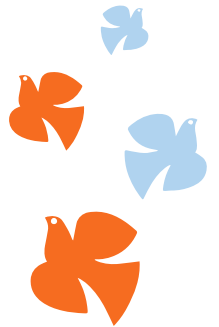
Diverse Funding



Well-Developed People



Ensuring Sustainability





TECHNICAL SECTORS



Education



Child Protection and Participation



Health, Nutrition and WASH



Livelihood and Food Security

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES



Advocacy and Campaign



Faith and Development



Gender Equality and Social Inclusion



Environment, Climate Change, and Disaster Risk Reduction



Foreword

This year once again, World Vision Bangladesh through its many programs, projects was able to empower and change the lives of almost 6.5 million people, of which 4.5 million were children. Advocacy and campaigns played a critical part in this process through the improved implementation of local laws, policies and greater allocation of govt funding resulting from child-led budget advocacy. We continue to scale our footprint, increase our reach and demonstrate impact across all areas of our work. We continued to collaborate with the government of Bangladesh to ensure all our work contributes to the SDGs.

Significant this year was our focus on declaring 152 Child Marriage Free Villages in conjunction with local government and the communities. This is currently being scaled to cover entire unions/wards and Upazilas/municipalities. Through this process more and more children are better protected, do not drop out but stay in school, complete their education and are able to fulfil their dreams for their future. We continued to expand our work in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. 169 villages consisting of 220,000 people was transformed into Eco-Villages contributing to sustainable, green, clean, healthy, environment friendly living. We also established 119 GESI (Gender Equality and Social Inclusion) friendly green schools. In this quest, WVB continues to measure its carbon footprint across the country with a view to making changes and ensuring we lead by example.

Irrespective of the challenges, there has been a lot to celebrate this year, particularly the many lives changed and transformed. None of this would have been possible without the collaboration, support from Government (national and local), our partners, generous donors and funding offices. We are extremely grateful to them all and thankful also to the communities who continue to welcome us and collaborate with us in bringing about lasting change.

My heartfelt thanks to our teams, who continue to serve faithfully in challenging contexts. There is still however, much to be done to provide fullness of life for every child in Bangladesh. With your continued support, we look forward to collaborating further, scaling our work to bring about greater impact and transformation to people's lives in this country.

Suresh Bartlett
National Director
World Vision Bangladesh



WHERE WE WORK

29

districts

88

sub-districts

54

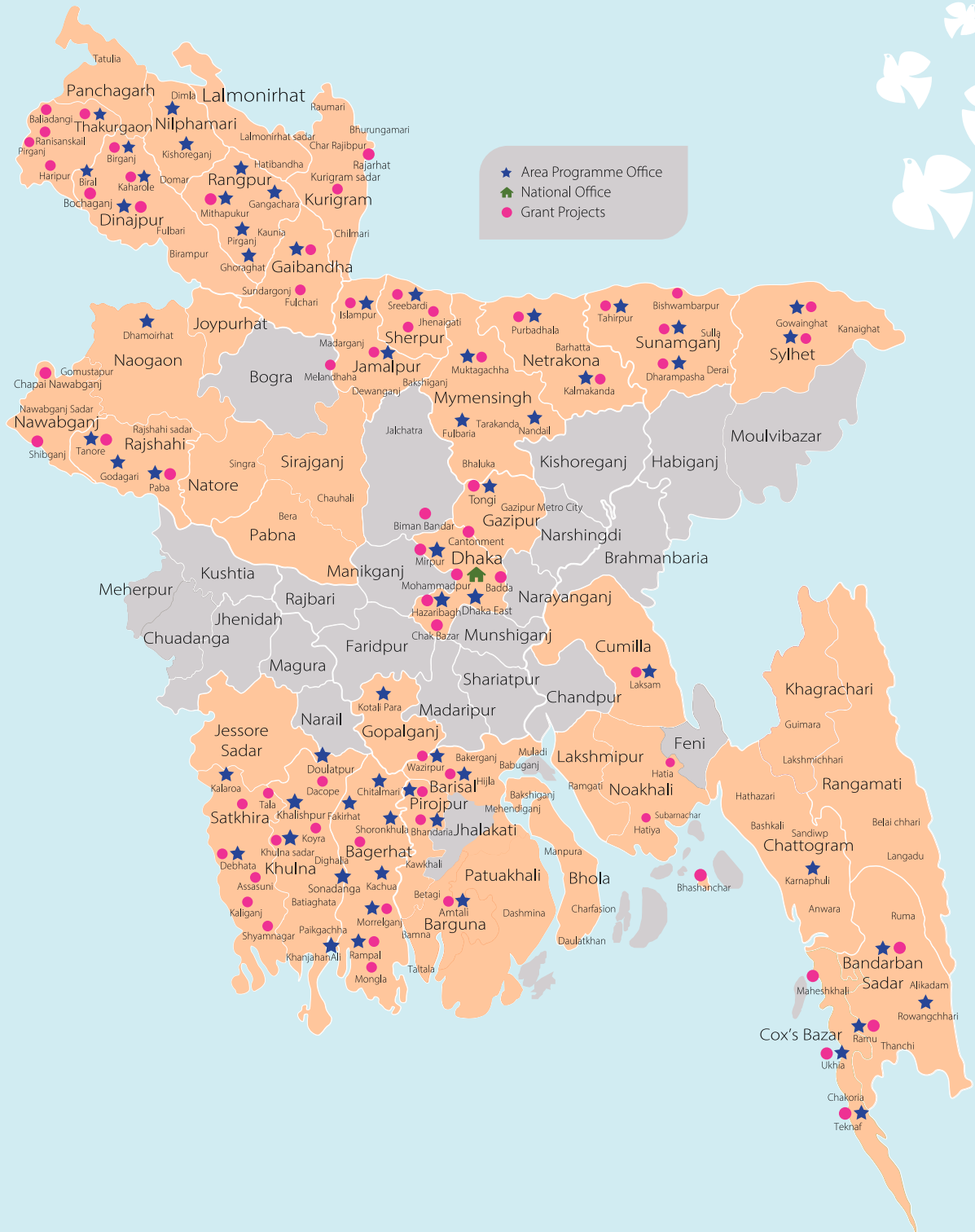
Sponsorship
Funded Area
Programmes
(AP)

37

grant- funded
projects

36

Private
Non-Sponsorship
(PNS)/ funded projects





OUR ACHIEVEMENTS



Total People Reached

65,13,043



Child protection and participation
921,162



Advocacy and Campaign
29,70,044



Education
251,227



Livelihood and food security
720,116



MCHN
929,413



GESI
281,266
 People with Disabilities (PWDs)
17,680



HEA
272,325



WASH
380,296



Faith and development
88,737



DRR and CCA
189,003



Youth (15-24 years)
107,961



Females
13,43,155



Males
5,11,124



Girls
22,63,902



Boys
23,94,862



Contribution to SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals)

Every hour, **28** children (under 5 years) were supported to prevent malnutrition

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



4 QUALITY EDUCATION



Every hour, **41** children received education

Every hour, **06** people received access to clean water and **35** people access to safe sanitation facilities

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



Every hour, **25** individuals received livelihood inputs to ensure food security for their families

Every hour, **22** people were better equipped to deal with Disaster Risk and Climate Change

13 CLIMATE ACTION



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



Every day, **236** children took part in ending violence against children

Child Protection and Participation

People Reached:

921,162

Significant Achievements



25,287 children and youth meaningfully participated in the programme and took action as changemakers



15,026 adolescent girls learned about child protection issues and are now working as agents of change in their community



1,965 child protection committees are functional, reporting and responding to violence against children



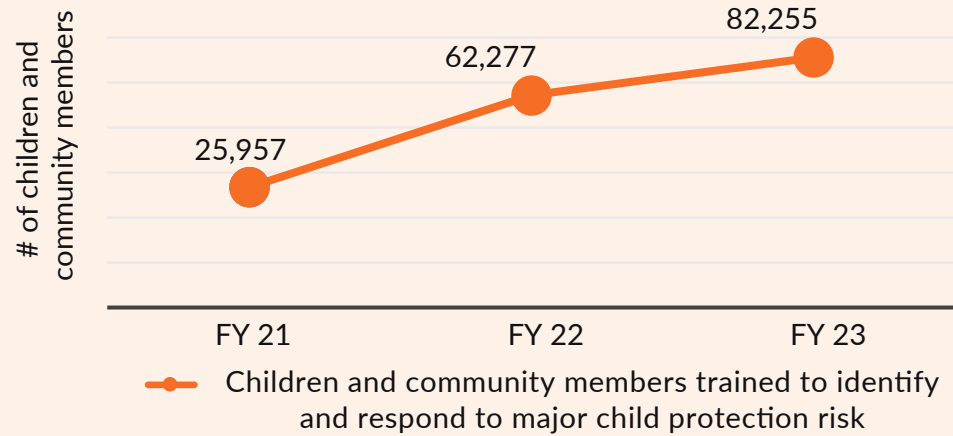
277 most vulnerable children and individuals who experienced violence and abuse at home and community received MHPSS (mental health and psycho-social) support and services through direct and referral care



119,905 people made aware about child protection issues



Children and community members trained to identify and respond to major child protection risk



Impacts



73.6% of parents/caregivers did not use physical punishment and/or psychological aggression to correct their children



61.9 % of children participated meaningfully in community decision-making



119 child marriages prevented by child and youth forum members, faith leaders and child protection (CP) committees



Education

People Reached:

251,227

Significant Achievements



15,425 children aged 3-5 years received early education in 616 community-led learning centers



6,536 adolescent members (aged 12 to 18 years) actively participated in Impact+ adolescent groups



27,945 parents/caregivers trained in Learning Roots' positive parenting approach



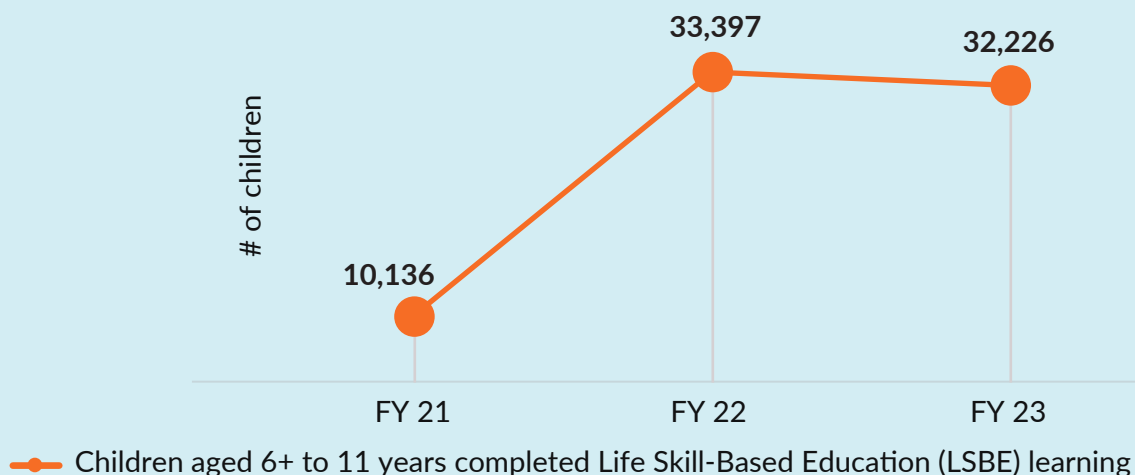
15,026 adolescents received education via 672 adolescent groups



6,154 students participated in 215 community-run Reading Clubs



Children aged 6+ to 11 years completed Life Skill-Based Education (LSBE) learning



Impacts



100% of Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres have achieved the quality standards in respect of cleanliness, safety, latrines, safe drinking water & handwashing



47.8% of female and male adolescent members (aged 12 to 18 years) actively participated in adolescent group activities and were empowered with competencies, values, confidence and social connectedness



97.9% of children (aged 6-18 years) currently enrolled in and attending a structured learning institution



Maternal Child Health and Nutrition (MCHN)

People Reached:

929,413

Significant Achievements



15,653 children aged 6-59 months participated in Positive Deviance (PD) initiative to address child malnutrition



41,289 adolescents reached with health and nutrition messages including reproductive health



57,307 women including pregnant and lactating mothers received orientation on safe motherhood and post-natal care



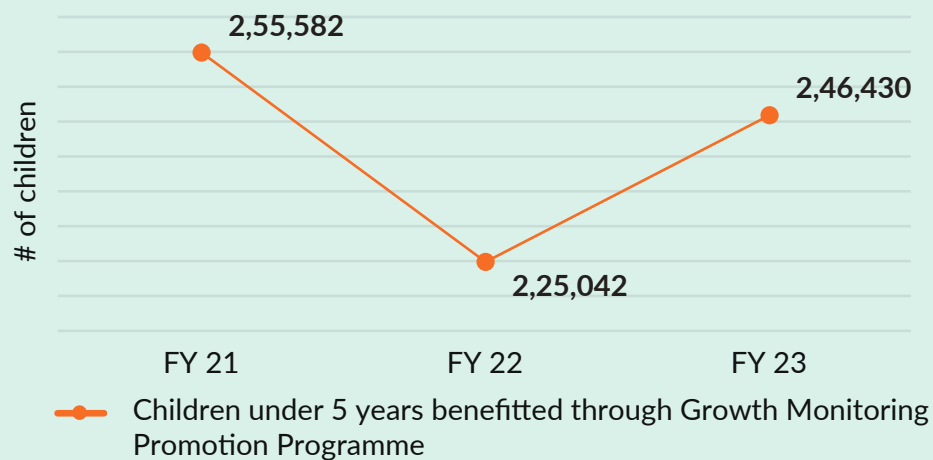
121,146 caregivers reached with infant and young child feeding (IYCF) messages



8,030 malnourished children, aged 6-59 months, became well-nourished through the community-based nutrition programme



Children under 5 years benefitted through the Growth Monitoring Promotion Programme



Impacts



50.0% of children receiving minimum dietary diversity



71.6% of infant births were supervised by skilled birth attendants



64.6% of mothers report that they had four or more antenatal visits while they were pregnant with their youngest child



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

People Reached:

380,296

Significant Achievements



11,753 households received handwashing facilities



19,794 women and adolescent girls were sensitised on menstrual hygiene



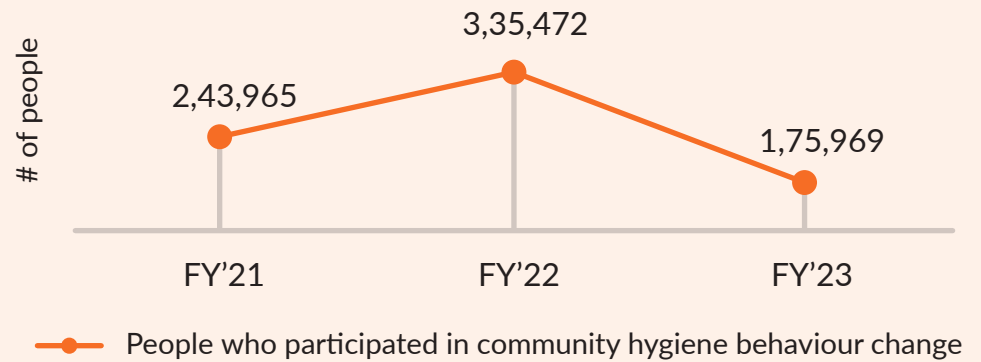
6,729 bins for solid waste were distributed in urban slum areas



51 villages were certified as open defecation free (ODF)



People who participated in community hygiene behaviour change



Impacts



55,361 people received access to a basic drinking water source in their communities. 96.9% of households using a basic drinking water facility



63,302 people received access to household sanitation facilities. 85.4% of households are using a basic sanitation facility



83.7% of water supply systems in communities are functional



Livelihood and Food Security

People Reached:

720,116

Significant Achievements



13,919 individuals participated in technical training on business/entrepreneurship skills



10,926 individual participants completed financial literacy and savings training



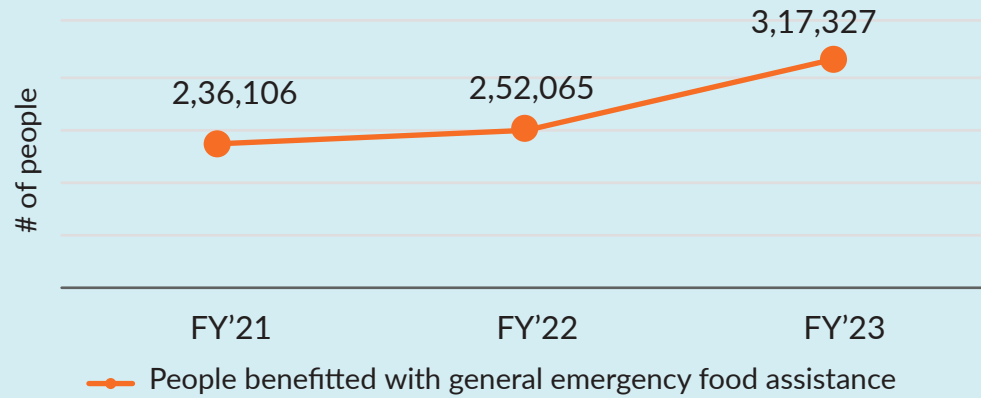
18,562 individuals trained on homestead gardening/agriculture for year-round vegetable production



65,598 households received agricultural/farm and non-farm inputs



People benefitted with general emergency food assistance



Impacts



76.4% of women actively engaged in decision making



94.5% of households have sufficient dietary diversity



86.1% parents or caregivers providing for the basic needs of their family



44.7% of households have savings in financial institutions



25.7% of households have access to sufficient credit



50.6% of households with alternative sources of income



Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

People Reached:

281,266

Significant Achievements



9,782 people became more aware of gender-based violence and how to prevent it



10,016 couples graduated from the men care programme training



14,398 adolescent girls became aware of their sexual health and reproductive rights



2,985 adolescent girls received training to adopt healthy lifestyle and promote improved nutrition behaviour



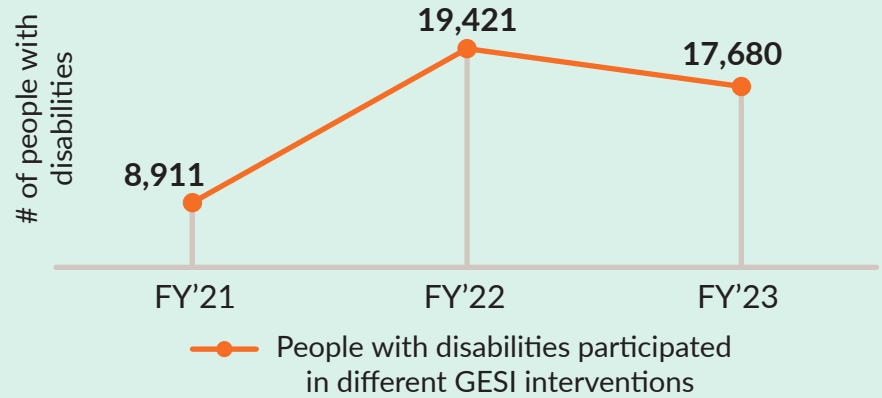
341 Muslim, Christian and Hindu faith leaders promoted disability inclusion, breaking existing taboos



119 GESI-friendly green schools set up



People with disabilities participated in different GESI interventions



Impacts



40.9% of women feel their economic roles/ contribution within the HH and the community are recognised and 38.2% of men recognise women's economic roles/contribution within their households and their communities



4.4% increase in women who have freedom of movement to access programme related services within and outside their residential localities



79.6% of members from community groups/partners are demonstrating an increase in gender equitable attitudes



Youth Empowerment

People Reached:

1,07,961

Significant Achievements



40,844 youth were engaged in promoting community-led social innovation



4,066 child and youth forum representatives exchanged views with the local and national level policy makers, government high officials, academicians, and the private sector



5,537 youth/adolescents were engaged in school-based nutrition education sessions



535 youths learned the technique of converting “waste into wealth” in collaboration with a youth-led organisation



9,707 youth promoted Youth Led DRR via digital platforms

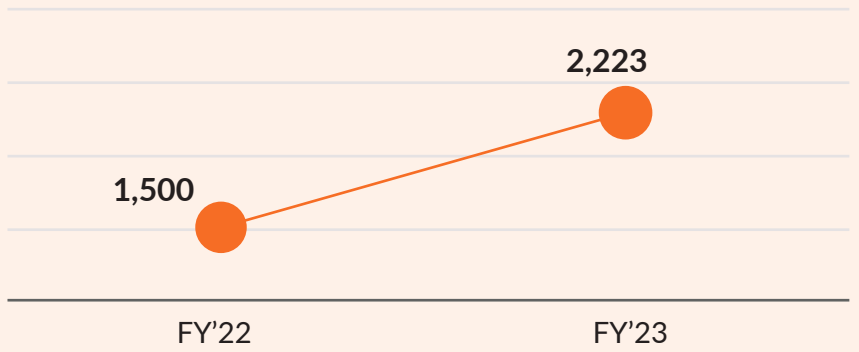


6,033 female and male adolescents actively participated in community projects



Youth advocates participated in 'Zero Child Marriage' initiative for preventing child marriage

of youth



— Youth advocates participated in 'Zero Child Marriage' initiative for preventing child marriage

Impacts



75.8% of adolescents have a strong connection with their parents or caregivers



Faith and Development

People Reached:

88,737



Significant Achievements



4,774 faith leaders equipped to address child protection, health, nutrition, gender-based violence and disability



1,516 religious leaders trained/oriented on COVID-19 prevention measures and promoting improved nutrition behaviour



19,174 boys and girls participated in faith-based programmes and Spiritual Nurture activities through Dare to Discover and Culture of Peace approaches



6,290 parents engaged in parents' support groups; 4,526 parents trained in positive disciplining



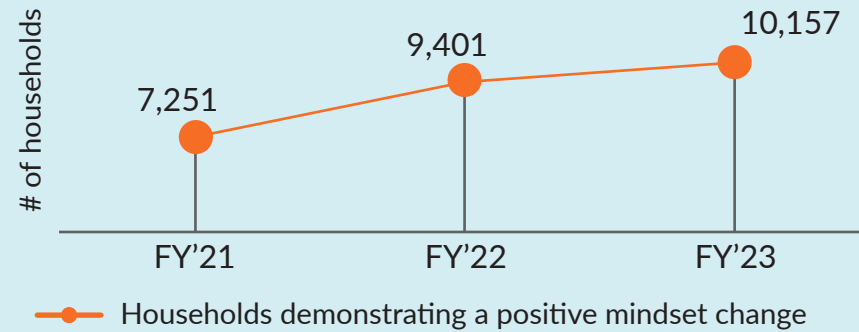
14,697 parents trained on Celebrating Families



274 joint events with FBOs/Islamic Foundation and Churches to address violence against children and child marriage issues



Household demonstrating a positive mindset change



Impacts



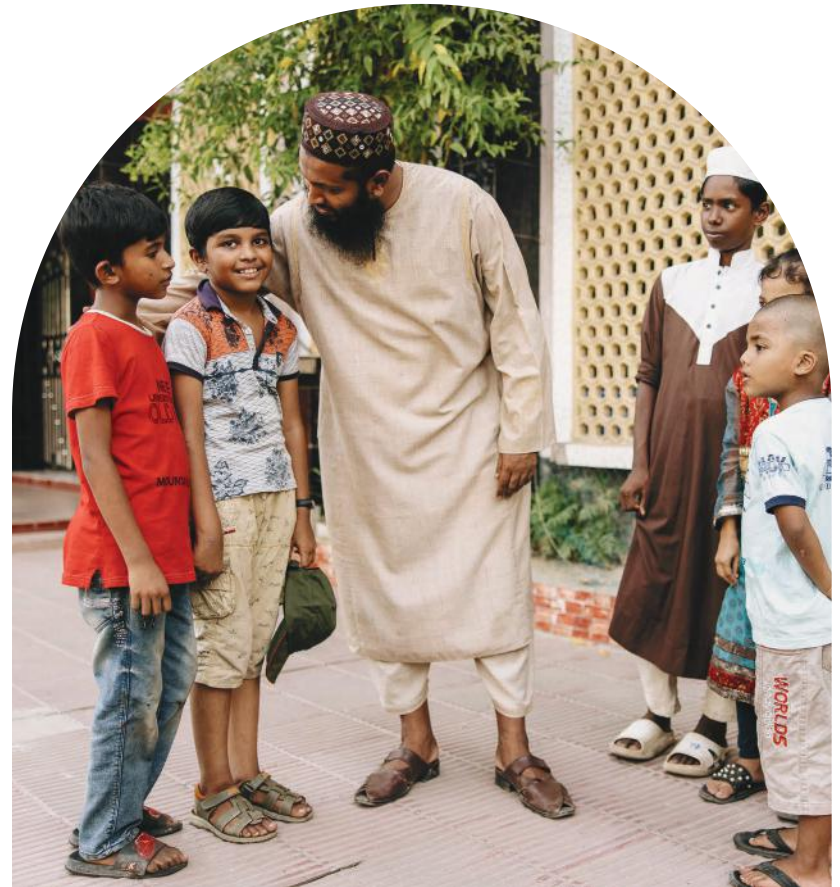
42.4% of boys and girls (aged 12-18 years) are enjoying positive and peaceful relations with their peers



32.0% of boys and girls (aged 12-18 years) are enjoying positive and peaceful relations with the faith leaders



66.7% of boys and girls (aged 12-18 years) with positive and peaceful relationships with their parent(s)/caregiver(s)



Humanitarian and Emergency Affairs (HEA)

People Reached:

272,325

Significant Achievements



People reached through sector focused Emergency Flood Response



5,460 Received
cash



68,742 Received
hygiene kits



37,290 Children
supported



65,262 Received
food packs



Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation

People Reached:

189,003

Significant Achievements



14,908 volunteers, community members, including children and youth trained on DRR and 32,589 people sensitised on DRR and preparedness



18,562 people trained on homestead gardening and 33,948 households received input support and practicing homestead gardening



2,186 households using improved cook stoves



3,432 local government Disaster Management Committee(DMCs) members trained on Standing Order on Disaster (SoD)



5,090 people made aware and able to better cope with the impacts of climate change



9,449 people sensitised on CCA

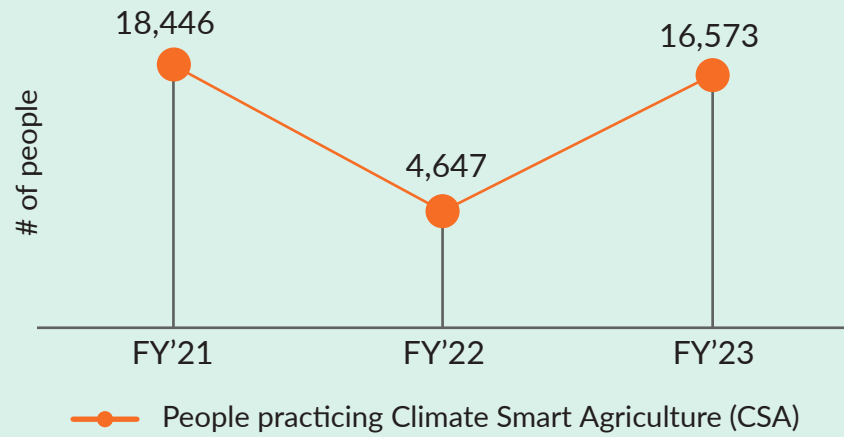


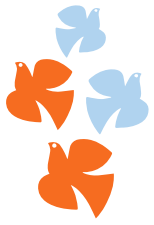
8,815 community volunteers, local government, and community DMCs' capacity increased for emergency response and DRR action



169 villages (219,759 people from 50,957 households) transformed into ecovillages contributing to sustainable and environment-friendly living

People practicing Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA)





Advocacy and Campaigns

People Reached:

29,70,044

Significant Achievements



40,843 children reached through the “It Takes Me” campaign to end child marriage



Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) and Gazipur City Corporation declared 3 dream parks that benefits 30,665 children



152 villages declared as Child Marriage-Free Village that impacts 271,153 children



18,79,935 children reached through improved implementation of laws and policies at community clinics, union parishad, urban primary health care centres, police stations, and schools



14,25,533 children benefitted from child-led budget advocacy resulting in an allocation of USD 783,222



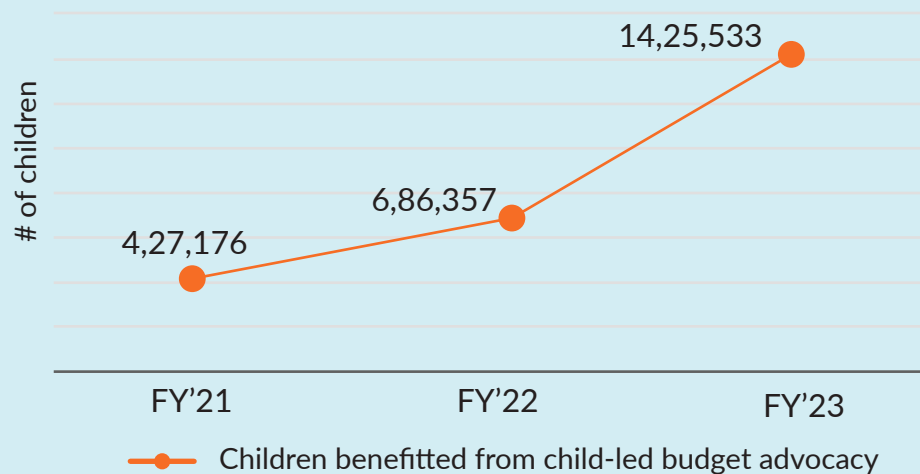
Urban Parliamentary Caucus for child rights formed due to advocacy efforts with the National Parliament



Ministry of labour issued a circular to 19 district commissioners and 32 UNOs at the sub-district level for joint events on child labour prevention awareness benefitting children aged 0-18 years



Children benefitted from child-led budget advocacy



Impacts



69.7% of parents/caregivers feel that their community is safe for children



93.8% of local government institutions met additional service standards on selected social safety net schemes, resulting from social accountability interventions



We are grateful to all our partners and donors for their continued support and collaboration. We appreciate the partnerships we enjoyed without which our achievements would not have been possible.



Our Donors



Nobo Jatra

Nobo Jatra Project II (NJP II) is a 24-month follow-on project to ensure the continuity and sustainability of USAID's Nobo Jatra II program implemented in southwest Bangladesh. The project has successfully enhanced the capabilities and instilled a sense of ownership among community agents, such as Gold Star Members (GSMs), Village Agents (VAs), Community Groups (CG), Community Support Groups (CSG), Animal Health Service Providers (AHSPs), Youth Clubs, Collection Point Management Committees (CPMC), and lead/sub-lead farmers.

People Reached:

53,663

Significant Achievements



11,190 children under five (0-59 months) reached with nutrition-specific interventions



5,214 pregnant women reached with nutrition-specific interventions



16,573 individuals in the agriculture and food system have applied improved management practices or technologies



29,964 individuals participated in group-based savings, micro finance or bank lending



13 VSLA cooperatives have been registered with the government's Cooperative Department out of 1,608 VSLAs



Impacts



Stunting and wasting in children reduced by 3.4% and 9.1% respectively



3.9% of households with increased knowledge and adoption of sustainable crops



14% of households equipped with soap and water at a handwashing station commonly used by family members



Bangladesh Initiative to Enhance Nutrition Security and Governance (BIeNGS)

BIeNGS is a multi-sectoral nutrition governance initiative to improve maternal, child, and adolescent nutrition in Jamalpur, and Sherpur districts.

People Reached:
1,76,937

Significant Achievements



10,000 extreme poor and poor women produced a total of 333,503kg vegetables, consumed 230,232kg vegetables, and earned BDT 1,738,176 from selling the surplus production



10,075 farmers established 775 demonstration plots for biofortified rice, wheat, and lentil cultivation



03 Smart Nutrition Model villages established with the support and collaboration of the multi-sectoral platforms under National Plan of Action for Nutrition



Impacts



97.1% of adolescents and 86.1% of women received Iron Folic Acid (IFA)



69.3% of women are involved in income related decision-making and 72.7% of women are involved in nutrition related decision making in the households



62.5% of Producers Group (PG) members adopted diversified and climate resilient food production techniques. 35.6% of farmers now have increased income after receiving training on improved agricultural production techniques



17.8% increase in children receiving treatment. Early Newborn Care (ENC) received by new born children also increased by 4.7%



Nutrition Sensitive Value Chain (NSVC)

NSVC is a 5-year agriculture initiative to improve the nutrition of 20,000 smallholder male and female farmers and their households (HHs) in Jamalpur district, North Bangladesh.

People Reached:

82,955

Significant Achievements



800 Producer Groups (PG) were engaged in the collective purchase of inputs and services involving 14,545 members



773 PGs comprising of 12,651 members practiced collective selling process resulting in more profit



Impacts



75.8% of children aged 6-23 months received minimum meal frequency (04 times a day)



65.2% of children under five-years were taken to a health facility when required



Bangladesh Rohingya Crisis Response (BRCR)

Rohingya refugees fled extreme violence and decades of persecution in Myanmar. Today, they live in one of the world's largest refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, home to more than 940,000 people. Our response team is continuing to support these refugees across the 34 camps.

People Reached:

420,749

Significant Achievements



FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOOD

- 51,776 households reached through General Food Assistance
- 5,400 people trained on homestead gardening
- 3,540 people reached with emergency Food Support
- 500 youth entrepreneurs received e-commerce capacity building training



HEALTH, NUTRITION, AND WASH

- 72,458 people reached through WASH interventions
- 35,400 people reached with WASH services
- 500 women attended awareness session on IYCF and nutrition, GBV and child care, personal hygiene and handwashing, DRR, COVID-19 prevention, and kitchen gardening
- 27,318 people reached with hygiene awareness sessions



CHILD PROTECTION, EDUCATION, GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

- 2,820 children received educational support through 212 ECD centres
- 57,750 people received GBV awareness at HH level through watch committee members
- 2,925 children and adolescents participated in age and gender-sensitive life skills sessions
- 14,872 parents/caregivers and other key stakeholders reached through positive parenting sessions focusing on ECD curriculum



Gender Inclusive Pathways out of Poverty (GPop)

People Reached:

73,476



Significant Achievements



1,440 participants trained on livelihoods option-based skills training



8 CBOs formed and received registration certificates from the government's Cooperative Department



149 people received disability support services specific to their needs



3,618 Ultra Poor household members participated in MenCare training



1,308 children have participated in Spiritual Nurture of Children (SNC) activities



Impacts



2,880 ultra-poor households graduated out of poverty by fulfilling 13 criteria requirements



855 households conducting small scale farming (native chicken and goat farming) out of 1440 households



Right 2 Grow Project

People Reached:
16,395

Significant Achievements



Increasing the budget allocation of Union Parishad (UP): Five UPs of Debhata Upazila allocated BDT 342,000 in FY23-24 to improve the nutrition and WASH status of children under 5- 440,000 for nutrition and 2,980,000 for WASH



A digital app was introduced for tracking budget expenditures in 05 Union Parishad (UP) of Debhata Upazila, Satkhira.



Inclusion of marginalised people in Social Safety Net Programme (SSNP): CSOs ensured different SSNP services to 38 community people considering Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)



Inclusion of CSO representatives in standing committees: 20 CSO representatives are included as members in the UP standing committees especially in health and WASH.



Long standing water sanitation and hygiene problem addressed via Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) process: five community clinics (CCs) installed safe water, sanitation and hand washing facilities and one CC established a breastfeeding corner through the initiative of CVA working groups.



Youth Empowerment Project

People Reached:

22,840



Significant Achievements



To improve the menstrual hygiene management (MHM) practices of rural adolescents' girls, the project is distributing sanitary napkins among 16,098 adolescent girls (students) every month



Trained faith leaders are supporting the project by training other faith leaders and community people. A total of 750 faith leaders have been sensitised



Established 44 handwashing stations at schools to improve handwashing practices of students and providing the handwashing materials every month



Organised 45 pot song events at schools and 20 events in communities to create awareness on COVID-19, child marriage, and gender-based violence



Supported 60 community clinics and 25 union health and family welfare centres to ensure adolescent-friendly SRHR services and counseling. Project has supported all 85 health facilities by providing protective equipment, medical equipment, other logistics, and set up adolescent-friendly corners

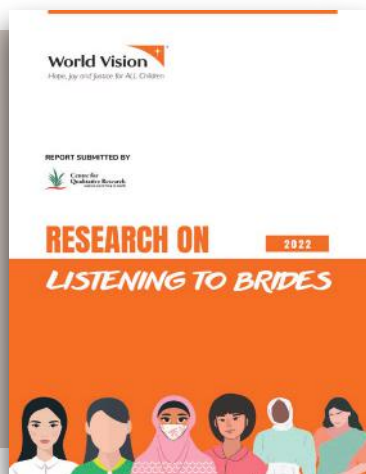


Created 45 wall murals at community places and schools to create visual awareness on child marriage prevention and COVID-19

Research

Number of completed research: **18**

Significant Research



Listening to Brides

[Final Research Report](#)
Scalable Approaches for
Children and Youth led Disaster
Risk Reduction



Scalable
Approaches for
Children and
Youth led
Disaster Risk
Reduction

Submitted to
World Vision Bangladesh
Dhaka, 10 December, 2022



Role of Faith Leaders in Ensuring Child Well-being in Bangladesh
On the ground search

Prepared by
Shafi Md Mostofa, PhD
Muhammad Sazzad Hossain Siddiqui, PhD

Report Submitted
30.01.2023

Role of Faith
Leaders in
Ensuring Child
Well-being in
Bangladesh



Eco Village,
CCA and
Environmental
Impact
Assessment

Innovation

Number of Innovations: **23**

1,07,366 participants

reached from 17 districts



Top five innovations:



Banana Fibre

Products from Banana Fibre received appreciation and recognition from the Prime Minister, People's Republic of Bangladesh. Banana fibre production centre is established by a women's group. Two registered and one non-registered women's groups are involved in banana fibre and fibre made handicrafts production. Each individual is earning BDT 4,000 (on an average) based on rope and handicraft product sales every month. The Bangladesh Handloom Board, inspired by this initiative, are planning to establish banana fibre handloom-based production as well in local communities



Waste to Wealth

In partnership with the youth-led organisation Wastech, 60 women recycled waste materials such as plastic bottles, plastic bags, broken glass jars, aluminum cans, into fairy jars, pen holder, flower vases, pens etc. and all together they have produced 2,500 products



Youth led DRR

140 youth groups developed 54 local-level action plans for village development committees and built capacity of 700 children and adolescents on disaster risk reduction and oriented them on the use of an online data collection software 'Kobo Toolbox'



48 days' farmer

3,195 children and youth from 50 schools sold vegetables produced in their school gardens. Profit of 58,930 BDT was used to support 655 MVC students with education materials in collaboration with the school management committees



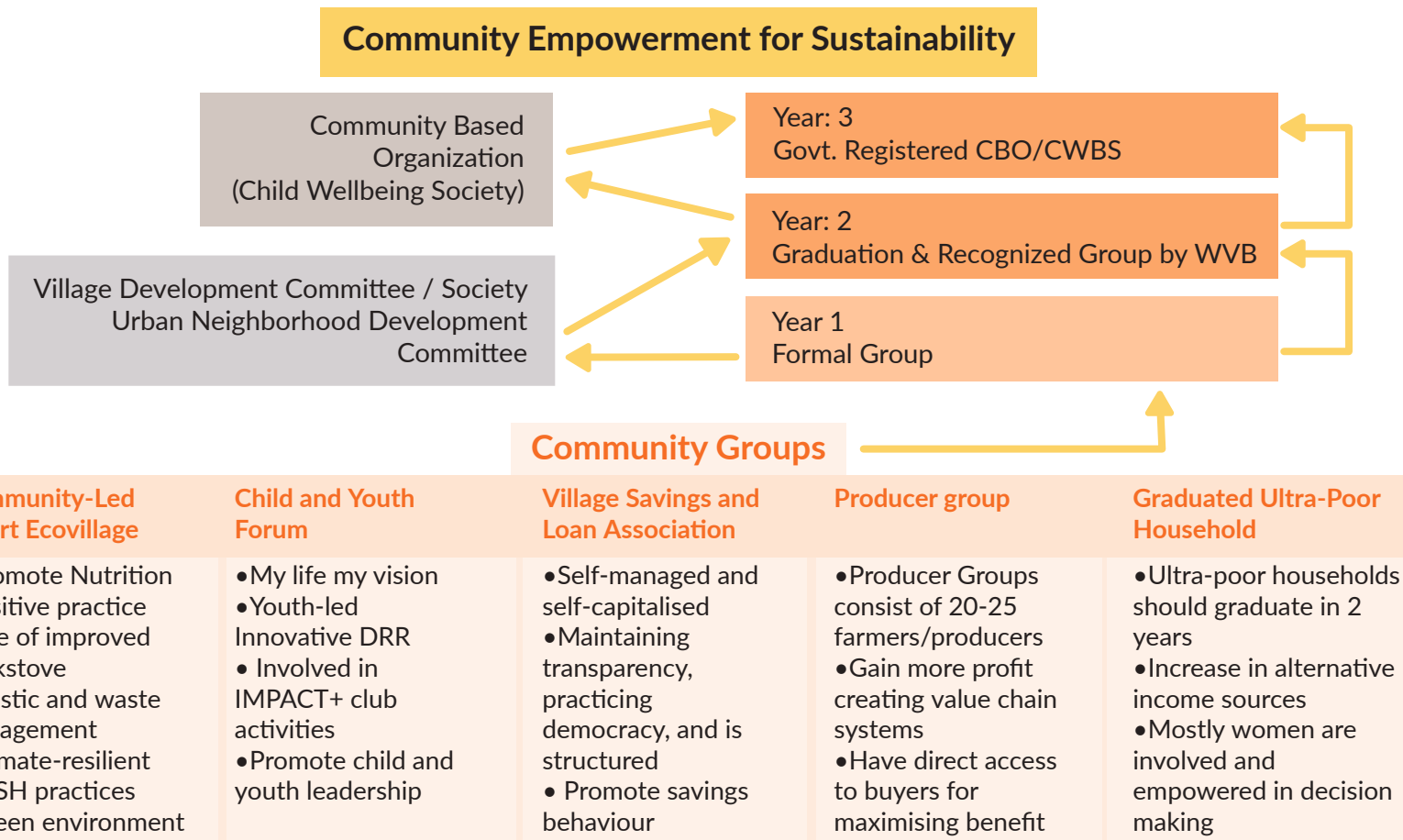
Dad care for adolescents

Fathers of 1,100 adolescent girls changed their attitudes and practices towards their daughters' health, including menstrual health and hygiene. Now they ensure that their daughters get regular health checkups from the community clinic. Both fathers and adolescent girls are provided counselling at the counselling centres, which helped build a better understanding and healthy relationship between them

Sustainability

World Vision through its long-term (10 to 15 years) presence in communities looks to ensure all development is indeed sustained. This is done by building the capacity of all stakeholders & ensuring they take ownership for their development from the very outset.

The following chart illustrates how the various communities, forums will be supervised, supported once WV transitions out of the various locations.





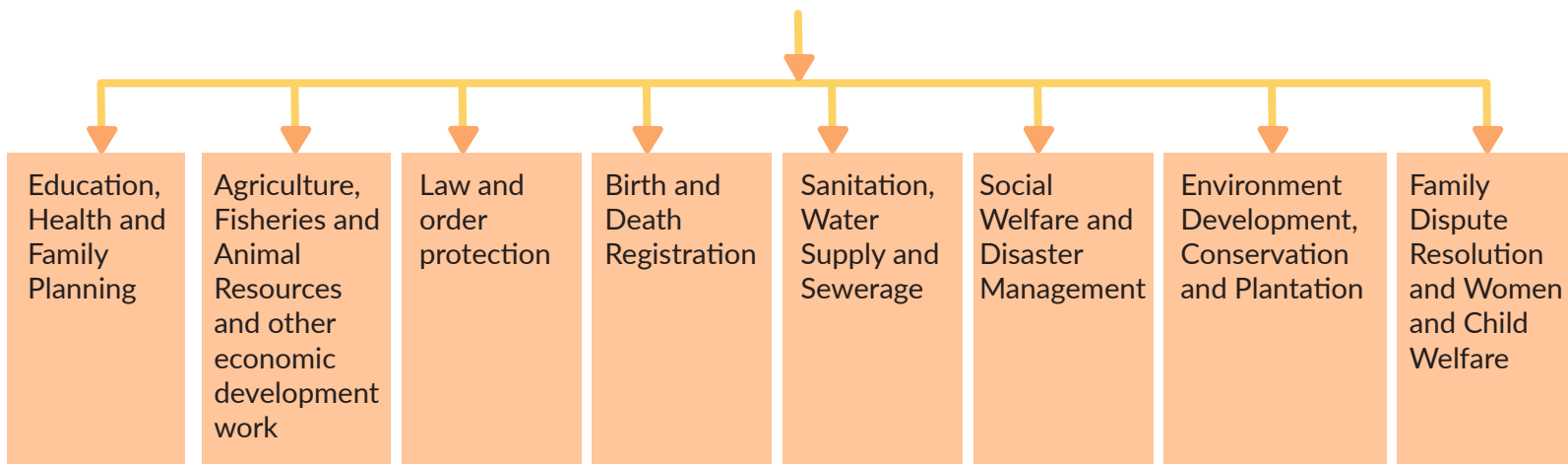
Community Groups

Disaster Management Committee	Citizen Voice and Action: Community Working Group	Child Protection Committee	WASH Committee	Community-Led Learning Roots Centre
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify local hazards and disaster vulnerability to address as necessary • Serve community voluntarily 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify gaps, raise voices to ensure service standards for communities at government facilities • Regular meetings with CG/CSG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that CP Committee is a part of VDC/UNDC/VDS • Monitor and follow up CP incidents • Mobilise communities and make them aware of child protection issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure safe water for communities and work to make WASH facilities functional • Mobilise and monitor community hygiene practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community initiated and implemented • Play-Cased learning approach • Engaging parents/caregivers to provide nursing care

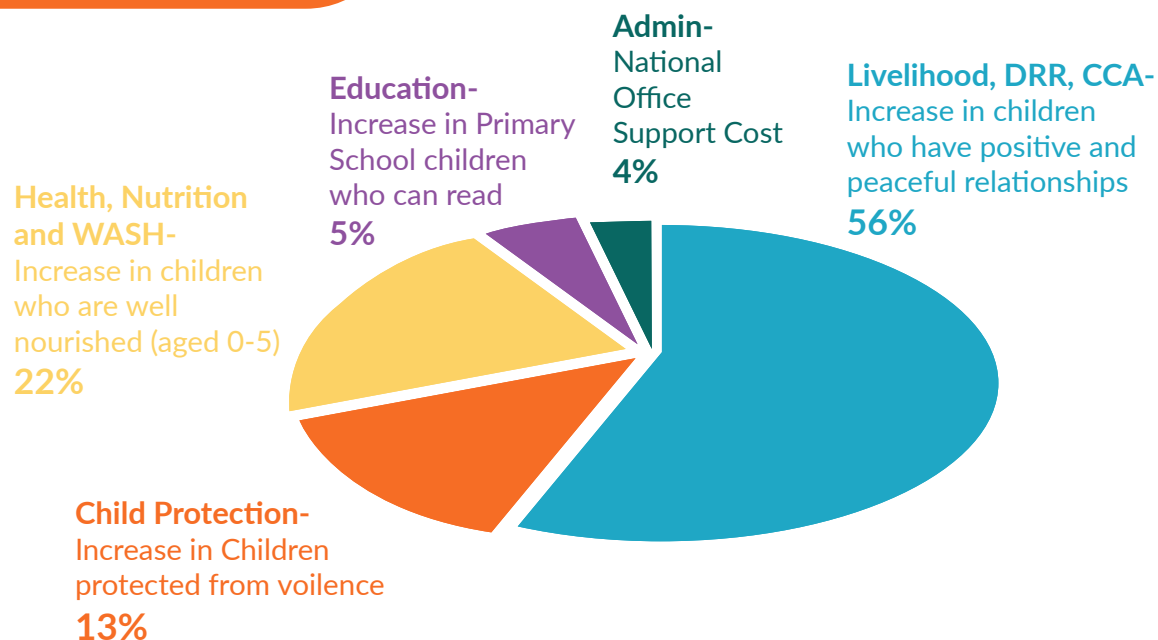
Supported by System Strengthening

All CBOs, community groups will be further linked to the following 8 relevant standing committees (set up as per govt policy) at Ward/Union/Upazila and supported by them to ensure sustainability:

Standing Committees



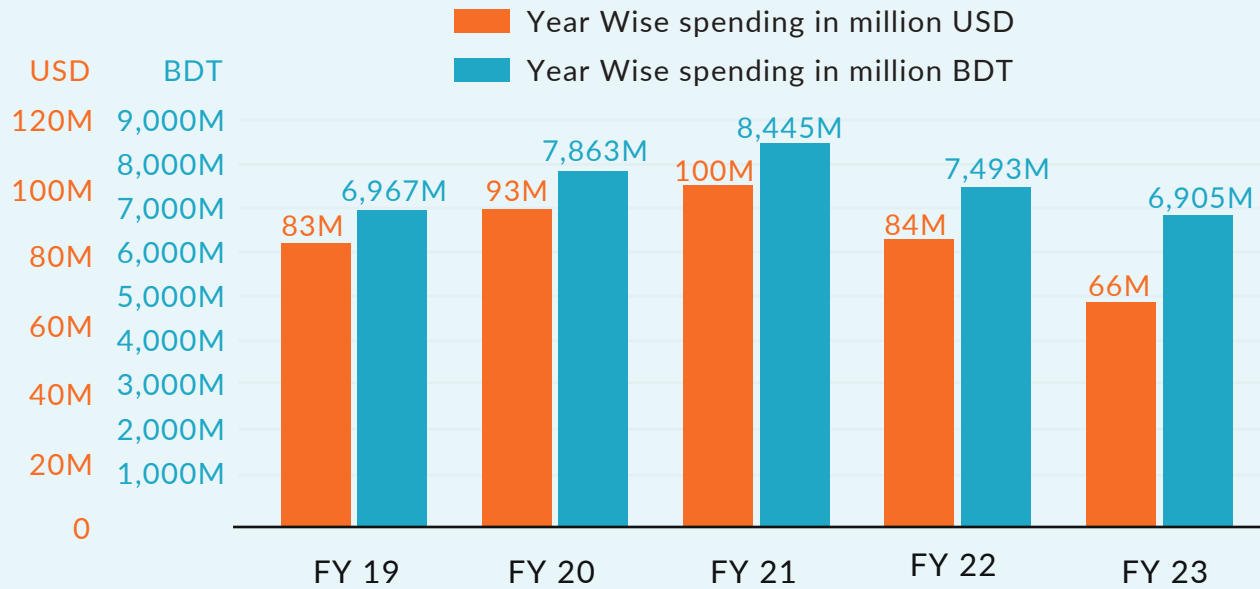
Financial Summary



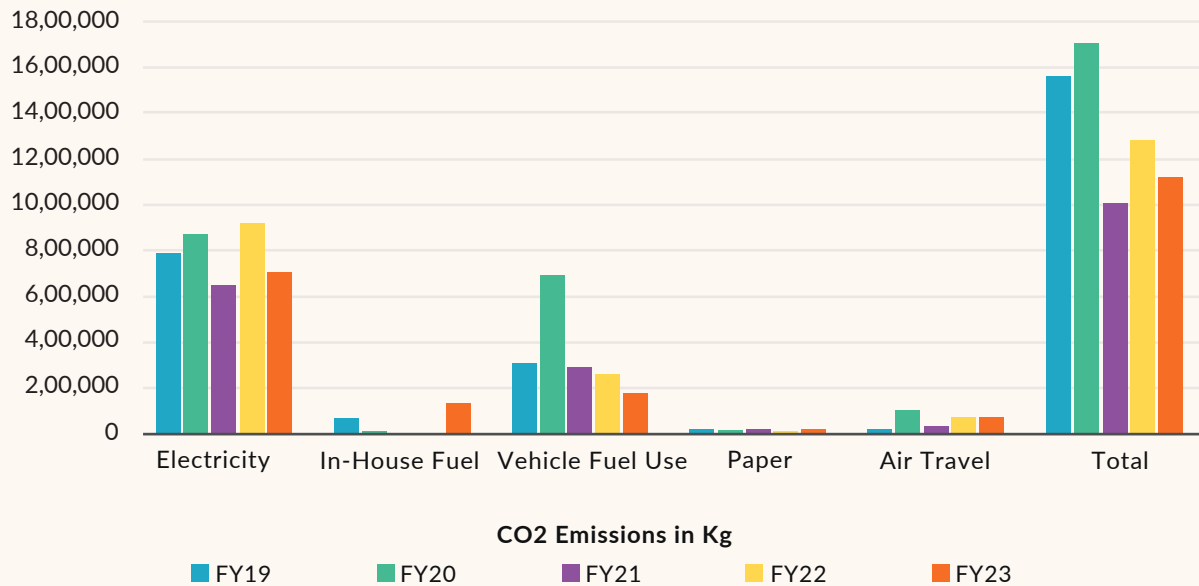
Objectives	Expenditure (US\$) in millions
Livelihood - Increase in children who have positive and peaceful relationships	36.9
Child Protection - Increase in Children protected from violence	8.7
Health, Nutrition and WASH - Increase in children who are well nourished (age 0-5)	14.6
Education - Increase in Primary School children who can read	3.6
Admin - National Office Support Cost	2.3
Total	66.1

Partner contributions via collaborative approach USD 6,74,411

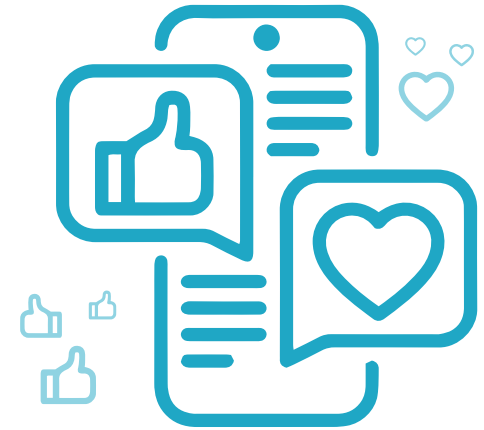
Trends in Annual Funding



Analysis of our Carbon Footprint



Media and Social Media Engagement



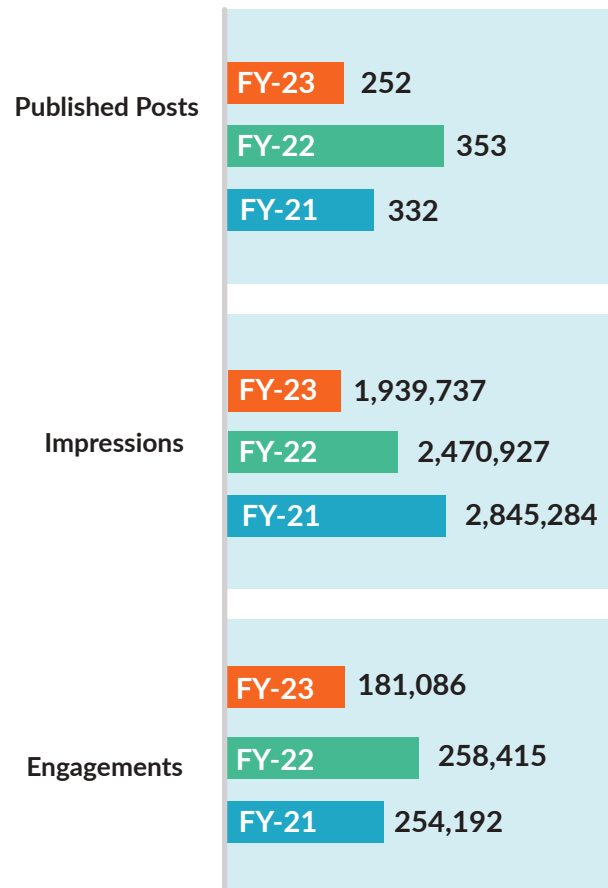
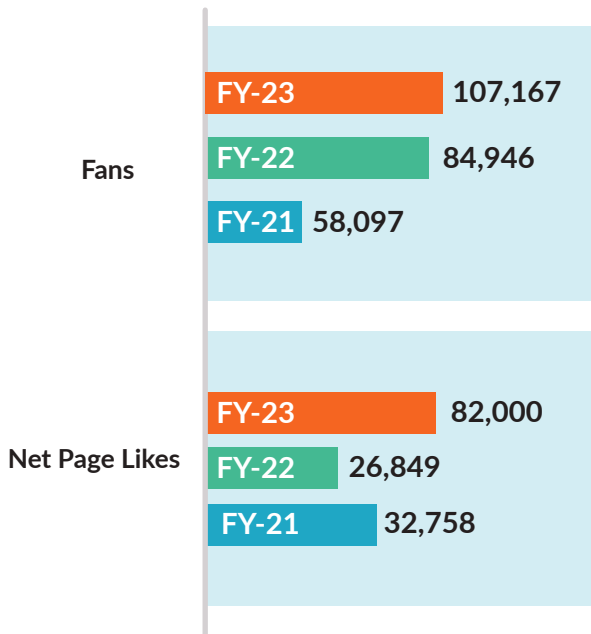
Media Engagement

- 1,487** news item published where World Vision mentioned
- 318** high value media coverage
- 28** special feature stories published/broadcast
- 79** million readers/viewers reached through media stories

Social Media Engagement

FY'23 FY'22 FY'21

Social Media(Facebook) Engagement



Annex: Stories of Change



Faith leaders are vital in preventing child marriage

Around 51% of Bangladeshi women aged between 22 and 24 were married before their 18th birthday which risks child wellbeing. Faith leaders may play a vital role in preventing child marriage considering their high influence over the social norms.

A study conducted by World Vision Bangladesh in collaboration with the Department of World Religion and Peace and Conflict departments, University of Dhaka revealed that 95% of the survey respondents think that faith leaders should be actively engaged in preventing child marriage. Fifty-seven percent of respondents think that faith leaders are already contributing to preventing child marriage. Faith leaders from Muslim, Hindu, Christian, and Buddhist religions echoed each other by stating that their religious values do not support child marriage.

Now the question arises as to why child marriage is still prevalent in Bangladesh if no religion supports child marriage. The study reveals that economic insecurity acts as the most influential triggering factor for child marriage (69%) which is followed by social insecurity (56%) and religious values and practices (13%). At the same time, existing misconceptions, negative social norms, and misconceptions of religious values contribute to child marriage.

Engaging faith leaders in preventing child marriage, on the one hand, would increase the awareness among faith leaders. On the other hand, communities' misconceptions regarding child marriage could be changed. However, there are some challenges to engaging faith leaders in this regard. Faith leaders opined that society is still sceptical about accepting faith leaders' engagement in development.



Although most faith leaders are not well trained to be engaged in development, there is huge potential for change in this area. Thus, the training of trainers (meaning faith leaders) is of great importance. The government has already promoted this initiative to train faith leaders through the Islamic foundation. This initiative now needs its scope widened and consistency must be ensured for the betterment of children everywhere.





Poor waste management exacerbated by rapid urbanization

For many children living in slum areas in major cities of Bangladesh, waking up to the smell of garbage, washing up near blocked sewer canals, and going to school by stomping over piles of garbage is a common scenario. This has led to many illnesses among children due to exposure to open, rotten sewage, and difficulty in movement due to poor waste management leading to pileups on roads.

These conditions are made far worse during the monsoon season, as clogged drains lead to roads flooded with dirty water. The conditions get exacerbated to such an extent in some areas that this water from the road infiltrates homes as well. It is obvious that these are not the ideal conditions for any human being, let alone a child, to live in.

Rapid urbanization and city expansion in Bangladesh are leading to this increase in poor waste management. A preliminary report from the 2022 census published by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) shows that more than 18 lakh people live in slums across the country. It is expected that by 2030 more than half of the country's poor households will live in urban areas.

According to the City-Wide Assessment 2022 by World Vision Bangladesh (WVB) covering the slums of Dhaka, Chittagong, and Gazipur areas, an average of 53% of respondents from each area dump their household waste in open spaces and drainage systems. One reason for this dumping is that 75.63% of respondents do not have available primary waste collection points. As slums are usually located on low-lying land, waste from surrounding areas usually gets dumped near them.

This negligence and mismanagement of waste in the slum areas not only affects the habitants' physical and mental health, but also affects the greater community when it inevitably infiltrates nearby water, soil, and air with its pollution.

WVB's Urban Area Programme is working along with the Government to make these cities Healthy, Safer, Resilient, Prosperous, and Just for the most vulnerable children by building a culture of accountability among the service providers and to all as citizens.





Liberating girls to pursue their dreams

"I got married at an early age, which is why I could not complete my education. Now I want to educate my babies to make them good citizens for my country."

A young mother describing her aspirations, her words resonate with the reality faced by countless young women in Bangladesh, where statistics reveal that 51% of them have been married during their childhood. Child marriage is a complex issue in Bangladesh with deep-rooted cultural, socio-economic, and legal dimensions.

Currently in Bangladesh, 13 million adolescent girls dream of a future filled with opportunities, education, and fulfilling careers. However, these aspirations often collide with the harsh reality of child marriage. Research indicates that girls marrying before 18 are less likely to complete secondary education, emphasizing the need for quality education. Despite vocational centres offering economic prospects, 38 million girls marry before adulthood in Bangladesh (UNICEF,2020).

Almost 86% of these married girls have experienced domestic violence. Raising awareness among parents, communities, and religious leaders about the perils of child marriage and ingrained norms helps to better address this curse.

Probing further, ending child marriage isn't just an abstract idea; it's a pledge to countless young lives. Imagine a community where the support of religious leaders and local influencers has the power to transform. These influencers can generate interest and, therefore, campaigns to break cultural barriers. Boys and men, too, play a vital role in championing girls' rights within their communities. Governments lead the charge, enforcing laws with penalties and collaborating with local authorities for a collective effort. Child protection services, like help lines and shelters, offer a lifeline to those at risk.

To end child marriage, we must adopt a comprehensive approach that spans education, building life skills, training, access to adolescent friendly services, legal enforcement, and community engagement. Policymakers should ensure fair access to educational infrastructure, medical facilities, and vocational education centers to bridge these gaps. Together, as a community, we can ensure that every girl has the opportunity to pursue her dreams, by breaking the chains of child marriage.





Climate smart agriculture a boon to farmers

World Vision Bangladesh (WVB) conducted a study on “Climate Smart Agriculture and Off-Farm Livelihood: Lessons Learned”, in 40 unions of Khulna and Satkhira districts under USAID’s Nobo Jatra Project (NJP).

The study shows that practices and technologies of Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) in the production of crops, fisheries, poultry, and livestock have ensured food security for 84% of farmers in southwest Bangladesh’s Satkhira and Khulna districts.

Currently, 11,048 agriculture-smallholder producers, 7,084 value chain farmers, 199 lead farmers, and 899 sub-lead farmers, are applying CSA technologies at their farms.

The study reveals that 90% of farmers use CSA technology to meet their family’s nutritional needs and also make a living. Of the farmers surveyed, 72% apply CSA techniques as they are cheaper than other available methods, and 63.1% of farmers use CSA to cope with

climate related hazards.

Sub-lead farmer Joyanti Ghorami, 33, from Dacope in Khulna, said, “I used to apply traditional crop cultivation methods before 2016, but now my husband and I follow the new CSA techniques. We now make twice the profit we used to make before.” She added, “Every year, I save over USD 3,240 in my personal bank account after meeting all production costs and family expenses.”

The NJP farmers apply climate resilient and short duration crops varieties, organic fertilizers, mulching, intercropping, early and delayed planting, drip irrigation, liming, integrated pest management, vertical garden method, improved and climate resilience Khaki Campbell breed, proper house management, feeding, schedule vaccination, proper disposal and bio-security maintenance.

As per NJP’s final report, 7,084 value chain farmers earned USD 6,264,708 by applying CSA technologies to produce bitter melon, bottle gourd, Genetically Improved Fish Tilapia (GIFT), watermelon, and ducks from 2019 to 2022.





Dignity and health restored in Local Slums

Scabies in vaginal areas, urinal infections, and reproductive tract infections are the most common illnesses among women and girls in Bangladesh. These are particularly common in slum areas, where there is a lack of clean water, waste management, and sanitation facilities, compounded by poor menstrual hygiene management (MHM). For adolescent girls, access to clean and safe toilets is not just a matter of convenience but also a matter of dignity and health.

The awareness of MHM among the women and girls of “Kalshi Balurmath basti” a slum in Mirpur, Dhaka is commendable. The Mirpur Urban Community Empowerment Project (MUCEP) brought about positive changes among the slum dwellers by engaging the community in all its initiatives within 3 years of its implementation.

In the Endline Evaluation Report of the MUCEP project in 2023, it was found that 63.3% of women had access to suitable MHM facilities, up from 30.2% baseline. 88 percent of the women now feel they have a secure and healthy place for MHM. 58% of respondents enjoy

improved facilities, 40% had upgraded latrines, and 89% of respondents reported soap use as a hygiene practice, up from 61% at baseline. Waste management has undergone a transformation, with 90% of households now storing their rubbish and disposing of it in a designated location, and 91% of households reported better coverage for drainage systems.

The active members of the slum have not just changed their MHM practices but also taken advantage of the livelihood opportunities in waste management, recycling, renovating latrines, etc. They have not just ensured their health and wellbeing but also their dignity through income within the slum.







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