

CHANNELS OF HOPE

Narrative: Channels of Hope Theory of Change

Detailed Version
Updated April 2014

The Foundation of Channels of Hope

The Reality

In the communities where WV works, many serious issues often limit improved child well-being (CWB). These might include violence against children, poor birth spacing, gender inequality, early marriage, wife inheritance, malnutrition, early marriage, gender-based violence, HIV infections, TB and malaria, trafficking, and more.

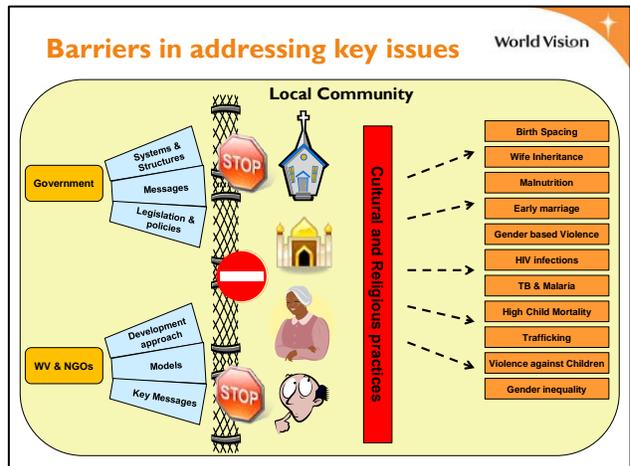
In any given country, the government addresses these key issues by providing systems and structures as well as distributing messages (e.g. health messages) and enforcing legislation and policies. Simultaneously, WV and other NGOs collaborate with the government to also address these issues through WV's development approach. This approach uses core programme models and key messages which aim to address the root causes of these issues.

Faith communities, faith leaders and community leaders play a crucial gate keeping role in the community. They can either block or allow messages/approaches to be distributed within the communities. In some cases they might even obstruct messages when they feel the messages/approaches are in opposition to their faith and values. There may also exist cultural and religious practices which contribute to or exasperate the issues that limit CWB. The combined effect of the gate keepers blocking messages, together with the harmful cultural/religious practices, act as filters which limit the effectiveness of the efforts from the government and WV and other NGOs.

To achieve CWB and improved development outcomes, WV needs excellent programming and innovation. However, WV must also work to involve everyone in the community to ensure children can truly experience the fullness of life.

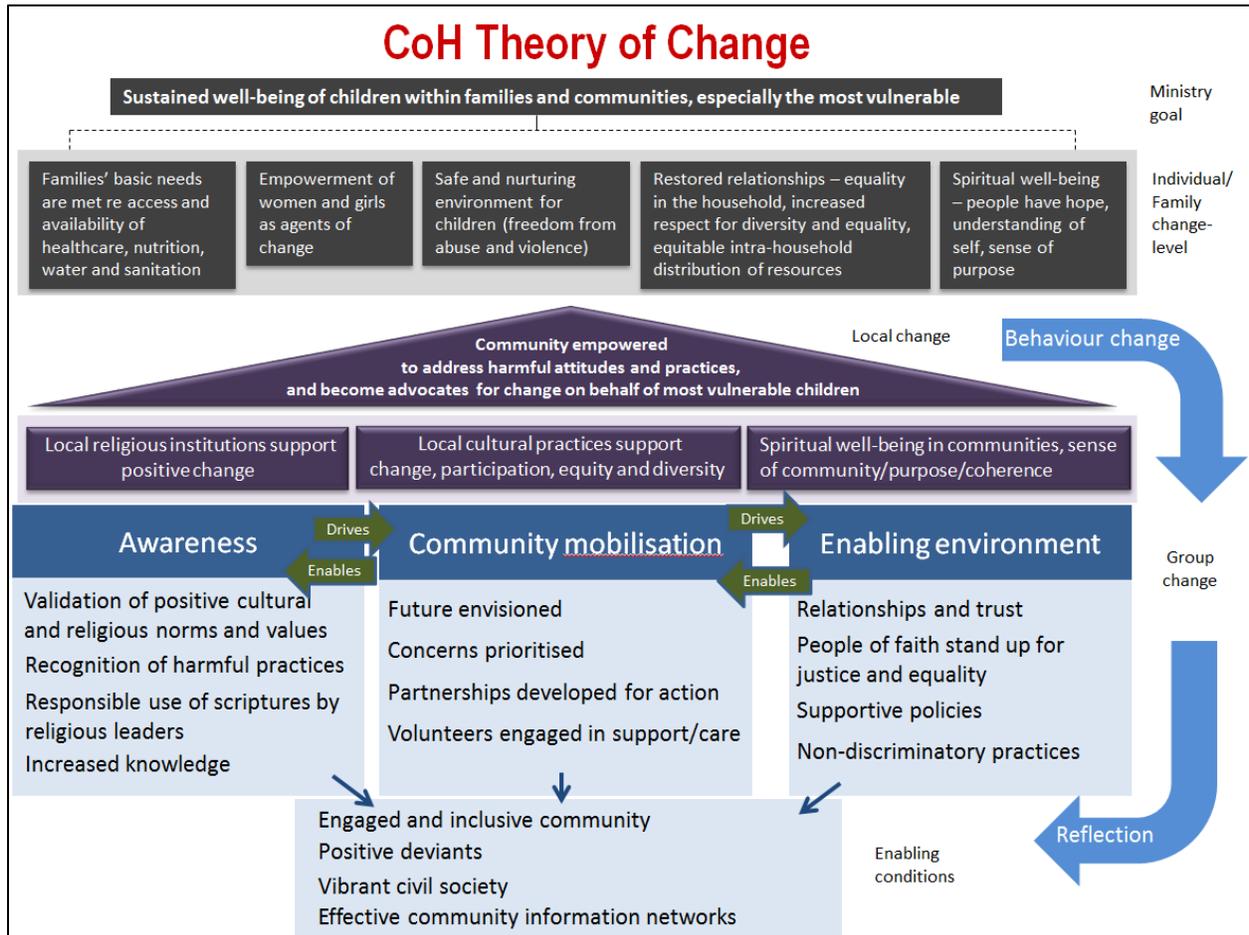
Faith in action

This is where Channels of Hope (CoH) adds a unique contribution to WV's work globally. CoH provides WV with the unique opportunity to unite churches and faith groups across denominational and faith borders, inviting them to work together on the most difficult, taboo development issues facing communities.

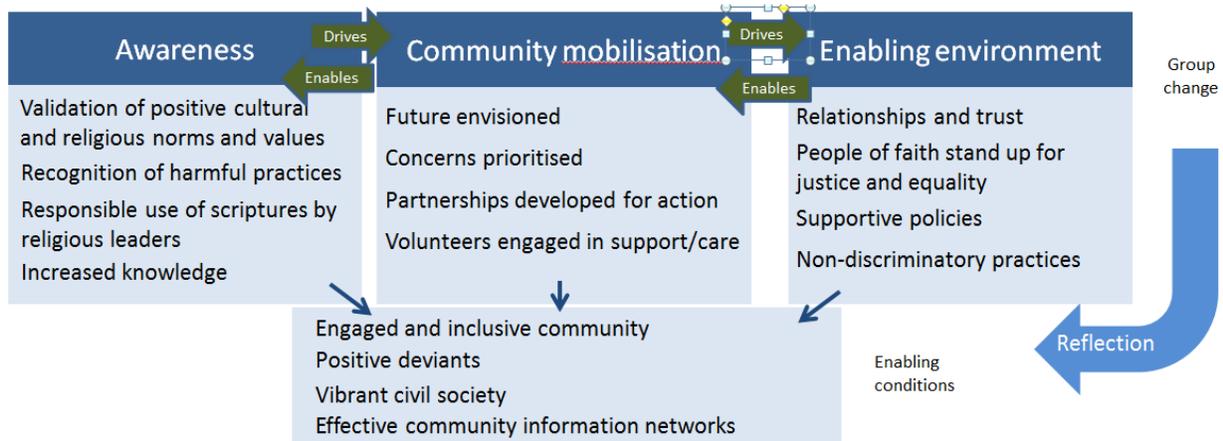


All four technical areas of the different CoH curricula were selected because they address the most difficult issues where faith communities are either silent, absent, have strong misconceptions, or which are strongly stigmatised.

CoH does not shy away from these tough issues, but takes faith leaders through a process and provides the safe space where they can discuss these difficult issues.



Step One: Sensitisation



The process starts with the sensitisation of faith leaders. Faith leaders participate in a three-day CoH workshop. This is a time of learning and discovery that helps facilitate the continued transformation of their hearts and minds. The workshops provide a safe space for faith leaders to share and grapple with difficult issues. The process takes them on a journey of discovery where they learn to understand the issues, experience the pains of people who face the same challenges, re-appreciate what the Bible (or their relevant sacred texts) and faith call them to be and why and how they should respond. By the end of the workshops, the faith leaders have been impacted in such a way that even deeply entrenched harmful attitudes and values are changed. The faith leaders become instrumental in taking down hostile barriers to positive change in their communities. Instead of blocking messages, they now welcome and support interventions which will address these tough issues. They start to address the harmful cultural and religious practices and work with their congregations and the community to change them, such that the negative practices are eliminated and positive, protective and healthy practices take their place.

As local religious institutions support positive change, religious and socio-cultural barriers to child well-being are reduced, the community becomes empowered, and harmful traditional practices are eliminated. This is in part because positive cultural and religious norms and values are validated while harmful attitudes are spoken out against. Religious and socio-cultural enablers of child well-being also increase, which inevitably increases the uptake of positive/healthy practices. As the barriers are eliminated and the enablers strengthened, local practices further support the change and lead to increased equity in gender, participation, and diversity. Ultimately, people can start to understand God's love and grace in a deeper and more real way. This can promote spiritual well-being in communities, and a deeper sense of community, purpose, and coherence.

Step Two: Community mobilisation

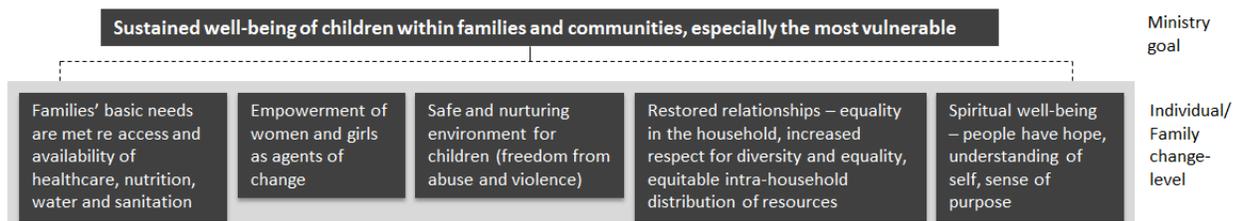


The CoH model goes on to assist faith leaders in becoming community change agents who offer messages and provide/support programming which address these key issues. These faith leaders are now willing to stand up for justice and become advocates for change.

As a result of the CoH workshops, many congregations form ministry teams (referred to as Congregation or Community Hope Action Teams – CHATs) that directly address the challenging issues in their community, whether via prevention, care, restoration, or advocacy activities. With continued support from Coh, other church leaders and volunteers receive appropriate training as necessary to effectively do advocacy and development work.

CHATs plan a vision/action plan for the future based on prioritising the major concerns and local needs of their communities. They work in successful collaboration with governments, other faith groups, NGOs and WV to achieve transformative community development. These partnerships create a larger pool of volunteers who are engaged in support and care.

Step Three: Enabling environment



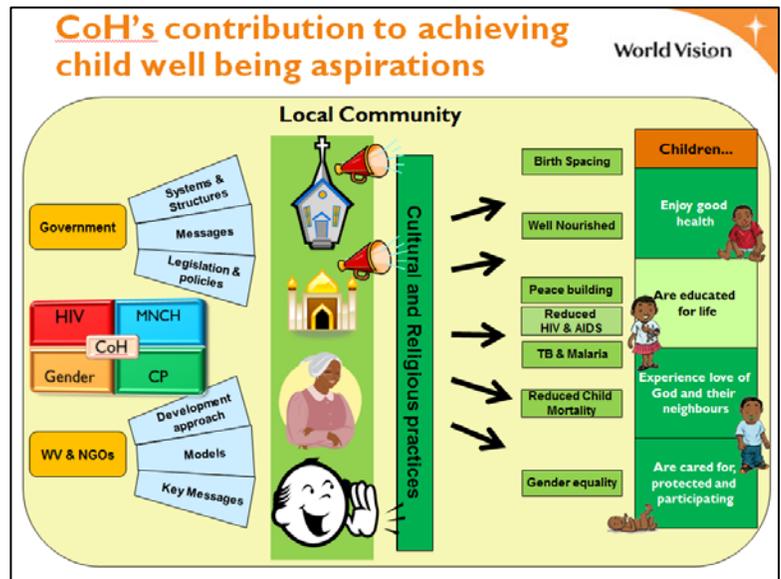
As a result of the work of CoH CHATs, harmful practices that work against CWB cease or lessen, turning the negative challenges in the communities into a positive new reality. By including CoH as an integral part of our development approach, WV enhances our ability to achieve our child well-being aspirations and outcomes.

As faith leaders are sensitised/transformed to engage with child well-being, relationships and trust are built within congregations and the wider community. As people of faith stand up for justice and equality, they can influence supportive policies and non-discriminatory practices. They encourage (and become) positive deviants. All of this can influence/create a vibrant civil society with an engaged and inclusive community, and more effective community information networks can form. **(Note: When these pre-exist in a community, CoH can be even more effective!)**

From all this, the family level change are as follows:

- Families basic needs are met re access and availability of healthcare, nutrition, water and sanitation
- Empowerment of women and girls as agents of change
- Safe and nurturing environment for children (freedom from abuse and violence)
- Restored relationships – equality in the household, increased respect for diversity and equality, equitable intra-household distribution of resources
- Spiritual well-being – people have hope, understanding of self, sense of purpose

Evidence of the above should be regularly collected by development leaders. CoH can help create an enabling environment such that all four of World Vision’s child well-being aspirations are achieved.



By working with faith leaders, there is potential to change whole communities to better honour, protect and care for children, pregnant lactating mothers, babies, people living with HIV, men, women, boys, and girls.