Empowered World View - bringing faith and science together to reduce risks

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Abstract

In virtually all the communities where World Vision works, faith is an important part of people's lives. Faith can impact on people's world view, attitudes and outlook in positive and negative ways. It can create a negative culture of fatalism or blaming bad events on the perceived sins of others, or it can create a positive culture of compassion and service to others, especially the more vulnerable.

To encourage this more positive impact of faith, World Vision uses an approach called ‘Empowered World View’ in our livelihoods and resilience work. This is an approach based on the use of Scripture and involving faith leaders, so that it uses language and stories that are familiar in the local contexts and works with faith leaders as people of influence and respect. This paper outlines the unique, potential contributions of faith to global issues including climate change and environmental sustainability.

Empowered World View is a faith-based enabling development approach for mobilizing and empowering individual and communities’ potentials to transform their mindset, beliefs, and behaviour which affirm their identity, dignity, and agency to participate effectively in sustainable transformative change. The approach looks at what the Bible, and other religious scriptures, says about the natural environment and the necessity to use natural resources wisely and with care. This then links to the promotion of climate smart agricultural techniques and conservation agriculture, natural resource management, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Because the approach starts from the common ground of faith and uses the language and expression of faith to build community cohesion and provide a solid basis for understanding the importance of addressing issues of natural resource management, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, it creates the necessary support and collective capacity to enable communities to tackle them.

To further improve the ability of the poorest and most vulnerable communities to adapt to the
challenges of climate change and environmental degradation, collaboration with geo-scientists can increase understanding of risks and hazards and the potential solutions to build community resilience. If this can be done by bringing together geo-scientists and faith leaders, to develop a common understanding of faith and culture as well as science, this can bring about sustainable change in the world's poorest communities, in ways that bring people together and build on different expertise and experiences.

World Vision is an international, child-focused, community based, Christian organisation, which works with people of all faiths or none. It has offices in nearly 100 countries around the world. Our aim is to increase the well-being of some of the world's most vulnerable children and their communities. World Vision operates mainly in countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, working with communities on long term development programmes, humanitarian responses and policy and advocacy work to improve and strengthen systems and essential service provision.