PROMISING CONVERSATIONS
An introduction to the Our Promise Strategy

SESSION INSTRUCTIONS
MAKING OUR PROMISE, YOUR PROMISE

Dear Leader,

Some conversations are so important that it’s worth getting everyone together to have them. Understanding our global strategy – Our Promise 2030 – is such an occasion.

This Promising Conversation has been specially created to help leaders throughout the World Vision Partnership to guide newly-recruited staff through a short, engaging conversation to introduce and understand the strategy.

We used six other conversations during 2018 to introduce staff to the mindsets and behaviours in the strategy. They explored how, by being at our best for more of the time in these areas, we will deliver our strategic imperatives and fulfil Our Promise together. If you want to find the content of these conversations, click here.

Listening to feedback from these conversations we know that staff are excited by:

- Deepening our commitment to the most vulnerable children;
- Focusing on ministry approaches that deliver the greatest impact; and
- Living out our Christian faith and calling with boldness and humility in every context.

We have also heard their concerns, including:

- How will we overcome the many obstacles to achieving a more sustainable funding mix?
- How do we deepen our commitment to the most vulnerable children AND keep our promises to existing registered children and their communities?
- How do we use our strengths in rural, developing contexts AND become more agile for the demands of fragile ones?

Staff also expressed a sense of urgency to move forward and understand what this change might look like.

Our aspiration is that the promise we make in the strategy to the world’s most vulnerable children will become the personal commitment of every staff member.

I hope this conversation will help you and your staff explore what keeping Our Promise 2030 might mean for them and your office.

Sincerely,

Kevin J. Jenkins
President and Chief Executive Officer
World Vision International
LEADING YOUR PROMISING CONVERSATION

This conversation is designed to be run by a group leader with seven or eight staff, either face to face or remotely over the internet. It will introduce them to the Our Promise strategy and point them towards places where they can find out more. It can be used with new staff as part of induction, or existing staff who have not been able to take part in previous conversations.

This document contains all of the resources and information you need to effectively lead this Promising Conversation.

We hope that you have a conversation that is full of promise – for you, the staff taking part, our supporters and the vulnerable children we serve.

If you have any questions, please connect with the Strategy Realisation Office at: Conversations@OurPromise2030.org or visit online at: www.OurPromise2030.org.

PROMISING CONVERSATION CHECKLIST

GETTING READY FOR THE CONVERSATION

Schedule a time to have this Promising Conversation with your group of staff. Set aside no less than 60 minutes to have this conversation as part of a regular team meeting or a specially arranged time.

Send an email inviting your group (you can copy the draft below) and include:

• Kevin Jenkins’ video message when he introduced the Our Promise 2030 strategy to the Triennial Council in 2016, www.wvlink.it/KJTC-OP30-Con (~7.5 minutes).
• The one page conversation flier: Link Feedback has told us that those who learn by reflecting appreciate seeing the flier beforehand, so they can prepare for the conversation. Participants will also need to use this at the meeting to help them remember the key points of the conversation.

The ‘Hints and Tips’ document is in Appendix II. Use it to be confident that you know how to lead the conversation well.

Read enough background on Our Promise 2030 and your local strategy to feel comfortable in leading a discussion with the group. We do not expect you to be an expert on the strategy and have all of the answers. Know enough about your own local strategy and priorities to have a view about how similar or different they are to Our Promise 2030.

Print off and read the conversation guide Appendix I

LEADING THE PROMISING CONVERSATION WITH YOUR GROUP

Show the Our Promise video. This short video helps to introduce the conversation. Ensure you have seen this before you use it and are ready to play it at the meeting. Click on this link www.OurPromise2030.org/PCI-Vid-Eng Please Note: If you are leading a virtual team, please share
the link with your team during your conversation and give them time to watch it in full. Showing films over WebEx is generally unsuccessful.

**Use the conversation flier.** Ensure each member of your team has a copy of the one page flier before the conversation starts. Encourage them to use this at the meeting to help them reflect upon the key points of the conversation: Appendix III (download link)

**Use the conversation guide.** The guide helps you to run the conversation by giving you a plan for the conversation, with timings, and a suggested script with questions. Use your own words and spend longer on a question than suggested if it helps create a better conversation.

Dear colleague,

You are invited to take part in a Promising Conversation with a group of your colleagues at (INSERT TIME) on (INSERT DATE), meeting at (LOCATION).

This Promising Conversation, has been specially created to introduce World Vision’s Our Promise 2030 strategy.

The conversation will take about sixty minutes and will help us explore what keeping Our Promise 2030 might mean for you and our office.

Before we come together please follow this link to watch Kevin Jenkins’ video message when he introduced the Our Promise 2030 strategy to the Triennial Council in 2016, www.wvlink.it/KJTC-OP30-Con. Also use this link to download and print this flier, which you will need during the conversation (link).

We hope to have a conversation that is full of promise – for you, our supporters and the vulnerable children we serve.

If you have any questions regarding Promising Conversations, please connect with the Strategy Realisation Office at: conversations@OurPromise2030.org or visit online at: www.OurPromise2030.org.
I. CONVERSATION GUIDE

WELCOME
(APPROXIMATELY 7 MINUTES)

SUGGESTED INTRODUCTION – “Welcome to our Promising Conversation. We are going to spend the next 60-minutes or so having a conversation about the global strategy for World Vision, Our Promise 2030. We will explore what Our Promise 2030 is, why it is important and what it might mean for us.

Hopefully you have had a chance to watch the video of Kevin Jenkins introducing the strategy, using the link I sent you in your invitation email”

‘Let us start this conversation by watching another short video to remind us what we are talking about’. (APPROXIMATELY 2 MINUTES)

www.OurPromise2030.org/PC1-Vid-Eng

QUESTION: Our Promise 2030 is a promise to the most vulnerable children that we will relentlessly pursue our vision; that none will be left behind. From what you already know about this strategy, what excites you?

QUESTION: What concerns do you have, if any?

ONE-PAGE FLIER
(APPROXIMATELY 7 MINUTES)

“On the flier sent to you there is an illustration of the Our Promise 2030 strategy in the form of a tree. Its roots reach deep into our core values from which we draw our inspiration, identity and hold us strong during testing times.

The trunk is our mission and vision, an expression of our core values, holding and shaping our work.

The branches are our strategic imperatives – the specific parts of the promise we have made in our strategy – that describe what we will do.

The leaves are the diversity of vulnerable children that we serve. Each in their own context. Flourishing as the promise is kept.

The rays of the sun are the mindsets and behaviours – the specific parts of the promise we have made in our strategy – that describe how we will do it”.

QUESTION: Many staff have found this a helpful way of showing our strategy. What do you find helpful about it?

“Let’s take some time to look at each of the strategic imperatives”.

DEEPPENING OUR COMMITMENT TO THE MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN
(APPROXIMATELY 7 MINUTES)

“The first strategic imperative is deepening our commitment to the most vulnerable children by shifting where we work and how we allocate resources”.

QUESTION: Who do you think are the most vulnerable children? What kind of places are they in now and where will they be in the future?
The feedback from staff has shown that deepening our commitment to the most vulnerable children stands out as the thing that excites and motivates them the most. Here are a couple of quotes:

• “Shifting our global efforts and influence on strengthening our commitment to the world’s most vulnerable children will be an uncomfortable shift, but a very necessary and therefore exciting one” – Support Office staff member

• “This calls for deeper commitment by all staff especially the field teams in identifying the most vulnerable children in their interventions” – Field Office staff member

Many field staff said they know who the most vulnerable children are and can see opportunities to include more vulnerable children in their programming activities today. Support Office staff have identified both the challenge and opportunity of deepening and funding work in fragile contexts. They recognise that this will not be easy:

• “The way we define vulnerable children is important as it will have an impact in the way we allocate resources, and each context is different” – Field Office staff member

• “We are concerned for the WV staff that will be serving in these most difficult places. Measuring and proving the impact we are making and communicating to our donors will be a real challenge” – Support Office staff member

**QUESTION:** What has ‘deepening your commitment to the most vulnerable children’ looked like in your office, function, or for you so far? What could it look like in the future?

**FOCUSING OUR MINISTRY FOR GREATER RESULTS**
(APROXIMATELY 7 MINUTES)

“The second strategic imperative is focusing our ministry for greater results. This involves focusing on a limited number of programme types and sectors, becoming excellent in each. The five prioritised sectors are water; health and nutrition; child protection; education; and livelihoods. This focus, and the desire to do fewer things well with greater impact, was welcomed in feedback from staff: Here are a couple of quotes:"

• “We used to struggle to address vast agendas with lots of thematic areas with an ambitious plan. Now we are planning to be strategic and focused on ministries with greater impact” – Global Centre staff member

• “Focusing like this is a profoundly different way of doing business, and we will have to learn to pick our battles in a more strategic and focused manner” – Field Office staff member

“However, staff expressed concern that whilst we focus for deeper impact, we must also continue to support transformational development outcomes across communities, using an approach that empowers others. For example, as bring our technical expertise we must also bring an experience of the love of God and neighbour”.

“Focus AND community transformation. Technical expertise AND experience of God’s love”.

**QUESTION:** How does making choices to focus help us make a deeper impact? What helps us keep in mind the ‘bigger picture’ of what is important at the same time?
COLLABORATING AND ADVOCATING FOR BROADER IMPACT
(APPROXIMATELY 7 MINUTES)

“Whilst focus gives the opportunity to create deep and sustained change, collaborating and advocating helps broaden out impact. This area of the strategy means changing from largely working on our own, in our way, to more partnerships, joint ventures and advocacy. This was also welcomed by staff. They recognised that is put into immediate action through our global campaign, ‘It Takes a World to End Violence Against Children’. Again here are a few quotes”

- “We are most excited about collaborating and advocating for broader impact - this is true for both internal collaboration and external collaboration. We can do more together” – Vision Fund staff member
- “The organisation has been undertaking interventions on Ending Violence against Children with enthusiasm and boldness” – Field Office staff member

“Staff also expressed concerns:”

- “World Vision does not have a strong culture of collaboration and partnering with external parties, but expect that we will need to develop this to be effective, both in our programming and in transitioning economies”. – Support Office staff member
- “As we need to do partnerships, when good things happen, who will take the worth? Will we be humble enough to let other organisations shine?” – Field Office staff member

QUESTION: Where do you see the greatest potential for greater collaboration inside or outside our organisation to keep Our Promise? What can you do to start to make it happen now?

DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY, SUSTAINABLE FUNDING.
(APPROXIMATELY 7 MINUTES)

“Staff feedback raised funding as the defining issue in the Our Promise 2030 strategy. Whether in a field or support office, transitioning economy, emergency response or global centre – raising the right funds with the right donors for the right programmes in the right places is seen as critical.

“Staff said:”

- “We are realising that how we worked 10-20yrs, and the ‘formula’ we used then may not work today. We must come up with this funding mix that is workable in this reality, and that’s a great thing to aspire to, it’s exciting to know we’re on the way to a more sustainable funding mix” – Support Office staff member
- “We need to up our game in meeting sponsorship standards so that we keep the promise to both sponsors and the children, because this affects our donor retention” – Field Office staff member
- “We need more efforts in grants acquisition from different sources; enhanced collaboration internally and externally for grants acquisition and management; prepositioning WV among donors, increased brand visibility in public sphere” – Support Office staff member

“Staff recognised that the largest proportion of our funding will continue to come from a revitalised child sponsorship offering. Grant funding will continue to grow as our second largest funding source. But the greatest change from today will be the growth in repeated private non-sponsorship giving – because it will set the pace for deepening our presence in fragile contexts”.

OUR PROMISE 2030
Building Brighter Futures for Vulnerable Children
QUESTION: The aspiration for high quality, sustainable funding is a difficult, long journey. It shows that not everything in the strategy will happen immediately. What part can you play in taking next steps in this area?

LIVING OUT OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH AND CALLING WITH BOLDNESS AND HUMILITY
(APPROXIMATELY 7 MINUTES)

“In staff feedback, living out our faith and calling stands alongside deepening our commitment to the most vulnerable as the defining and inspiring feature of the strategy”.

- “I’m proudest of the boldness that comes out of our faith. We take on the big problems and the really hard causes” - Global Centre Staff member

- “It excites me that World Vision is out of its mind with these goals. Who do we think we are? These are goals that only God could pull off, and that excites me” - Field Office staff member

“Staff celebrate our unity in the diversity of expressions of our faith, however, the challenge of being bold and humble resonates with staff, especially in restricted contexts and those of majority other faith. Staff say”:

- “Operating in multi-faith and secular contexts poses a challenge to live out our Christian identity with both boldness and humility” – Field Office staff member

- “How do we live Christian faith with boldness and humility in restricted contexts. It is challenging but our faith often acts as a bridge, more than a barrier, with communities and leaders ” – Field Office staff member

QUESTION: What can we do to further understand what boldness and humility looks like for you personally and the work of World Vision in your context?

MINDSETS AND BEHAVIOURS
(APPROXIMATELY 7 MINUTES)

“During the strategy development process, we wondered, what might keeping Our Promise mean for the way we work together. We took a hard look at ourselves and the way we have been working. It was like looking in a mirror where we could see:

What we are like on a good day – at our best
What we are like on a bad day – less than our best

We celebrate the good things we see. By God’s grace, He uses these things in His service through World Vision’s work. The Our Voice survey highlights many of these – the extraordinary commitment of our staff to our vision and mission; our commitment to developing skills and experience; seeing our faith expressed in our work; and our desire to see greater impact in the lives of vulnerable children”.

However, some things will have to change in us and between us if we are going to keep Our Promise. Four mindsets and behaviours shine a light on what will make the biggest difference in keeping Our Promise 2030 – you can see them in your flier in the rays of the sun”

“Many of these mindsets and behaviours are already seen in the best examples of our work and have been part of our success to date. But we want to be at our best in these areas more of the time in order to keep Our Promise – to children, their families and communities, and our supporters”.
**QUESTION:** Which of these mindsets and behaviours stands out as most important for you? What would being our best, more of the time, look like?

**CLOSING THE CONVERSATION**  
(APPROXIMATELY 3 MINUTES)

“During this conversation, we have reminded ourselves of the promise we have made to vulnerable children, the reaction of our colleagues around the world and what keeping that promise looks like for us. Like the tree on the flier, our roots are grounded in our mission and core values.”

“You can learn more about the strategy by visiting the Our Promise portal and the online learning programme on World Vision’s eCampus site. The addresses for both sites are on your flier”.

“Thank you for being part of this conversation and the amazing commitment you show to our work. One final question”

**QUESTION:** When you describe to others what the Our Promise 2030 strategy is about, why it is important, and what we will do to keep it – what will you say?

**CLOSING PRAYER**

**NOTE TO LEADER:** Please take this time to pray in a way appropriate to your context, in relation to the new strategy and specific prayer requests for your team. Here is a prayer that you might use:

- From where we are
- To where you need us
- Christ be beside us.

- From what we are
- To what you can make of us
- Christ be before us.

- From the making of loving promises
- To their faithful keeping
- Christ be beneath us.

- Through the streets of the most vulnerable
- To the gates of heaven
- Christ be above us

- Surround us with your presence
- Inspire us with your promise
- Confirm in us your love.

- In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

AMEN
II. PROMISING CONVERSATIONS
HINTS AND TIPS

WHAT ARE THESE PROMISING CONVERSATIONS?
Staff want to hear important news from their leader, and to have the chance to explore it, understand it and work out what it means for them. Promising Conversations is a series of regular team conversations across the World Vision Partnership, that started in May 2017.

Six Promising Conversations were based upon the mindsets and behavior changes called for by the strategy:

1. Who we are and why we need to change (May 2017) http://ourpromise2030.org/index.php/pc-1/
4. The story so far (December 2017) http://ourpromise2030.org/index.php/pc-4/

These conversations required leaders, at all levels, to engage and lead their people so that Our Promise 2030 becomes their promise as well, and together we understand and deliver the changes to make it real for children and supporters.

Each conversation started with World Vision International President, Kevin Jenkins, and his team. They in turn hosted a similar conversation with their own team and so on – eventually reaching all staff.

TIPS AND TECHNIQUES FOR HOSTING EFFECTIVE CONVERSATIONS
Many of the skills and approaches for hosting Promising Conversations are the same that you would use for having effective conversations during performance management, team meetings, coaching sessions, or training.

Hosting a conversation well can make all the difference. This is a skill and an art. Here are eight tips to help:

1. **Wait at least 5 seconds for an answer after asking a question.** Silence is a difficult thing when we are hosting. However, people need time to think of what they want to say, whether they want to share and what questions they have.

2. **Acknowledge all answers.** Participants need to know that every answer, regardless of how strange or different, has been heard. When participants know that all answers are listened to (although not always correct), they will be encouraged to share.

3. **Ask open questions.** Open questions encourage dialogue and invite ideas, opinions and discussion. Since open questions have no ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers, learners are invited to engage with the content and
each other, exploring and making sense of the topic for themselves. They often start with, what, how, or when.

4. **Weaving.** Weaving past and future information and stories into what you are doing will help learners see connections and hook personal learning into the new learning.

5. **Talk less, listen more.** The more participants can discuss, debate, and assess new content, the more they learn. This means: less of you, more of them.

6. **Use invitational language.** Invitational language is respectful and inviting. Try phrases like: “I want to invite you back to the conversation…” or “Who would like to share their story with us?” or “Who has a question?”

7. **Sample to keep energy up.** In table or group work, it may not be necessary to hear from everyone. It is important to honour people’s contribution and invite questions, but this can be done by sampling: “Let’s hear from two or three of you” or “Let’s hear one of your stories” or “Who else haven’t we heard from so far?” Avoid sampling, however, when it is important that the group together make a decision that affects everyone.

8. **Be flexible.** The most critical thing to remember about hosting is to be flexible. We never know exactly how a discussion will go, who will be there, and what unexpected events will arise, therefore, you need to be able to shorten an activity, add some important language to a definition and change the format of your session as needed.