



It takes a world
to end violence against children

World Vision



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

An Essential Approach for Ending Violence against Children



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SUMMARY

This paper aims to increase understanding of children and young peoples' participation and how World Vision envisions their engagement in the global campaign to end violence against children. This paper explores and responds to five critical questions:

1. What does World Vision mean by children and young people's participation?
2. What does count for meaningful participation?
3. Are children and young people's participation and campaigning activities complementary?
4. What are the benefits of including children and young people's in global campaigning?
5. What are the options for children and young people's participation in the campaign: "It takes a world to end violence against children?"

WHAT

Children and young people's participation is an ongoing process that seeks to influence decision-making processes. Campaigning provides them with the space to take actions and bring about changes in policies, practices or attitudes.

WHY

- Participation is a right granted in international conventions
- Leads to better decisions and outcomes and makes processes more efficient and focused
- Contributes to higher levels of empowerment and increased opportunities for socio-political action

HOW

The campaign strategy builds upon the successes of previous initiatives that involved children and young people in advocacy efforts and recommends four approaches:
Child-led mobilisation | Child-led social accountability
Child-led research | Young leaders

INTRODUCTION

In the last five years, World Vision has made significant advancements in the area of children and young people's participation. Influenced by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), World Vision has strengthened guidance and technical support to enhance children and young people's participation in policy and advocacy debates, linking initiatives from the local to national and global levels.

An integral component of World Vision's work on children and young people's participation is to ensure that its policies and programming reflect the position that children and young people are subjects of rights and to create more innovative and supported spaces for them to actively participate in shaping the environments where they live and grow.

As World Vision is seeking to enhance its understanding of children and young people's participation and increase the opportunities to include their voices in the global campaign; It Takes a World to End Violence against Children, it has integrated key principles and objectives in the campaign strategy in order to engage children and young people in campaigning and mobilisation over the next five years.

Children and young people's participation can make a significant contribution to both describing the problem of violence against them, and also to the design of services and other interventions that they can trust and use. ¹ Existing research indicates that children and young people who have experienced violence are keen to pursue action and social mobilisation in order to raise awareness on the issues affecting children and to ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place for their protection. ²

This paper aims to examine how and why children and young people's participation is integrated in the global campaign to end violence against children and to ensure alignment with key objectives and core approaches outlined in the World Vision's Strategic Direction for children and young people's participation in order to influence a common understanding and practice of participation and representative voice.

1. United Nations (2006) Report of the Independent Expert for the United Nations Study on Violence against Children. New York: UNGA A/61/299.

2. Horwath, J., Kalyva, E. and Spyru, S. (2012) "I want my experiences to make a difference" promoting participation in policy-making and service development by young people who have experienced violence, *Children and Youth Services Review* 34, pp 155–162.



WHAT DOES WORLD VISION MEAN BY *CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION*?

Children and young people's participation means children under 18 years of age contribute to decisions and take action on issues that affect their lives. This is best done through empowering children and nurturing positive relationships between children, adults and communities based on mutual respect and partnership at familial, local, national and international levels. ³

World Vision's definition is consistent with Article 12 of the UNCRC, which establishes a new paradigm to the status of children and young people by recognising them as subjects of rights. From this international policy perspective, children and young people's participation is defined as follows:

States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

Despite this declaration, Article 12 does not provide an operational definition of children and young people's participation. However, it does outline key elements of the UNCRC definition, which includes two pivotal rights: ⁴

- The right to express a view.
- The right to have the view given due weight.

The right to express a view freely refers to expressing relevant perspectives and experiences in order to influence decision-making. The UNCRC builds a specific definition of children and young people's participation by connecting the right to express views freely with other rights granted in the convention such as the freedom of expression, freedom of association, and access to information. ⁵

The right to have the view given due weight refers to the fact that children have the right to be listened to, with their opinions considered seriously, and that those views can be expressed in many ways and with no restrictions to age or maturity. ⁶

The concept drawn in Article 12 contrasts with the notion of participation as merely taking part in or being present in activities and offers new perspectives where children and young people are entitled to participate in decision-making processes on issues that impact and affect their lives. ⁷

The UNCRC also recognises children and young people as experts of their own lives and that they are able to engage in decision-making in accordance with their evolving capacities and increasing autonomy. ⁸

The UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children established that one of the key principles to end violence against children is to provide the spaces and opportunities for children and young people to have the right to express their views and have them given due consideration in the planning and implementation of policies and programmes. Additionally, in the study's overarching recommendations – number seven specifically – it points out that Member States should actively engage with children and young people and respect their views in all aspects of prevention, response and monitoring of violence against them. Furthermore, the study argues that children and young people's organisations; children and young people-led initiatives are pivotal to addressing violence as they can contribute with their own views and experiences to interventions to stop violence against them. ⁹

ARTICLES ASSOCIATED TO THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE

Article 12

The right to be listened to and taken seriously.

Article 13

The right to freedom of expression.

Article 14

The right to freedom of conscience, thought and religion.

Article 15

The right to freedom of association

Article 16

The right to privacy.

Article 17

The right to information.

Article 29

The right to education that promotes respect for human rights and democracy.

Article 42

The right for children to know their rights.

An explanatory definition of children and young people's participation is also provided in **General Comment No 12**: Participation is an on-going process, which includes information-sharing and dialogue between children and adults based on mutual respect and in which children can learn how their views and those of adults are taken into account and shape the outcome of such processes.¹⁰

The general comment's definition has three pivotal components:¹¹

Impact in decision-making

- Mutual respect between children and adults
- Joint learning process

From the definition itself, it can be seen that children and young people's participation is both a process and an outcome.¹² Child focused literature highlights that children and young people are more likely to remain engaged in campaigning and mobilisation initiatives when the process is meaningful and relevant and when there are clear outcomes as a result of their participation. Furthermore, the process and outcome of participation is closely linked to the obligation to listen to the views of children and young people and facilitate their participation in all matters affecting them within the family, schools, institutions and judicial procedures.¹³



3. World Vision International (2012) World Vision's Guidelines for Child Participation.
4. Lundy, L. (2007) Voice is not enough: conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, *British Educational Research Journal*, 33 (6), pp927-942.
5. Lansdown, G. (2011) Every Child's to Be Heard- A resource guide on the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No.12, London: Save the Children and UNICEF.
6. Lundy, L. (2007) Op Cit.
7. Tisdall, K. (2014) Addressing the challenges of children and young people's participation: considering time and space. In Gal, T. and Duramy, B.F. (Eds) *Promoting the Participation of Children and Youth across the Globe: From Social Exclusion to Child-Inclusive Policies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
8. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2009) General Comment No. 12: The right of the child to be heard, Geneva: UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.
9. United Nations (2006) Op Cit.
10. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Op Cit.
11. Tisdall, K. (2014) Op Cit.
12. Tisdall, K. (2014) Op Cit.
13. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Op Cit.



HOW DOES WORLD VISION ENHANCE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION?

In September 2009, the World Vision International Board approved the partnership policy on the well-being of children, which includes a strong and explicit call to “strengthen children and young people’s participation across the organisation.”

WorldVision is committed to operationalising this call by developing frameworks that enable children and young people to contribute to policy debates and participate in decision-making processes on matters relevant to them.

WorldVision seeks to put policies and practices in place that ensure the active engagement of children and young people, in contributing to linking local, national, and regional initiatives, to enhancing local monitoring of services and allocation of budget for children’s issues, and promoting the inclusion of children’s rights issues in national law and policy reform.



WHAT TYPES OF PARTICIPATION DOES WORLD VISION ENDORSE?

Existing literature offers several models of children and young people's participation such as the Hart's Ladder of Participation, Treseder's Degrees of Participation, Shier's Pathways to Participation, Lansdown's Model of Participation and Lundy's Model of Participation. World Vision's global campaign to end violence against children endorses the Lundy and Lansdown models as appropriate guides through which children and young people's participation in campaigning can be mapped out, developed, analysed and monitored.

LANSDOWN'S MODEL

This model outlines three types of participation, all of which shows the different levels of power for children. Power is based on degrees between a lower and a higher level of participation, including a natural overlap between the categories: ¹⁴

- (1) Consultative participation
- (2) Collaborative participation
- (3) Child-led participation

The first degree is consultative participation, which is based on adults recognising that they do not have all the information. As a result, they need to consult children and young people to get their views on specific issues. This practice is initiated, led and managed by adults.

The second degree is collaborative participation, which involves children and young people's engagement in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects or activities. This process is adult-initiated but includes children and young people as partners and empowers them to influence decisions.

The third degree is child-led participation, which recognises children and young people as empowered subjects who are able to take actions and manage decision-making. In this last degree of participation, adults have a facilitation role rather than a directive one.

World Vision seeks to empower children and young people to move from consultative participation to one that is led by children and young people; where participants are given the space and opportunity to be involved in decision-making processes and they are able to conduct the own initiatives in collaboration with adults through intergenerational dialogue. Consultative participation is considered an appropriate methodology for specific circumstances or when other options are not feasible. However, participation should not be limited to a consultation and other spaces should be offered to ensure that children and young people's views can influence and shape processes and outcomes.



14. Lansdown, G. (2014) Op Cit.

LUNDY'S MODEL

This model of participation includes the essential components required to ensure a meaningful and sustainable implementation of the right to participate outlined in Article 12 of the UNCRC. Lundy's model for child participation conceptualises the key components of Article 12 and connects them to the involvement of children in decision-making processes.

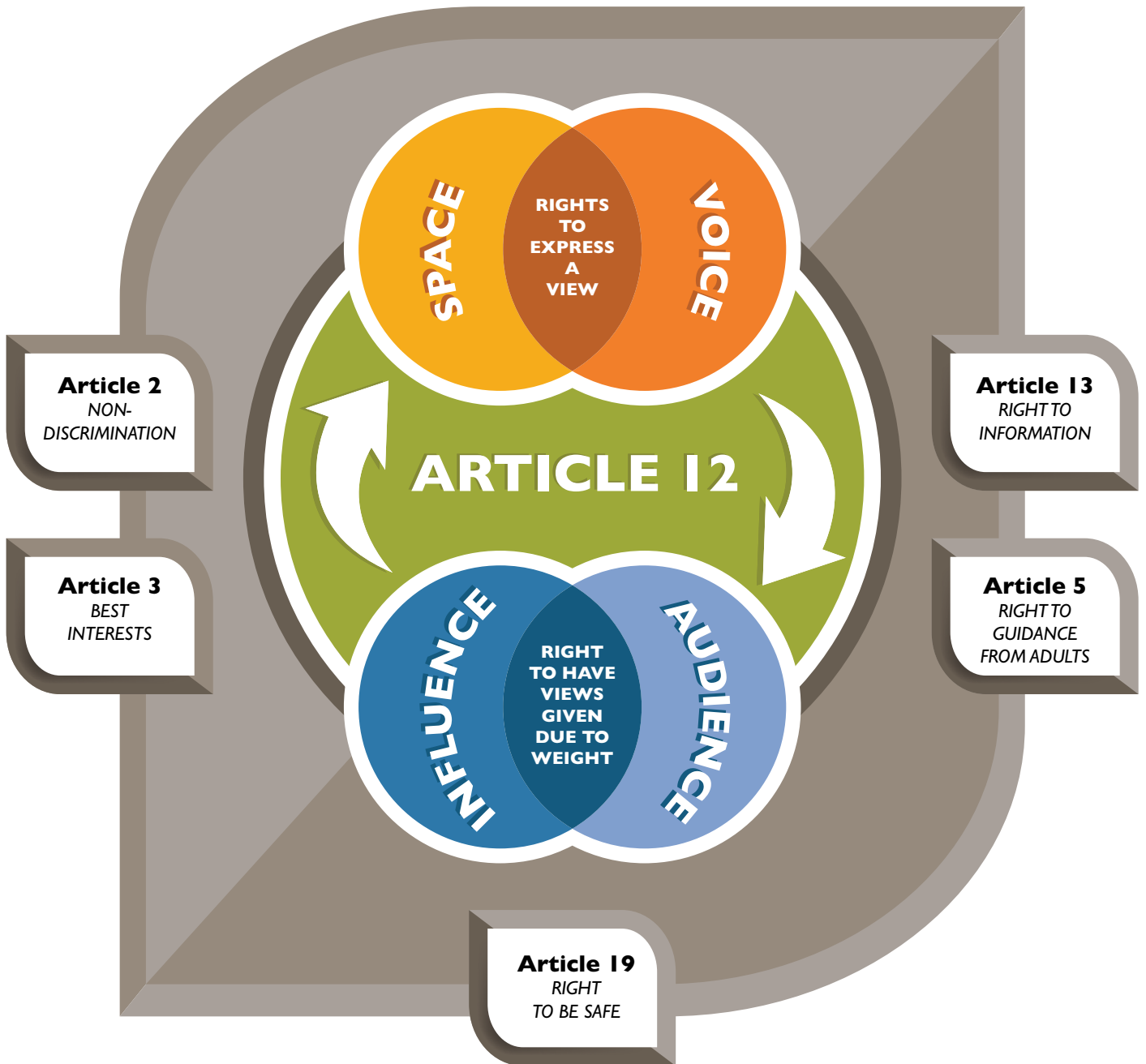
This model uses a policy analysis of child participation and includes five articles that need to be read in conjunction with Article 12 in order to understand the implication of the right to participate. These are the principle of non-discrimination (Article 2), the best interest of the child (Article 3), the right to information (Article 13), the right to guidance from adults (Article 5), and the right to protection (Article 19).

This model focuses on four interrelated elements of the provisions of Article 12: space, voice, audience and influence.¹⁵ In this model, space refers to the fact that children and young people must be given the opportunity to express a view. Voice means that children must be facilitated to express their views. Audience reflects the obligation that the view must be listened to. Influence refers to the fact that these views must be acted upon, as appropriate.

By using this model, World Vision seeks to empower children and young people to use the UNCRC framework to enhance their right to participate in the It Takes a World campaign and influence changes in policies, attitudes, practices and programmes that they consider relevant to them.



15. Lundy, L. (2007) Op Cit.



LUNDY'S MODEL

This model also helps campaign teams at the national, regional and global levels to raise awareness amongst key stakeholders and decision makers on the critical components of the right to participate and establish the mechanisms to ensure that children and young people have the space to express their views. Using this model will help to determine how spaces have been created for children and young people's participation; what mechanisms are in place to ensure that their voices are validated, how strategic audiences have been selected, and how and when their views have been taken into account in decision-making processes.

Based on this model, the



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campaign, for example, should include the following minimum standards:

SPACE

- Spaces have been created through consultations and debate to include children and young people's opinions in the campaign strategy design.
- Meaningful, inclusive and safe spaces have been established to ensure that children and young people can participate actively in different campaign initiatives.
- Spaces are created from the local to national to global level to include children and young people in the campaign, ensuring fair representation of children: gender; age, different abilities, urban/rural.

VOICE

- Children and young people have been provided with information and appropriate methodologies to engage in the campaign according to the contexts and maturity of participants.
- Participation is free and voluntary. Any children and young person can choose to opt out at any time.
- Children and young people are encouraged to propose their own ways in which they want to participate.

AUDIENCE

- Communications channels are established to ensure children and young people's opinions are taken into account.
- Launch events, panel discussion and high-level debates include the active participation of children and young people.
- The selected audience engages meaningfully with children and young people.

INFLUENCE

- Children and young people's opinions are incorporate into the campaign design strategies.
- Children and young people's ideas are framed in projects or action; e.g. Young Leaders project.
- There is an accountability mechanism in place to provide feedback to children and young people.



ARE PARTICIPATION AND CAMPAIGNING COMPLEMENTARY?

As mentioned above, children and young people's participation is an on-going process that seeks to influence decision-making processes in issues relevant to them by using multi-layered approaches such as information-sharing, discussions with decision-makers and stakeholders, mobilisation and shaping the outcomes of such processes.

All these components are equivalent to those included in campaigning. For instance, a campaign is normally defined as 'organised actions around a specific issue seeking to bring about changes.' This conceptualisation embraces the concept of planned and coordinated actions to make a change, which includes clear objectives and targets to influence those with power.¹⁶ Children and young people's participation within the UNCRC and World Vision's understanding, is looking at collective processes where children and young people aim to influence a change in their lives by challenging injustice and promoting children's rights.

Research has shown that one of the main motivations of children and young people's participation is making a change in their communities and countries.¹⁷ Evidence from the field has proven that children and young people's participation in campaigning and mobilisation has achieved public reporting and media coverage, as well as actual law and policy reform.¹⁸ Successful examples of children and young people's participation in advocacy have been broadly perceived as positive and valuable by most of the actors involved. It has encouraged a fruitful public debate and dialogue among children and young people within communities and with decision makers.

16. Burke, T. (2010) How to support children and young people's campaigning. London: Participation Works.

17. Tisdall, K. (2014)

18. Wanduragala, R. (2014) Changing Our World: Children and Young People's experience of advocating for social and political change in Albania, Bolivia, Mongolia and Sierra Leone. World Vision International



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF ENCOURAGING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION?

A growing body of evidence suggests that there is a positive relationship between children and young people's participation in campaigning and higher levels of empowerment through information, skills training and increased opportunities for socio-political action.¹⁹ Research has shown that the engagement of children and young people in campaigning enables them to participate more effectively in political and social life in the present and in the future as adults.²⁰ While participating they acquire campaigning skills including the following:²¹

- How to search for and gather information about a particular topic or issue
- How to identify which individuals to contact locally or nationally about particular issues
- How to argue and present a case about an issue
- How to work cooperatively
- Enhancing knowledge about procedures
- How to build confidence and ability to speak in public
- How to contact certain organisations or groups
- Enhancing knowledge of the policies of political parties and other organisations

19. Wandurugala (2014) Op Cit.

20. Roker, D., Player, K. and Coleman, J. (1999) Young Peoples Voluntary and Campaigning Activities as Sources of Political Education, *Oxford Review of Education*, 25:1-2, pp185-198.

21. Roker et al. Op Cit.



WHAT TYPES OF PARTICIPATION DOES WORLD VISION ENDORSE?

World Vision is committed to creating spaces and opportunities for children and young people to meaningfully engage in policy debates and shape programmes and practices towards ending violence against children. This focus builds upon previous successful initiatives involving children and young people in advocacy and campaign efforts. World Vision promotes a menu of options that includes four approaches from which children and young people can craft their own spaces in the campaign.

Those four methods include the following:

1

CHILD-LED MOBILISATION

Based on the experience of the Brazilian Young People Monitoring Public Policy project – MJPOP, its acronym in Portuguese, child-led mobilisation aims to open up spaces for children and young people to engage in social movements and participate in public policy debates through campaigning and awareness-raising initiatives. This method is inclusive of other movements and rooted in an intergenerational dialogue approach.

2

CHILD-LED RESEARCH

This approach is based largely on research experiences from Lebanon and Bangladesh where children and young people have led their own research on issues that impact their daily lives. This approach provides children and young people with new avenues to influence decision-making by using the findings of their own research to put pressure on stakeholders and decision makers on issues around violence against children.

3

CHILD-LED ACCOUNTABILITY

This model is rooted in experiences from El Salvador and Malawi where children and young people monitored the performance of governments providing essential services at the local level, particularly for child protection in Malawi and teenage pregnancy in El Salvador. Child-led social accountability enables young people to design and carry out their own processes to monitor policies and practices and use that information to take action alongside local government leaders and service providers.

4

CHILD-LED SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

This approach is network-based, involving dynamic learning and collaboration of young leaders from different countries and regions. Through this network, young leaders seek to influence, collectively and individually, their communities, countries and regions on ending violence against children. This network of young leaders is the driving force that connects the campaign to end violence against children to the grassroots movement; giving young leaders space and opportunities to gain skills, knowledge and tools to engage in campaigns across the globe and make their voices heard in policy discussions and at high-level debates.



WHAT ARE THE PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES?

World Vision promotes a participatory approach that includes policies and procedures to ensure the safe and comfortable participation of children and young people. Based on this approach, all the World Vision offices engaging children and young people in the new global campaign are required to conduct a “Child Protection Risk Assessment for Child Participation Activities”. This risk assessment is intended to help World Vision staff members consider, prepare and protect children and young people from any potential physical, social, or emotional harm that may arise due to a World Vision participation activity or project.

During the campaign implementation, the key principles in ensuring children and young people's safe participation are:

- Risk for children and young people's participation must always be assessed in relation to context, with special attention given to fragile contexts and relevant risk mitigation strategies applied
- The principle of participation (Article 12, UNCRC) must be balanced with the right to life, survival and development (Article 6, UNCRC).



PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN GLOBAL ENGAGEMENTS ²²

WorldVision has prioritised the need to ensure that the most vulnerable children and young people are given the space and opportunities to make their needs visible and their voices heard to decision makers.

The goal is to ensure decision makers:

- Acknowledge the role of children and young people as competent social actors.
- Meaningfully including their contributions in decision-making processes.

World Vision has been witnessing a paradigm shift towards this direction, as evidenced by increasing opportunities for children and young people to input into national, regional and global processes.

Based on the experiences of young delegates; dialogue and communication among children, young people and stakeholders are critical to reducing the gap between the contexts and minimising the tensions between the right to participate, as an ideological standpoint, and the cultural values that perceive participation as an alien concept.²³

It is critical to conduct a cost-benefit analysis weighing these risks against the importance of the global engagement must take place, where the best interests of the children and young people are prioritised. Alternatives to in-person children and young people's participation are:

- Incorporating the voices of children and young people into reports, briefs or other communications
- Virtual participation via videos or live-streaming
- Selecting experienced young delegates who have previously participated in global events.



22. World Vision (2015) *Guidance on the Participation of Children and Young People in Global Engagements*, New York: World Vision.
23. Cuevas-Parra, P (2015) *Children Advocating for Children's Rights*. Beirut: World Vision and Australian AID.

CONCLUSION

The evidence that children and young people are active and competent social actors is clear in this paper alone. Aligned with World Vision's strategic documents, across a wide range of disciplines, there is a huge opportunity to engage children and young people in advocacy and campaigning and nurture their abilities to get involved at the community, national and global level.

World Vision encourages all staff to consider these options throughout the campaign, from design to evaluation, to ensure that the process is children and young people-centred and embraces empowering approaches. Considering options for dialogue and collaboration from the outset leads to increased ownership and influence of campaign activities by children and young people.

The for participation are not project models but approaches that can be used and adapted to the context of the campaign strategy and implemented in a given context. They can be added to existing models if these are addressing issues that align with the campaign to ensure we are all working to end violence against children.



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