



# 2025 CHILD PARTICIPATION IN WORLD VISION DECISION-MAKING REPORT

EXECUTIVE BRIEFING SUMMARY

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	2
<b>World Vision Programming?</b>	3
What do children think is going well in World Vision programming?	3
What could be improved?	4
Emerging patterns	4
<b>Child Participation in World Vision Decision-Making</b>	5
Impact of child participation on children, their communities and World Vision	5
What could make child participation more effective?	5
<b>Child Participation in Advocacy</b>	6
What challenges do children face when participating in advocacy?	6
<b>What are the considerations for Our Promise Phase 3?</b>	9
Conclusion	9

## Introduction

The 2025 Global Child Participation in World Vision Decision-Making Executive Summary presents key findings on World Vision’s commitment to amplifying children’s voices and participation in decision-making processes across local, national, and international levels. Drawing from 61 Field Office (FO) annual child participation reports across development and humanitarian contexts, the report provides large-scale insights into how children experience World Vision’s Programmes, how children are participating in decision-making and the impact it is having, and insight into how children are engaging in advocacy to enact greater change.

Across regions, a clear pattern is emerging: when children are meaningfully engaged as partners—not just consulted—programmes are more relevant, communities are more responsive, and outcomes for children are stronger and more sustainable. This Executive Summary accompanies seven in-depth Regional Reports that focus on regional trends and unique contextual challenges. All data analysis and examples from the Executive Summary and Regional Reports refer to children’s participation efforts and practice within World Vision’s 2025 fiscal year.

# World Vision Programming

## What do children think is going well in World Vision programming?

Across the seven regional reports, children most consistently say World Vision is doing best when it helps them participate meaningfully, build skills and confidence, and feel safer or better protected.

Figure 1 below show the top five programming areas that children think are going well:

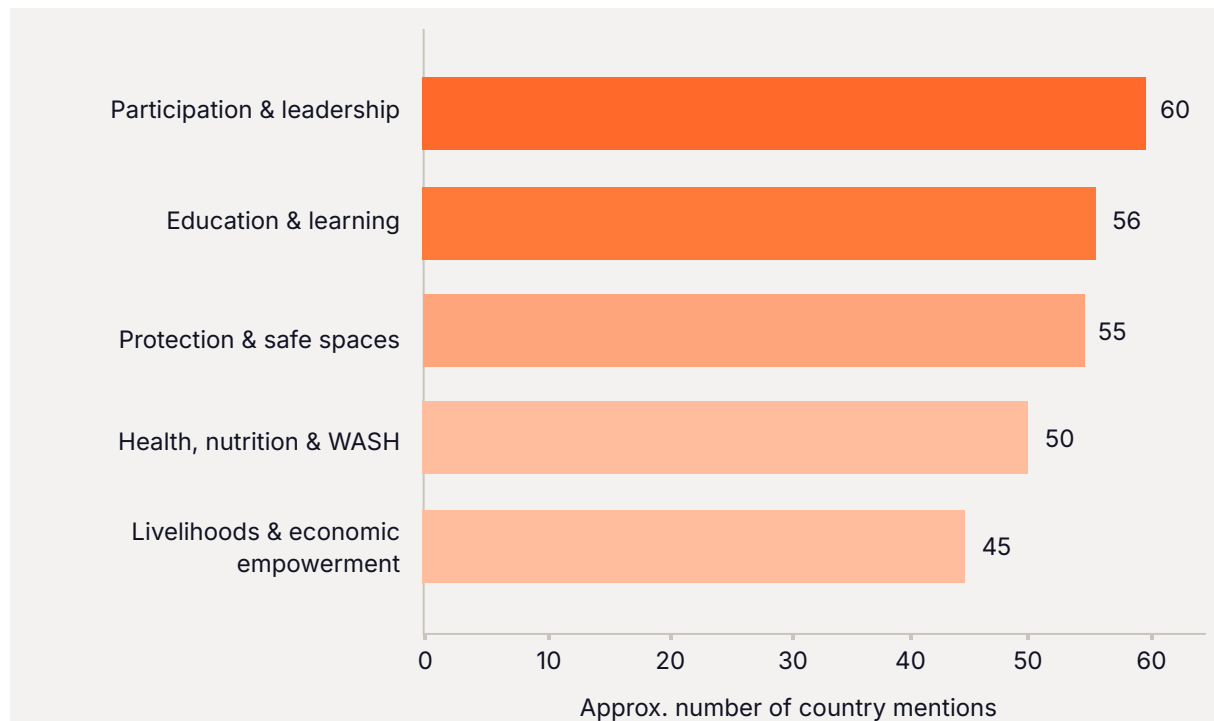


Figure 1: Top five WV programming areas that children think are going well



While these 5 areas reflect the aggregate positive feedback across the reports, certain regions (like Eastern Europe) prioritize mental health and digital safety, while Africa and parts of Asia along with children in humanitarian response programmes focus more on basic infrastructure and survival needs.

## What could be improved?

The strongest areas of World Vision's programming that children say need more attention are **more inclusive programming, more real influence and better feedback loops**, and **stronger infrastructure/basic services** to support their involvement. Figure 2 shows the top five areas that children identified for World Vision to strengthen in its' programming.

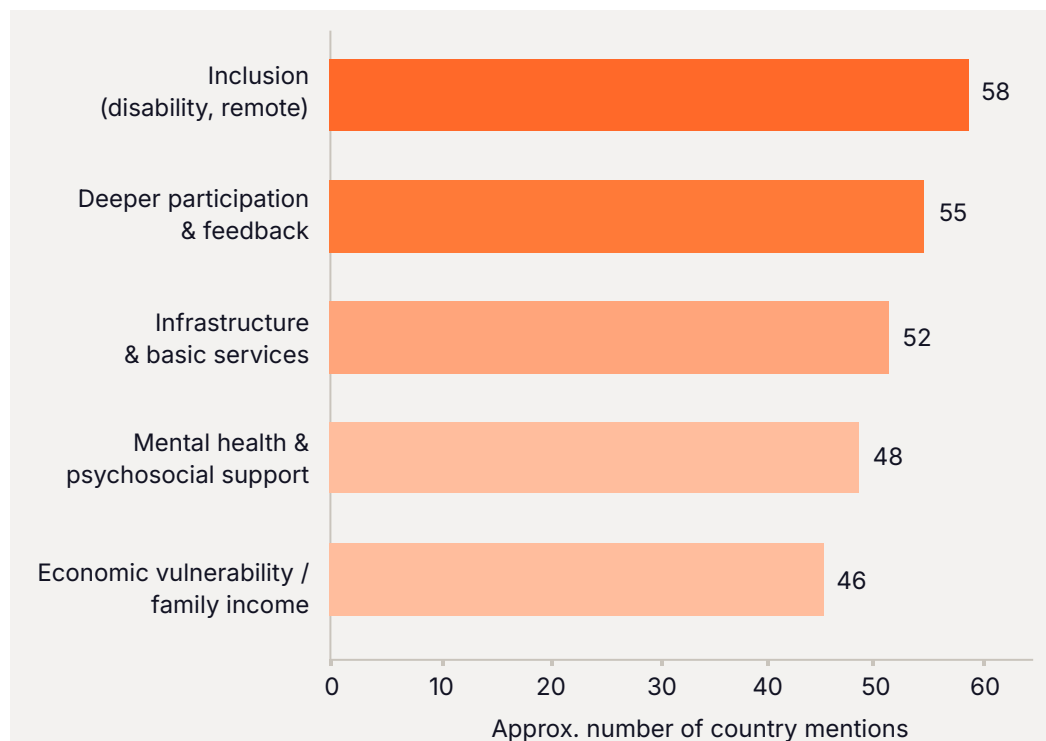


Figure 2: Top five areas that children think can be improved

## Emerging patterns

- **Participation is both the biggest strength and a major area that World Vision can go further on.** While children repeatedly say World Vision has opened space for their voices, they still want to move from being consulted to actually shaping design, budgets, monitoring, and more accountable follow-up. This includes a desire to strengthen the sustainability of children's groups and networks and create more institutionalised advisory spaces in World Vision decision-making at all levels. This pattern appears in all regions.
- **Inclusion is the clearest universal gap.** Children consistently point to peers with disabilities, children in remote areas, minority or indigenous groups, non-sponsored children, and other marginalized groups as still being left behind.
- **Basic conditions still shape participation.** In many regions, children connect participation to whether they have food, safe toilets, clean water, learning materials, transport, or safe meeting spaces.
- **Children value programmes that are practical, interactive, and relational.** Life skills, children's groups or clubs, peer learning, creative methods, and respectful staff relationships come through strongly, especially in East Asia, LACRO, MEER, and SAP.
- **There are regional nuances to consider.** Expanding school feeding and WASH programming are especially prominent in East, Southern, and West Africa and SAP; making efforts to reduce adult centrism is especially explicit in LACRO and East Asia; safe spaces and psychosocial well-being stand out strongly as clear needs for children in MEER fragile contexts; positive change in family relationships is especially visible in LACRO as something to build upon. The seven regional reports dig deeper into these nuances and shed more light onto how children see and experience World Vision's programming in specific contexts.

# Child Participation in World Vision Decision-Making

Across all regions, children are no longer passive beneficiaries of World Vision programmes but are increasingly active partners in decision-making. Their participation spans multiple levels.

- **At the programme level**, children contribute to needs assessments, project design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation through clubs, forums, and structured feedback mechanisms.
- **At the community level**, they engage in Area Community Review and Planning (ACRP) meetings with World Vision and their partners. These meetings also contain opportunities to leverage children's voices for advocacy and accountability processes, influencing improvements in schools, WASH services, and community safety through dialogue with parents, teachers, and local leaders.
- **At the organisational level**, children are participating in advisory groups, strategy consultations, and leadership dialogues, shaping programme priorities and, in some cases, influencing resource allocation.

## Impact of child participation on children, their communities and World Vision

Child participation delivers a triple win for children, communities, and the organization:

- **For children:** Child Participation is consistently associated with increased confidence and agency, with children reporting that they feel heard, respected, and capable of influencing change. Participation also strengthens key life skills, including leadership, communication, problem-solving, and civic engagement. In many contexts, particularly fragile ones, participation contributes to improved psychosocial well-being and resilience by providing safe spaces for expression and peer support.
- **For communities:** Child-led advocacy results in tangible service improvements including better school infrastructure, safer facilities, and improved access to water and sanitation. It is also contributing to gradual shifts in social norms, with adults increasingly recognising children as credible contributors rather than passive recipients.
- **For World Vision:** It improves programme relevance by grounding decisions in children's lived experience, strengthens community trust, and fosters a cultural shift from delivering for to shaping with children.

## What could make child participation more effective?

Despite these advances, children are clear about what is needed to make participation more effective:

- **More meaningful influence in decision-making:** Children desire greater involvement in programme design, budgeting, and strategic planning with stronger feedback loops to see how their input has shaped decisions.
- **More inclusion:** Children highlight the need to reach those that are excluded, including children with disabilities, those in remote or fragile contexts, and marginalised groups.
- **More capacity building:** Children desire training in leadership, communication, advocacy, and opportunities for peer-learning.

Overall, child participation is emerging as a **strategic asset** for World Vision, delivering stronger outcomes for children, communities, and programmes alike. However, to fully realise its potential, there is a need to move beyond consultation toward genuine co-decision-making, to shift from broad reach to intentional inclusion, and to strengthen accountability by consistently closing the feedback loop. The message from children is clear: they do not only want to be heard—they want to play a meaningful role in shaping the decisions that affect their lives.

# Child Participation in Advocacy

Children across all regions are actively engaging in advocacy at multiple levels, demonstrating a clear shift from awareness-raising to influencing systems, policies, and resource allocation.

- **At the community and service level**, children are using clubs, forums, and accountability mechanisms to improve the quality and accessibility of services such as education, WASH, health, and child protection. Through approaches like community dialogues and social accountability (Citizen Voice in Action), they have successfully advocated for tangible changes, including improved school infrastructure, safer sanitation facilities, and better access to clean water.
- **At the local and sub-national governance level**, children are increasingly participating in planning and budgeting processes, influencing how resources are allocated for child-focused priorities. In several countries, children have contributed to local development plans, advocated for child-friendly budgets, and engaged directly with municipal leaders. For example, children have successfully influenced the inclusion of funding for child participation activities, school improvements, and nutrition services within local government plans. These engagements are helping to institutionalize children's voices within governance processes and ensure that services better reflect their needs. engagement across systems.
- **At the national policy and legislative level**, child participation is increasingly embedded within formal governance structures. In some contexts, children have contributed to the development or reform of child protection laws, youth policies, and participation frameworks, including influencing national legislation that formally recognizes children's right to be consulted. They are also engaging in national advocacy platforms, advisory councils, and consultations with ministries and parliaments, where their inputs have informed policies on issues such as education, digital safety, climate action, and child protection. This reflects a clear shift from one-off consultation toward more embedded, multi-level engagement across systems.
- **At the regional and global level**, children are participating in international forums, global campaigns and consultations, and cross-country advocacy initiatives. Through platforms linked to global movements and partnerships, children have contributed to discussions on climate change, nutrition, and child rights, influencing global agendas and commitments.

## What challenges do children face when participating in advocacy?

However, children also face persistent challenges in their advocacy efforts. While they are often consulted, their direct influence over final decisions—particularly budgets and high-level policy choices—remains limited in many contexts. Feedback loops are not always consistently closed, leaving children unsure how their contributions have shaped outcomes. Structural barriers such as adult-centric norms, limited access for marginalized groups, and logistical constraints (including time, distance, and resources) can restrict meaningful participation. In some settings, participation remains project-based rather than fully institutionalized, limiting sustainability and scale.

Overall, children's participation in advocacy is strengthening systems by making services more responsive, influencing laws and policies, and improving accountability in resource allocation. While significant progress has been made, realizing the full potential of child-led advocacy will require deeper institutionalization, stronger inclusion, and a shift toward shared decision-making power, particularly in areas of policy and budgeting.

Level of advocacy	Example (country)	Issue advocated	Activity / platform	Impact on systems (Services, laws, budgets)
<b>Local / Community</b>	Bangladesh (South Asia Pacific)	Ending child marriage and improving child protection	Child Forums, community advocacy, local monitoring	Over <b>2,200 villages declared child marriage-free</b> , strengthening local protection systems and community accountability
	Mozambique (Southern Africa)	Access to clean water and improved services	Child Parliament, Citizen Voice & Action (CVA)	Issues raised with district authorities led to <b>improved water access and service responsiveness</b>
	Mali (West Africa)	School WASH and sanitation facilities	School WASH clubs, community dialogues	Advocacy resulted in <b>construction of latrines and water points</b> , improving school infrastructure and hygiene systems
<b>National</b>	Zimbabwe (Southern Africa)	School feeding and child hunger	Child-led research (ENOUGH campaign), presentations to Parliament	Evidence influenced <b>national school feeding policy discussions and budget prioritization</b>
	Zambia & Lesotho (Southern Africa)	Ending child marriage and strengthening child protection laws	National child parliaments, legislative consultations	Children contributed to <b>legal reforms raising the minimum age of marriage and strengthening child protection laws</b>
	Indonesia (South Asia Pacific)	Child participation in local governance and budgeting	Musrenbang (village planning forums), Child Forums	Children secured <b>allocation of village funds for child-focused activities</b> , influencing budgeting processes
<b>Global / Regional</b>	Nepal (South Asia Pacific)	Nutrition and child health	Global Nutrition for Growth Summit (Paris)	Child participation influenced <b>global dialogue on nutrition commitments and accountability</b>
	Solomon Islands (South Asia Pacific)	Climate change and loss & damage policy	National & international climate forums, policy consultations	Children contributed to shaping the <b>country's Loss and Damage Policy</b> , influencing national climate systems
	Niger (West Africa)	Environmental protection (plastic pollution)	Petition to Governor, regional advocacy platforms	Led to <b>government commitment to enforce environmental laws</b> , strengthening regulatory systems

**Table 1: Examples of child participation in advocacy**



### Key takeaways

- **Local level:** Children are most effective at improving **services and community systems** (schools, WASH, protection).
- **National level:** Children are influencing **laws, policies, and budget priorities**, especially when supported by evidence (e.g. child-led research).
- **Global level:** Children are shaping **agenda-setting and policy dialogue**, particularly on climate and nutrition.
- **Overall insight:** Children's participation in advocacy is strongest when it is structured using platforms like forums, parliaments, CVA, using evidence through a process like child-led research, and explicitly linked to decision-making spaces (government and policy platforms).

# What are the considerations for Our Promise Phase 3?

The child participation findings strongly reinforce the strategic direction of the next phase of World Vision’s Global Strategy - Our Promise Phase 3 - particularly Shift 3 toward unified **advocacy, child voice, results, and systems influence**. This shift aims to propel child participation from sporadic inclusion of children's perspectives to consistently embedding children's perspectives in programming, decision-making, advocacy, and public engagement at all levels. The table below includes actionable considerations for OP 3.3 Outputs (3.3.1–3.3.4), grounded in the findings of this report:

Our Promise output	Key considerations
<b>3.3.1 Partnership-wide framework for meaningful child participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standardise what meaningful participation looks like (depth of influence, inclusion, safety), not just presence</li> <li>• Embed participation across the full programme cycle (design → implementation → monitoring and evaluation → advocacy)</li> <li>• Require intentional inclusion of marginalised groups (disability, remote, non-sponsored children)</li> <li>• Allow for local adaptation of global standards, with clear accountability indicators</li> </ul>
<b>3.3.2 Child and youth-led accountability and feedback mechanisms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutionalise consistent “you said – we did” feedback loops</li> <li>• Link feedback mechanisms directly to decision-making processes</li> <li>• Integrate child feedback into core systems (AIM, programme reviews, management decisions)</li> <li>• Enable real-time, continuous feedback using digital and community platforms</li> <li>• Track impact through budget allocations, service improvements, and implementation—not only commitments.</li> <li>• Translate children's priorities into specific, measurable policy, systems, and budget outcomes to drive focus and accountability</li> </ul>
<b>3.3.3 Amplifying children's voices in advocacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shift from visibility to influence—ensure children are co-creators in shaping advocacy priorities and positions</li> <li>• Align platforms that amplify children's voices (digital or physical) to target decision-makers and/or decision-making processes effectively at each level (as opposed to simply amplifying their voices generally)</li> <li>• Combine child voice and child led research with data and evidence to strengthen credibility</li> <li>• Ensure safeguarding, ethical representation, inclusion of the MVC and meaningful participation in public advocacy</li> </ul>
<b>3.3.4 Strengthening capacities, platforms, and partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in platforms and capacity – groups, networks, leadership, advocacy, policy engagement, communication</li> <li>• Create structured pathways from local to national and global influence</li> <li>• Leverage partnerships (government, youth networks, faith actors, coalitions) to scale impact</li> <li>• Resource child participation as core infrastructure (funding, staff, systems), not an add-on</li> <li>• Align advocacy priorities with programme delivery and resource mobilisation to maximise impact at scale.</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

Children have a clear appreciation of World Vision's commitment to engage them meaningfully in decision-making across programming, advocacy, and World Vision's own decision-making processes. However, children see greater possibilities for maximising their engagement. They have a desire to build the sustainability of children's groups as well as strengthen their capacity to engage in programming, strategy and advocacy work.

While World Vision has made significant progress in creating opportunities for children to contribute, children's feedback highlights the need to deepen this approach by strengthening inclusion of the most vulnerable children, embedding participation across decision-making processes, and consistently demonstrating how children's input shapes outcomes. Sustaining this momentum will require continued investment in the mechanisms, skills, and partnerships that enable children to participate as genuine partners with World Vision. Doing so will ensure that programmes remain grounded in children's realities and deliver lasting impact for the most vulnerable.



World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities to reach their full potential by tackling the root causes of poverty and injustice. World Vision serves all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender.

© World Vision International, 2026