



World Vision

2025 EAST ASIA REGIONAL CHILD PARTICIPATION IN WORLD VISION DECISION-MAKING REPORT

East Asia Region

World Vision Cambodia, China, Laos Mongolia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam

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World Vision staff in each of the countries of this region also worked diligently to gather the data and findings for each of the FO reports and strive each day to engage children meaningfully in World Vision programming, advocacy, and decision making.

Introduction

World Vision is committed to supporting and strengthening children's meaningful participation in all decisions that affect their lives, including and especially in World Vision's own decision-making processes that affect children at local, national, regional and global levels. Ensuring that children have a say in projects and programmes that affect their lives and empowering them to take action on issues that they care about is a cornerstone of World Vision's identity and child-focused programming.

This regional report provides high-level insight on the child participation reporting and data from the countries in the East Asia Region who submitted their annual FO report in 2025¹. These FO reports are produced annually as part of the organisation's Operational Requirements for Child Participation in World Vision Decision-Making, summarising an office's local and national level child participation practices, data, and perspectives from boys and girls. It also digs deeper into how child participation is making an impact on children, local communities, and World Vision, giving the Region and FOs more insight into what practices to strengthen and what areas to target for improvement.

Note: Please note that the following sections draw only from data and examples that were reported in the office's annual child participation in decision-making report from FY25. Each office report follows the same general structure, but some offices provide more or less information about their child participation efforts at their discretion. Therefore, this regional report may not capture the breadth of the region's child participation work in full.

¹ World Vision Laos' report was submitted late due to staffing transitions. As a result, the data from WV Laos was only mapped onto Sections 1 and 2 of this regional report. Their full FY25 child participation report can be found on WV Central.



Section 1: What do children think is going well in World Vision programming?

Across the various country reports, children consistently highlight five primary areas where World Vision (WV) programming is excelling. These themes are ranked below by their prevalence and importance as expressed in children's feedback across 6 countries: China, Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam, Mongolia, and Thailand.

1. Life Skills development and personal growth

Times Mentioned: 7 out of 7 reports

This is the most frequently cited benefit. Children report that WV programming provides essential skills that transition them from being shy and passive to confident and brave. Initiatives such as the Young Minds Camp (implemented in 6 out of the 7 countries in East Asia) and IMPACT+ are enthusiastically embraced by children as spaces to learn, grow and build peer and intergenerational relationships. These spaces equip children and adolescents with key leadership skills, engage them in child-led research on issues they care about, and support them to influence policy and budgeting at local, national, and regional levels.

Why it is going well: Clubs and training sessions provide a non-judgmental space to practice public speaking, teamwork, and critical thinking.

- **Vietnam:** *"Through club activities... these activities also help us practice and develop soft skills including teamwork, public speaking, organizing events, planning. Thanks to these activities, we feel more and more confident in both our studies and social activities."* – Boy from Vietnam
- **Thailand:** *"Together, we designed activities to solve real problems in our communities. It made me feel that our voices matter and that we can be part of the solution"* -Worawit (see photo).
- **Laos:** *"Through these experiences, children have gained increased confidence and a sense of empowerment, learning to articulate their opinions, contribute meaningfully, and take initiative—skills that bolster their self-esteem and foster a strong sense of agency"* - quote from the WV Laos Report



2. Child protection and rights awareness

Times Mentioned: 6 out of 7 reports

Children highly value learning how to protect themselves from violence, abuse, and exploitation.

Why it is going well:

Programmes empower children with the knowledge to identify risks (such as online abuse, child labour, or early marriage) and understand that they have a right to safety.

- **Vietnam:** *"I learnt more about preventing child labour, using the internet safely, protecting ourselves from violence and abuse."* – Girl from Vietnam

3. Empowerment and Influence on Decision-Making

Times Mentioned: 6 out of 7 reports

A significant highlight for many children is the shift from being beneficiaries to co-creators of change.

Why it is going well: When children see their suggestions—such as installing water filters or safety barriers—actually implemented, they feel a sense of efficacy and responsibility.

- **Thailand:** *“It’s the first time I felt that our voices as youth were truly heard and valued—not just in programme activities, but in shaping the future direction of the organization.”* – Boy from Thailand
- **Laos:** *“Adolescents played a vital role in the community consultation process for the new project proposal... This contribution ensured that the new project proposal aligned with their lived experiences, which not only strengthened the relevance and inclusivity of the project design but also empowered them as co-creators of change within their communities.”* – quote from WV Laos Report

4. Social connection and peer relationships

Times Mentioned: 5 out of 7 reports

Children report that World Vision programming provides a vital social outlet, reducing isolation and fostering deep friendships.

Why it is going well: Children centres and clubs offer a fun alternative to staying home or spending time on screens, and they provide a platform to connect with peers from different communities.

- **China:** *“Coming to the children’s centre is really fun, and I’ve made some great friends there. I rarely stay home glued to my phone anymore.”* – Child from China

5. Tangible Community and Environmental Improvements

Times Mentioned: 4 out of 7 reports

Children appreciate the physical changes in their environment prompted by their participation.

Why it is going well: Programmes involving waste management, reforestation, and school infrastructure improvements give children a sense of pride and a safer place to live and play.

- **Thailand:** *“Our project on waste separation wasn’t just about cleaning—it was about protecting our future”* – Pornpairin, child club member (see photo)
- **Myanmar:** *“We have been planting trees and have plans to continue this... we would like to express our gratitude to World Vision Myanmar for its continuous support.”* – Boy from Myanmar



Section 2. What do children say could be improved about World Vision programming?

Children across the region identified several areas for improvement, ranging from the way adults interact with them to the specific formats of World Vision (WV) activities. These recommendations are ranked below by the frequency and prevalence of themes found in the reports.

1. Adult attitudes, bias, and lack of meaningful inclusion

Times Mentioned: 5 out of 7 reports

The most prominent concern is that adults—including WV staff, teachers, and local authorities—sometimes view children as too young or incapable of making serious decisions. Children report that their participation is sometimes tokenistic, where they are consulted on minor issues but excluded from major ones.

Why it needs improvement: Children feel their voices are weak compared to adults and that their suggestions are frequently dismissed if they don't align with adult expectations.

- **China:** *"When students' ideas differ from what teachers expect, teachers pretend not to hear them".* – Child from China
- **Mongolia:** *"I wish they would ask us more often. We have ideas, especially about our schools and neighbourhoods, but adults usually decide everything without us".* – Child from Mongolia

2. Accountability and follow-up gaps

Times Mentioned: 3 out of 7 reports

Children in China, Mongolia, and Vietnam expressed frustration over the lack of feedback after they share their opinions. They want to know if their ideas were implemented and, if not, why.

Why it needs improvement: A lack of response creates an accountability gap, leading children to feel that their contributions are not taken seriously.

- **China:** 30% of children surveyed believe that adults do not adequately respond to or follow up on their opinions.
- **Mongolia:** Local government authorities admitted they implemented some of the children's ideas but *"did not respond back to the same participants"*.

3. Programme format and content

Times Mentioned: 3 out of 7 reports

Children requested more interactive, fun, and relevant sessions, noting that some current activities can be too theoretical or passive.

Why it needs improvement: Theoretical sessions cause children to lose concentration and learn passively.

- Vietnam: Children noted that life-skill sessions sometimes remain too theoretical, leading to passive learning.
- Mongolia: Children expressed a desire for "more recreational and interactive activities" and a stronger focus on "specific, relevant topics".
- China: 21% of children expressed concern that activities sometimes do not resonate with their interests or seem relevant to their lives.



4. Inclusivity and reach

Times Mentioned: 3 out of 7 reports

There is a call for WV to expand its reach to the most vulnerable and to ensure that participation isn't limited to a selected few.

Why it needs improvement: Barriers like language (for ethnic minorities), transportation, and selective invitation processes prevent many children from participating.

- **Myanmar:** WV recognized the critical need to include more of the Most Vulnerable Children (MVC), such as those in child labour or living on the streets.
- **Vietnam:** Children noted that *"only some children were selected to join"* certain dialogues or sessions.

5. Sponsorship and administrative specifics

Times Mentioned: 3 out of 7 reports

Children highlighted specific operational issues, particularly regarding sponsorship communications and complex rules.

Why it needs improvement: Some processes, like filming for sponsors, can make children feel uncomfortable or like passive recipients rather than active participants.

- **Vietnam:** Children described filming and photo-taking for sponsors as one-way and requested it be conducted in a way that helps them feel more comfortable, such as in a private booth.
- **Myanmar:** Children found the group's *"rules and service fee calculations confusing"* and requested more training on management skills.

Section 3: How are children participating in advocacy?

Children are actively participating in advocacy across several key themes, transitioning from passive recipients of aid to co-creators of change who influence national strategies, international policy, and local service delivery.

Below is a ranking of these advocacy issues and activities based on the breadth of their impact and the levels of participation described in the sources.

1. National strategy and policy formulation

Children are increasingly involved in the highest levels of organizational and governmental decision-making to shape long-term policies and laws.

Type & Spaces: Strategic consultations, national workshops, and dialogues with senior leadership.

Levels: National and Regional.

Examples:

- **Cambodia:** Children participated in regional and national workshops to develop the **National Violence Against Children (VAC) Action Plan 2025–2030**, ensuring their concerns were reflected in the final plan.
- **Thailand:** Youth representatives were integral to developing the **Country Strategy for FY26–30**, shifting their role to strategic partners.
- **Vietnam:** 88 children provided direct recommendations for the organization's **Strategy Mid-Term Review**.
- *"It's the first time I felt that our voices as youth were truly heard and valued—not just in programme activities, but in shaping the future direction of the organization."* - Tawan, boy from Thailand

2. Climate change and environmental protection

This is a dominant area for child-led advocacy, characterized by child-led research and representation at major international summits.

Type & Spaces: Child-led research presentations, ministerial conferences, and community-led environmental projects.

Levels: Local, Regional, and International.

Examples:

- **Cambodia:** Chhon Narin presented child-led research at the **Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Manila**, advocating for increased government budgets for early warning system.
- **Htar Mu (Girl, Myanmar):** *"We are children, not JUST children... as a child I am also responsible to stop climate crisis and to make the world better"*.
- **Myanmar:** Children shared research with national leadership, leading to organizational commitments to integrate findings into future environmental programmes.
- **Bunny (Girl, Myanmar):** *"I'm inspired to be a part of the child-led research team... Discussing environmental disasters and climate change in the Asia Pacific has been incredibly enlightening"*.



Narin at the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference

3. Nutrition, Health, and Social Campaigns

Children utilise large-scale campaigns to advocate for better service provision and awareness regarding health and safety. This included child-led research on agricultural productivity, climate change and its impact on malnutrition.

Type & Spaces: Nutrition dialogues, school-based workshops, child-led research, Young Minds Camps and nationwide social media campaigns.

Levels: Local, national and regional.

Examples:

- **Mongolia:** Through **Nutrition Dialogues**, 40 children identified that school meals lack nutritional balance and recommended that the government strengthen regulations on imported low-quality food.
- **Mongolia:** The "**Be a Friend-2**" campaign engaged over 11,500 children to advocate for safe school environments free from bullying.

4. Service quality, budgeting, and local provision

Children influence how local budgets are spent by identifying safety hazards and service gaps in their immediate environments.

Type & Spaces: Annual Community Review and Planning (ACRP) meetings and village/school audits.

Levels: Local and Sub-national.

Examples:

- **China:** Children used community maps to point out unfriendly areas to adults, resulting in the **installation of guardrails on hazardous roads** and rain shelters at children's centres (see photo inset).
- **Mongolia:** Children presented recommendations to local authorities regarding school standards, leading to the installation of **new water filters**.

Child (Mongolia): *"We shared concerns about the lack of clean drinking water at our school. The officials listened, and two weeks later, they installed a new water filter. It felt like they really heard us".*

- **Ha (13-year-old girl, Vietnam):** Advised leaders on creating private spaces at school so victims of violence *"can feel safe and comfortable when seeking help"*.



Section 4: How are children participating in decision-making?

Children are participating in decision-making through a structured range of local, national, and regional platforms that transition them from being passive beneficiaries to co-creators of change. Their involvement spans the entire project cycle, from identifying community problems to monitoring and evaluating the results.

Common methods of participation

The sources highlight several dominant methods used across different countries:

- **Annual community review and planning (ACRP):** This is the most common local-level method. Children meet with staff and community members to review past projects and influence future project designs and budgets. In Mongolia alone, 1,373 children used this process to set local priorities.
- **Child-led research and projects:** Children conduct their own research on issues like climate change and disaster risk reduction and present findings to senior leaders. In Vietnam, children successfully pitched their own Rainbow project to receive direct funding.
- **Formal councils and clubs:** Platforms like the **Child and Youth Council (CYC)** in Cambodia and Thailand, and **IMPACT+ Clubs** in Vietnam, provide permanent structures for children to develop leadership skills and engage government stakeholders.
- **Direct dialogues with leadership:** Children participate in high-level meetings with Senior Leadership Teams (SLT) and Board members to influence national organizational strategies.
- **National and regional forums:** Large-scale events like the Young Minds CAMP or the Children & Youth Forum allow children to advocate on regional issues like migration and nutrition to international delegates.





What is working and why?

The reports identify several key factors that make child participation effective:

- Building self-confidence through life skills training.** Participation works best when children are first equipped with **leadership, public speaking, and critical thinking skills**.
 - Why:** Children who receive training transition from being shy and hesitant to confident speakers who feel capable of Undertaking meaningful actions. In Cambodia, 99% of adolescents reported improved self-efficacy after such training.
- Creating safe and child-friendly spaces.** Successful engagement occurs in environments where children feel **relaxed and respected**.
 - Why:** When staff use child-friendly methods and do not force children to speak, it builds trust. Children in China noted they felt braver because staff never pressured them.
- Tangible impact and immediate feedback.** Participation is highly effective when children see their recommendations result in concrete community improvements.
 - Why:** Seeing real actions, such as the installation of water filters in Mongolia or road guardrails in China, reinforces a child's sense of efficacy. In Vietnam, a boy shared that he felt more confident specifically because his ideas were reflected in his community's physical actions.
- Meaningful inclusion by adults.** A shift in adult attitudes—moving from judging to listening—is critical.
 - Why:** When adults (parents, teachers, and officials) take children's ideas seriously, it creates a solid foundation for informed decision-making. In Myanmar, children noted that when adults cooperate and pay them respect, it leads to better collaborative action on community issues.
- Collaborative vs. Consultative Levels.** The most successful programmes move beyond consultative participation (simply asking for an opinion) to collaborative or child-led stages.
 - Why:** Collaborative participation ensures children are active partners working alongside adults rather than passive recipients. Vietnam reported that 100% of children in certain programmes felt empowered because they were involved in the actual implementation of their ideas.

Section 5: What could be done to make children's participation more effective?

To make their participation more effective, children across various regions emphasize the need for greater accountability from adults, more interactive activity formats, and involvement in every stage of the programming cycle. Their specific requests are categorized by the following themes:

1. Meaningful accountability and follow-up

Children frequently express that while they are often asked for their opinions, they rarely receive feedback on what happened next.

- **Response and Action:** In Mongolia and China, children note a desire for greater influence over how their ideas are acted upon, expecting adults to take their suggestions seriously rather than just listening to small matters.

A child in Mongolia shared, *"I wish they would ask us more often. We have ideas... but adults usually decide everything without us"*. In Vietnam, children requested consistent updates to enhance the accountability of local partners in addressing their recommendations.

2. Involvement in the full project cycle

Children want to move beyond being participants in activities and become partners in design and evaluation.

- **Strategic engagement:** Children in Myanmar and China highlighted the need to be encouraged to participate in every step of the programme cycle, specifically including needs identification, design, monitoring, and evaluation.
- **Participative planning:** 21% of children surveyed in China expressed a desire to be more involved in the initial planning of activities to ensure topics resonate with their actual interests.

3. Improved activity formats and content

A recurring theme is the move away from theoretical or passive learning toward engagement that is fun and relevant.

- **Interactive Methods:** Children in Vietnam and Mongolia recommended adopting diverse and engaging formats like role-play, drama, drawing, and sports instead of sessions that feel like classroom lectures.
- **Timing and Location:** Students in Vietnam suggested that activities would be more effective if organized at schools during break times, such as weekends or summer holidays, rather than during busy school hours.

4. Capacity building and skill development

Children identify specific skills they need to feel confident enough to advocate at higher levels.

- **Leadership and Communication:** Youth in Thailand requested more training in public speaking, English language skills, and leadership to help them access broader international opportunities and participate in policy-level discussions.
- **Technical Skills:** In Myanmar, children requested training on management skills and service fee calculations after finding the rules of their children's groups confusing. They also asked for consistent training on how to use online platforms for national events.



5. Greater inclusivity and safety

Children advocate for spaces that are truly accessible to all, regardless of ability or background.

- **Inclusive Communication:** A 13-year-old boy in Vietnam, Duc, suggested using sign language during national meetings to allow children with disabilities to participate more fully.
- **Safe Spaces:** Children requested private, child-friendly spaces at school where victims of violence can feel comfortable seeking help.
- **Comfort in Operations:** Sponsored children in Vietnam suggested that filming and photo-taking for sponsors should be redesigned to be more comfortable, such as using a private booth or room, and requested that sponsors send photos back to foster a two-way connection.

6. Changes in adult attitudes

Finally, children state that they need adults to change their perceptions of a child's capability.

- **Respectful Engagement:** Children in Myanmar noted that participation is most effective when adults cooperate, pay respect, and work together with them on taking action.
- A girl in Thailand noted that for participation to work, adults must overcome the bias that children's voices are weaker, stating, *"Children are often seen as less capable than adults"*.

Section 6: What impact does child participation have on children, communities and World Vision?

Child participation is transforming children from passive recipients into active community agents who are co-creating the future of their communities and World Vision itself. The impact of this engagement is evident across three distinct levels:

1. Impact on children

Child participation serves as a catalyst for personal growth, providing children with the skills and confidence to advocate for their own well-being. Being meaningfully involved in decision-making builds children's confidence, skills, and protection awareness. Children become effective communicators and leaders, better understand and defend their rights, develop practical life skills, and form strong friendships and social networks across communities.

2. Impact on local communities

Children's advocacy leads to tangible improvements in community safety and environment, while simultaneously shifting deep-seated social norms. Their advocacy delivers measurable community benefits, improving safety, infrastructure, and environmental stewardship. Youth led initiatives influence public facilities, protect the environment, support vulnerable groups, and shift adult attitudes—strengthening respect for children and collaborative decision making in families and communities.

3. Impact on World Vision

Child participation has moved from a fundamental right to a core strategic driver that enhances organizational efficacy and accountability.

- **Strategic and programmatic relevance:** Feedback from children directly informs Country Strategies and Mid-Term Reviews in Thailand, Vietnam, and China. For example, Cambodia added online abuse and alcohol awareness to its programming specifically because children requested it.
- **Budgetary accountability:** In Myanmar, annual plans and budgets were explicitly adjusted based on children's feedback, leading to increased resources for child-focused activities.
- **Organizational credibility:** Children representing World Vision at national and international ministerial conferences (such as the Young Minds Camp) amplifies the organization's advocacy reach and ensures that high-level policy discussions are grounded in children's lived realities.
- **Continuous improvement:** Using tools like the Child Participation Measurement Tool, staff can identify accountability gaps and adjust their methods to be more child-friendly and responsive.

Conclusions

These findings affirm that when child participation is intentional, well resourced, and taken seriously by adults, it delivers meaningful and sustained impact. At the same time, children are clear about what still limits their influence—from weak accountability and tokenistic engagement to adult attitudes that underestimate their capabilities. For practitioners, this is both encouragement and challenge: to protect what is working, to listen carefully to children’s critiques, and to continue strengthening systems, skills, and mindsets that allow children to participate as genuine partners in shaping decisions that affect their lives.

Appendix: Consolidated child participation data

Based on the provided reports, the table below consolidates data on child participation spaces, membership figures, and the resulting impacts across six countries.

Country	Clubs and Participation Spaces	Membership numbers	Key impacts
China	Annual Community Review & Planning (ACRP); Children’s Groups; Social Worker Children’s Groups.	42 children in ACRP; 33 children evaluated across 4 Area Programs (APs).	Infrastructure improvements (road guardrails, rain shelters); establishment of centre rules by children; improved self-protection knowledge.
Myanmar	Children Advisory Committee; National Children Forum; Young Minds CAMP; Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS).	276 total engagement; 58 in Advisory Committee; 10 in Young Minds Camp.	Organizational budget adjustments for FY25; commitment to integrate child climate research into all future programs; trauma recovery through CFS.
Cambodia	Child and Youth (CaY) Clubs; Children and Youth Council (CYC); Young Minds Camp.	14,164 children in 673 clubs; 30 CYC members (core & reserve).	National Policy Influence (VAC Action Plan 2025–2030); 404 child-led community service projects; \$500 grant secured for child protection.
Vietnam	IMPACT+ Clubs; Strategy Mid-term Review Consultations; Young Minds CAMP; Child Protection Committees.	1,963 children consulted; 88 in Strategy Review; 59 evaluated via CPMT.	National Strategy incorporation ; funding for the child-led Rainbow Project (migration support); shift from passive recipients to active community agents.
Mongolia	Child Development & Life Skills Clubs; Children’s Forum; ACRP meetings; Nutrition Dialogues.	6,314 in 270 clubs; 1,373 in ACRP; 4,000 in decision-making platforms.	School infrastructure (new water filters); Milk Mustache Challenge providing refrigerators; national anti-bullying campaigns reaching 17,500 children.
Thailand	Youth-led community projects; National Children & Youth Forum; National C&Y Council; Young Minds Camp.	11,458 in projects; 1,815 leaders; 66,601 reached via life skills.	National climate awards (1 Gold, 9 Silver); 15,000 THB raised for playground renovation; direct influence on the new 2026–2030 Country Strategy.



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