



World Vision



**2025
LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN
REGIONAL CHILD PARTICIPATION
IN WORLD VISION
DECISION-MAKING REPORT**

Latin America and the Caribbean Region

World Vision Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Venezuela

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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 programs 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.

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.



This regional report provides high-level insight on the child participation reporting and data from the countries in the Latin America & Caribbean Region who submitted their annual FO report in 2025. 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.

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

Across the 14 Field Office (FO) country reports and 1 Response Office report, children and adolescents consistently highlight that World Vision's programming is most successful when it empowers them as active protagonists of change rather than passive recipients of aid. They value the acquisition of tangible life skills, the creation of safe, playful environments, and the transformation of their family relationships.

Theme/Topic	Frequency (# of FOs)	Why it is going well (children's perspectives)
Learning & Skill Development	13	It builds self-confidence, provides vocational pathways (sewing, robotics, trades), and fosters leadership and teamwork (Youth Ready, Child Networks, Clubs).
Meaningful Participation & Agency	12	Children feel their voice is worth something; they are consulted on local policies and represent their peers in global forums like COP30.
Creative Methodologies	10	The use of games, art, music, and sociodramas makes learning fun, helps them understand complex topics, and encourages free expression.
Respectful & Empathetic Treatment	10	The kindness, empathy, and "horizontal" treatment by staff and volunteers create a foundation of trust that motivates participation.
Safe Spaces & Rights Awareness	10	Programmes provide protection from bullying and digital predators while teaching children that they are subjects of rights who can speak up.
Environmental & Climate Action	9	Activities like reforestation and school gardens allow children to feel they are leaving a legacy for future generations and protecting their territory.
Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups	9	Children with disabilities and those from indigenous or migrant groups feel valued, safe, and integrated through adapted activities.
Improved Family Dynamics	8	The Tenderness Parenting approach has reduced physical discipline and improved communication, making children feel more listened to at home (see video from Venezuela).
Humanitarian & Material Support	7	The provision of kits, uniforms, food vouchers, and clean water systems meets immediate needs that are essential for their well-being and education.
Peer Integration & Socialization	5	Meeting peers from other regions or countries allows for cultural exchange and the strengthening of a social capital of friendship.

Table 1: What is going well in World Vision programming



Summary of key findings

Children report that World Vision programming is successful because it validates them as active citizens. They emphasize that they enjoy activities most when they are dynamic and non-traditional, noting that moving away from teacher-style sessions to peer-led or experiential and playful models increases their engagement. A critical factor is the holistic impact on their environments: children in countries like Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Colombia specifically noted that World Vision's influence extends into their homes, creating a "balsam of tenderness" that has fundamentally changed how their parents treat them. Furthermore, they express pride in their advocacy successes, such as influencing municipal budgets in Ecuador or monitoring school food quality in Peru.



Quotes from boys and girls

- **On personal growth and skills:** *"I was an introverted young man, with few words and many doubts... I fell in love with the methodology and wanted to go from sitting as an apprentice to standing as a volunteer guiding and teaching other young people."*
— **Boy, 18 years old, Peru**
- **On agency and voice:** *"Now we feel that our voice is worth something and that they listen to us... World Vision teaches us to speak without fear and to share our ideas."*
— **Girl, Guatemala**
- **On family transformation:** *"This activity (Celebrating Families) helped me reflect on how important it is to maintain good relationships in the family and especially unity... participating in these spaces helps us to be taken into account and to be able to improve relationships in our families."* — **Josuar, 12 years old, Nicaragua**
- **On environmental legacy:** *"Trees are important for protecting the environment... perhaps you will not have time to enjoy that tree yourself, but your children will benefit from it."* — **Enel, 15 years old, Haiti**
- **On protection and safety:** **Matheus (15 years old, Brazil)** reported that the digital safety platform in partnership with Safe Online allowed him to identify a sexual predator, resulting in the protection of his younger sister from a potential attack.

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

Based on the 2025 country reports, children and adolescents identified the following 15 areas where World Vision's programming and local operations could be improved. These issues are ranked by the frequency with which they were mentioned across the different national contexts.

Top 15 Areas for improvement in World Vision programming

Issue/initiative for improvement	Total reports	Country evidence
Combating adult centrism (Adults making decisions "from desks," under estimating youth leadership, or not listening to proposals)	12	HON, MEX, ECU, BRA, CHI, BOL, VEN, COL, GUA, DOM, PER, ELS
More inclusion of Vulnerable Groups (Children with disabilities, indigenous groups, and non-sponsored children)	10	HON, MEX, NIC, BOL, VEN, COL, GUA, DOM, PER, ELS
Continuity & Frequency of Activities (Meetings are too far apart; desire for sustained programs rather than one-off events)	9	BRA, NIC, BOL, PER, CHI, COL, DOM, COS, GUA
Methodological Flexibility (Sessions are too long/rigid; desire for more play, art, and dynamic "peer-to-peer" learning)	9	MEX, NIC, BRA, VEN, COL, DOM, PER, COS, BOL
Infrastructure & Basic Services (Lack of school water, clean bathrooms, transport, and recreational spaces like skateparks/canchas)	8	HON, ECU, HAI, VEN, GUA, DOM, COS, COL
Parental Education (Training parents in non-violent discipline, parenting with tenderness, and financial literacy)	8	HON, NIC, BOL, VEN, PER, MEX, COL, ELS
Follow-up & Feedback (Accountability) (Not being informed if their ideas were used or what influence they effectively had)	7	MEX, NIC, BRA, CHI, COL, DOM, PER
Expansion of Reach (Desire to bring programs to other villages, remote rural areas, or more schools)	7	NIC, BOL, GUA, DOM, PER, HAI, HON
Mental Health & Emotional Support (Need for more focus on depression, anxiety, and suicide prevention)	7	HON, MEX, ECU, BOL, VEN, DOM, ELS
Vocational & Academic Diversity (Desire for university scholarships and trades beyond manual labour like sewing)	7	HON, MEX, HAI, PER, DOM, ELS, COS

Closing the Digital Divide (Lack of internet, signal, or phones to use feedback chatbots or learn technology)	6	HON, MEX, BRA, VEN, COL, NIC
Safety & Anti-Bullying (Protection from gangs, school bullying, and online predators)	6	HON, MEX, HAI, VEN, COL, GUA
Economic Barrier Mitigation (Need for grants, food security kits, and preventing children from leaving school to work)	6	HON, MEX, HAI, VEN, COL, DOM
Gender-Specific Needs (Private spaces for menstrual hygiene, and spaces for girls to discuss sensitive topics)	6	NIC, CHI, VEN, COL, ECU, DOM
Resource & Food Quality (Improving the quality/logistics of snacks and providing more educational materials)	5	BRA, ECU, COL, GUA, ELS

Key findings summary

The sources indicate that adult centrism is the primary obstacle to child participation across the region; children and adolescents are calling for a move away from "symbolic participation" toward real influence where their ideas are acted upon. A critical finding is that infrastructure (especially water and private bathrooms) is a major barrier to school attendance, particularly for girls. Furthermore, there is a clear demand for methodological shifts, as children consistently report that traditional lecture-style sessions are unengaging and that they prefer ludic (play-based) and creative activities regardless of their age. Finally, children in the most vulnerable contexts (such as Venezuela and Haiti) highlighted that economic crises and child labour are the biggest external threats to their continued participation in World Vision activities.

Quotes from boys and girls

- **On adult centrism:** *"Adults believe we don't have the right to an opinion... because we are minors, they don't take us into account."* — **Adolescent, Dominican Republic**
- **On follow-up:** *"There is a sensation that they ask us, but later they don't inform us which aspects are going to be considered or the influence we can have."* — **Adolescent, Chile**
- **On the need for space:** *"Often, our voice as adolescents is not heard. But we have things to say, we want to be heard... we just need the space."* — **Rafaela (Girl), 15 years old, Brazil**
- **On digital tools:** *"The [digital] platform is an excellent tool but [needs] greater interactivity to engage a broader adolescent audience."* — **Bianca (Girl), 15 years old, Brazil**
- **On reaching others:** *"We want them to do more activities in other villages so more children can participate."* — **Child, Guatemala**

Section 3: How are children participating in advocacy?

Children and adolescents across the region are moving beyond symbolic participation to engage in Citizen Voice and Action (CVA), directly influencing legislative reforms, municipal budgets, and the quality of government services. They are participating at local, national, and international levels, using mechanisms like municipal councils, social 'veedurías' (monitoring oversight groups), and global summits.

The following ranking illustrates the advocacy issues and the levels at which children are participating:

Children's participation in advocacy by issue and level

Advocacy Issue	Type of Activity & Spaces	Participation Levels
1. Food Security & Nutrition	Consultations, school food quality monitoring (Veedurías), and meetings with Ministers.	National, Regional, Local
2. Climate Action	Local Conferences of Youth (LCOY), reforestation campaigns, and representation at global summits (COP16, COP30).	Global, National, Local
3. Protection & Ending Violence	Developing protocols, participating in World Ministerial Conferences, and building national awareness campaigns.	Global, National, Regional
4. Budgeting & Local Policy	Managing Silla Vacía (Empty Seat) in councils, advocating for 10% municipal budget allocation for vulnerable groups.	Local (Municipal)
5. Service Provision (Water/Health)	Community diagnostics for water/transport and social audits of local health clinics.	Local (Community)
6. Electoral & Legislative Influence	Dialogues with presidential/parliamentary candidates and proposing reforms to National Youth Laws.	National, Sub-national

Key findings on advocacy and impact

- **Social accountability and "veeduría":** In Peru, children implemented school-based monitoring of the National School Feeding Program (MIDIS). This Veeduría Escolar allowed 12,000 students to evaluate the hygiene and quality of their food, with their findings leading to the creation of a formal government monitoring protocol.
- **Influencing municipal budgets:** In Ecuador, youth networks in Portoviejo and Santa Ana proposed municipal ordinances to enforce the allocation of 10% of budgets to vulnerable groups, as required by law. In Flavio Alfaro, they used the "Silla Vacía" (Empty Seat) mechanism to personally debate this in the Municipal Council.

- **National Strategy and Policy:** In Nicaragua, 50 children were consulted by the Ministry of the Family to define the central messages for the national campaign "Por una niñez tiernamente protegida" (For a tenderly protected childhood). Similarly, in Brazil, youth in Sobral successfully advocated for the "Zona Viva" state policy to reduce violence against children in their communities.
- **Global presence:** Adolescents from **Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala** and **Bolivia** brought their advocacy points regarding the climate crisis to global arenas such as the **G20 Summit** and **COP30**.

Illustrative quotes

- **On legislative influence:** *"The Ministra [of Education] told me that now in schools they are asking students if they like the food from the school programme and how it could be improved... our opinions are being heard."* — **Girl (16), Guatemala**
- **On right to opinion:** *"Human rights say that children have the right to speak, to study, to express their opinion to our parents... if a parent wants to harm you, you can call the police or the LOPNNA because the law protects us."* — **Child, Venezuela**
- **On environmental legacy:** *"My message for the country's authorities is to support the planters so that there can be more food produced in our country... this is how we will combat food insecurity."* — **Daëlle (17), Haiti**



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

Children are shifting their participation in decision-making from being passive recipients to active protagonists of their own development. Across the region, this participation occurs at local, national, and even global levels, where their voices influence everything from municipal budgets to international climate policy.

Children are moving beyond symbolic roles to assume leadership in several key areas:

- **Organizational planning:** Children participate in **Annual Community Review and Planning Meetings (ACRP/RCRP)** and Programme Quality Self-Reviews (PQSRT) to evaluate World Vision's work and set future priorities.
- **Public policy and advocacy:** Adolescents in Ecuador use the Silla Vacía (Empty Seat) mechanism to debate in municipal councils. In Brazil, youth advocated for the Zona Viva state policy to reduce violence, and in Peru, they established monitoring protocols for national school feeding programs.
- **Strategic co-creation:** In **Chile**, children co-designed the audiovisual project "[El late de los niños y niñas](#)". In Honduras and Nicaragua, children helped define the central messages for national protection campaigns.
- **Global arenas:** Adolescents have brought their advocacy to international forums like COP30, the [G20 Summit](#), and World Ministerial Conferences.

Most common methods of participation

The sources highlight several standardized and creative methods children use to exercise their voice:

- **Social accountability (Citizen Voice and Action - CVA):** This is a primary tool for monitoring public services, such as school meals or health clinics.
- **Organized youth networks:** Large-scale networks like WKYK in Ecuador (2,500 leaders) and MJPOP in Brazil allow for continuous, structured mobilization.
- **Dialogue spaces and focus groups:** Intergenerational encounters—meetings between children and Senior Leadership or Board members—are common for direct accountability.
- **Creative and audiovisual tools:** Chile uses a draw-dialogue methodology (*Multiplicar las Voces*), and Venezuela utilizes a Channel of Drawings for children with limited verbal communication to express emotions and feedback.
- **Digital platforms:** Feedback chatbots and digital participation tools are increasingly preferred by adolescents for their speed and ease of use.

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

Across the region, children and adolescents have clearly identified what they need to move from symbolic participation to having a real, effective influence on their communities and World Vision's programming. Their requirements centre on structural changes in adult attitudes, the sustainability of their participation, and the provision of basic resources.

1. Combating adult centrism and ensuring real influence

Children consistently report that the biggest barrier to effective participation is adult centrism—the tendency of adults to underestimate their leadership or make decisions without them.

- **Active listening, not just presence:** They ask that adults and authorities move beyond consulting them to actually co-designing actions and proposals with them.
- **Decision-making power:** They want their ideas to reach "people who take decisions" and to see their proposals incorporated into public agendas and municipal budgets.
- **Legal recognition:** In countries like Ecuador, youth emphasize the need for legal status (juridical life) for their networks so they can sign formal agreements with institutions.

2. Continuity, frequency, and follow-up (closing the loop)

A recurring complaint is that participation often feels like an "isolated event" rather than a process.

- **Sustainability:** Children demand that activities be more frequent and constant to maintain momentum and motivation.
- **Accountability (Feedback):** They express a strong need to be informed about the results of their participation; they want to know which of their ideas were considered and what impact they effectively had.
- **Long-term support:** They fear the closure of programs and ask for sustained accompaniment by World Vision to ensure their projects do not fail once initial support ends.

3. Infrastructure and basic resources

Children across the region highlight that they cannot participate effectively if their basic needs are not met or if they lack safe spaces to meet.

- **Safe and improved spaces:** They ask for larger, better-equipped facilities, including recreation centres, skateparks, and soccer fields.
- **Basic services in schools:** In Guatemala, Venezuela, and Colombia, children identified clean water, functional toilets, and private hygiene spaces for girls as essential prerequisites for their active participation and attendance.
- **Materials and logistics:** They need kits, educational materials, and reliable transport to reach meeting locations, especially for those living in remote or rural areas.



4. Closing the digital divide

As World Vision moves toward digital feedback mechanisms, children in several countries have noted significant barriers.

- Technical accessibility: They need free internet access, data, and mobile devices to use tools like Chatbots or digital platforms.
- Interactive tools: They ask for digital platforms to be more interactive, age-appropriate, and engaging for adolescents.

5. Inclusivity and differentiated spaces

Children are calling for spaces for all that respect their unique identities.

- Inclusion of the most vulnerable: They demand more effort to include children with disabilities, indigenous groups, and non-sponsored children.
- Differentiated spaces: Girls and adolescents ask for private, safe spaces to discuss sensitive topics such as their bodies, relationships, and the future without fear of judgment.

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

Child participation is proving to be a transformative force that extends beyond symbolic gestures, creating tangible shifts for the children themselves, their surrounding communities, and the internal culture of World Vision.

1. Impact on children

For children and adolescents, participation is a powerful tool for **personal empowerment and psychological well-being**. Child participation strengthens children's confidence, skills, and sense of agency. Children gain leadership and vocational skills, feel valued and heard, improve family relationships, and are empowered to speak without fear—seeing themselves as active change agents rather than passive beneficiaries.

2. Impact on local communities

Child-led advocacy and social accountability are leading to concrete improvements in public services, infrastructure, and environmental outcomes. Children influence policies and budgets, monitor service quality, drive climate action, and identify local priorities—resulting in safer communities, better facilities, and stronger accountability in public systems.

3. Impact on World Vision

Participation has forced World Vision to become a more relevant, flexible, and accountable organization.

- **Programme relevance:** Listening to children ensures that aid meets felt needs. In Colombia, child feedback led to the organization replacing standard school kits with vouchers, allowing families to purchase the specific items they actually needed. In Haiti, youth consultations shifted the program focus on vocational training to build economic independence
- **Strategic alignment:** Multiple countries, including Nicaragua and Chile, have built their 2025–2030 National Strategies around the right to participation as a core pillar, directly influenced by child input.
- **Organizational culture:** Participation is challenging adult centrism within the organization. In El Salvador, 100% of Programme Areas reached a Maturing status in child participation, signifying a deep cultural shift toward horizontal leadership between adults and children.
- **Trust and connection:** Regular interactions, such as Senior Leadership Team visits to Casas Club in Costa Rica, help the organization stay connected to its core mission and source of inspiration.

Conclusions

The findings from the FO country reports reaffirm that child participation, when practiced with intention and integrity, is transformative—not only for children, but for communities and World Vision itself. Yet children are equally clear that participation must move beyond symbolic inclusion toward real influence, sustained engagement, and shared power with adults. For practitioners, this moment calls for both confidence and courage: to consolidate strong practice, to confront adult centric norms, and to invest in the systems, spaces, and relationships that enable children to participate consistently, safely, and meaningfully. Doing so is essential to honour children's rights and to ensure World Vision's programming remains relevant, accountable, and grounded in the realities of children.

Appendix: Consolidation of child participation spaces and impacts

Based on the country reports for 2025, children and adolescents are participating in a diverse array of clubs, networks, and advocacy spaces. The following table consolidates data on these participation spaces, their membership numbers, and the key impacts identified by the children and World Vision staff.

Country	Participation Spaces (Clubs, Networks, Parliaments)	Membership / Participant Numbers	Key Impacts
Honduras	Peace Clubs, Robotics, Reading Camps, Peace Schools, Student Governments, and Municipal Child Councils.	2,473 NNA in evaluations; 339 in community planning (195 girls / 144 boys).	Recognition of NNA as active subjects of development; creation of adolescent pregnancy prevention plans; improvement in school water systems.
Mexico	"El Reto" and "El Reto Jr" sessions, Youth Ready, Community Centres, and Environmental Workshops.	700,000+ active NNAJ; 621 in <i>El Reto Jr</i> ; 1,078 students in <i>Youth Ready</i> ; 3,322 in <i>Celebration of Life</i> events.	Transformation of "toxic" social media environments into information hubs; improved self-esteem and public speaking; development of 10 entrepreneurship initiatives.
Nicaragua	Reading Clubs, Voces de la Niñez Platform, Youth Ready, and Un gol por la ternura.	1,102 youth in <i>Youth Ready</i> (cumulative AF22-24); 50 NNA consulted for national campaign.	Increased self-confidence and "tender parenting" in homes; contribution of central messages for the national protection campaign.
Brazil	Youth Movement for Public Policies (MJPOP), <i>EuSintoNaPele</i> project, and <i>Amplificando a Voz</i> (Digital Safety).	528 beneficiaries in Ceará (71% girls); adolescents from Rio Grande do Sul sent to COP30.	Approval of the Zona Viva state policy to reduce violence in Sobral; use of digital platforms to identify online sexual predators.
Ecuador	<i>Wamprakunapak Yuyaykuna</i> (WKYK) National Network (20 local networks) and "Escuela de Liderazgo".	7,629 significant participants; WKYK has 2,500 leaders; 264,000 NNA reached via <i>Tu voz, tus derechos</i> consultation.	Proposal of municipal ordinances for 10% budget allocation to vulnerable groups; selection of a youth leader as VP of Global Youth Alliance.
Haiti	Vocational training (sewing/printing), school vegetable gardens, and climate awareness (ESCA) workshops.	6,700 in vegetable gardens (1,364 at home); 500+ in climate workshops; 13,593 in humanitarian response.	Increased economic independence via trades; planting of 10,000 trees to fight erosion; improved family nutrition through home gardens.
Chile	Multiplicar las Voces project, <i>El late de los niños y niñas</i> (audiovisual project), and Intergenerational Dialogues.	260 NNA in <i>Multiplicar las Voces</i> ; 206 total reported in managing area activities.	High-level dialogue with the National Child Defender; creation of two technical guides for adults to combat adult centrism.
Bolivia	Organized local groups, INDABA debate meetings, and the 4th Intergenerational Encounter.	9,193 in technical evaluations; 934 in community planning (RCRP); 2,517 in impact measurements (AIM).	Consensus on 16 strategic agreements for 2026, including mental health and TICs; increased leadership in municipal committees.

Venezuela	Ecological Brigades, Crianza con Ternura groups, and feedback channels (Chatbot/ Canal de Dibujos).	158 in retro-alimentation consultation; 58 in local focus groups.	Parents "now actually listen" and reduced physical violence in homes; identification of water supply as a critical humanitarian need.
Colombia	Escuelas de Paz (Santander), Usme Local Consultative Table (CLONNA), Reading/ Dance/Environment Clubs.	42,641 total participants (21,489 girls / 21,172 boys); 11,000 in "Manos Rojas" mobilization.	Integration of child focus into the COP16 Biodiversity Plan; shift from standard school kits to voucher/bono systems based on child feedback.
Guatemala	Embajadores de la Paz Network, WASH school groups, and student governments.	511 NNA in project diagnostics; 165 NNA used participation measurement tool.	Visibilization of needs (water, birth registration) to Ministers; joint agreements between generations on community hygiene and peace.
Dominican Rep.	MIJP (Movimiento Infante Juvenil Protagonista), Youth Ready, Reading Clubs, and Jóvenes Empoderados network.	116,409 direct participants; 18,361 in youth-focused activities; 700+ in high-level advocacy.	Strengthening of self-esteem and sense of purpose; youth research on school meals leading to policy recommendations.
Costa Rica	Casas Club (Upala, Cañas, Siquirres) and psychosocial skills workshops.	~30 NNA in direct decision-making focus groups.	Children co-designing the ambientación (decoration) and resource investment for their clubs; increased child empowerment and clarity in expressing needs.
El Salvador	Crezco, Aprendo y me Divierto Clubs, Familias Productivas project, and Savings Groups.	174 NNA in decision-making processes; 100% of PAs reached Maturing participation status.	Influence on inclusive activities for children with disabilities; improvement in public speaking and overcoming fear.





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